



Mental Health Awareness

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Stress, anxiety, depression and other mental health disorders are widespread and very real. Research shows that only about one in three people with a diagnosed disorder is likely to pursue treatment. Often it takes the gentle nudge of a friend or loved one to help these individuals pursue professional help.

Misconceptions and stigma commonly surround mental health issues. That is why it is critical families and friends encourage their loved ones to get professional support when needed. Treatments for mental illnesses are highly effective – and the earlier patients receive them, the faster they can begin recovering and return to

Signs that Someone Needs Help:

- **Unusual or Irregular Behavior.** A sudden or particularly aggressive temper, or something out of the ordinary for that person. For example, someone could be drinking more than usual.
- **Hallucinations.** Is the person hearing or seeing things that others do not?
- **Overly Intense Feelings.** Anxiety about a seemingly mundane activity, like leaving the house, or emotional expressions—laughing or crying—that appear excessive or misplaced.
- **Difficulty Interacting with Others.** Are they suddenly having issues getting along with others?
- **Traumatic Experiences.** A death, accident or other major life-altering occurrence can have a serious impact on one's mental health.

Tips to Start a Conversation:

- **Show Your Concern in a Loving and Kind Way.** Let the person know you care about them and are concerned about recent changes in behavior you have noticed.
- **Keep Questions Simple.** Ask how you can help provide support and if they have thought about seeking professional help.
- **Offer Reassurance and Hope.** Let the person know they are not alone and you are there to support them in actively seeking treatment to help them feel better.
- **Avoid phrases that could sound dismissive or accusatory.** Although you may not understand what the person is feeling, it is important to only express your unwavering support.

Mental health issues impact people regardless of age, gender, ethnicity or socioeconomic level. The good news is that resources are available to help address the problem and make a successful recovery.

For more information on mental health treatment and recovery resources near you, visit the websites below:

- National Alliance on Mental Health Illness (www.nami.org)
- Mental Health America (www.mentalhealthamerica.net)
- MentalHealth.gov (www.mentalhealth.gov)

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