

# How to Help A Friend

## Know the 10 Common Warning Signs

1. Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
2. Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
3. Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors
4. Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason
5. Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
6. Seeing hearing or believing things that are not real
7. Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
8. Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
9. Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still
10. Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities

### Start the Conversation

- “It worries me to hear you talking like this. Let’s talk to someone about it.”
- “Tell me more about what’s happening. Maybe if I understand better, we can find a solution together.”
- “I’ve noticed you’re [sleeping more, eating less, etc.], I’m here if you need to talk.”

### Offer Support

- Be patient, understanding and provide hope.
- “I really want to help, what can I do to help you right now?”
- “Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting?”
- “Let’s sit down together and look for places to get help. I can go with you too.”

### Be a Friend

- Learn more about mental health conditions
- Avoid saying things like “you’ll get over it,” “toughen up” or “you’re fine”
- Tell your friend having a mental health condition does not change the way you feel about them
- Tell your friend it gets better; help and support are out there.

