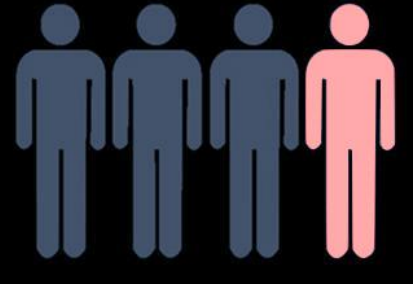


RAISING *mental health awareness*

How to help a friend



Be there for a friend with a mental health condition...

Reach out to Someone you Trust. You don't need to go at it alone. You may want to involve others who can help provide the right support. Here are some people you can reach out to:

- Friends and family
- Residential assistants/advisors
- Campus counseling center staff
- On-campus health care providers
- Faith-based leaders
- Faculty advisors
- Sorority and fraternity chapter mentors and advisors

Share your Concerns. Share your observations with your friend. Focus on being nonjudgmental, compassionate and empathetic. Use these "I" (instead of "you") comments to get the conversation started:

- "I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.]. Is everything okay?"
- "I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?"
- "It makes me afraid to hear you talking about dying. Can we talk to someone about this?"

Offer Support. Ask the person what you can do to help. You can suggest specific things that might help like:

- How can I best support you right now? Is there something I can do or can we involve others who can help?
- Can I help you locate mental health services and supports? Can I help you make an appointment?
- Can I help you with your errands until you're feeling better?
- Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting? Do you need a ride to any of your appointments?

Be a friend. You can play an important role in helping your friend build a positive, social support network:

- Check-in regularly
- Include your friend in your plans
- Learn more
- Avoid using judgmental or dismissive language, such as "you'll get over it," "toughen up," "snap out of it"

Raising mental health awareness about *how to help a friend* provides hope and lets others know that they are not alone.

Learn more at www.nami.org/aka.

