

# NAMI Student Guides to Mental Health

## Getting the Right Start



SCAN ME

### KNOW THE 10 COMMON WARNING SIGNS

- 1 Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than two weeks
- 2 Suddenly trying to harm or kill yourself or making plans to do so
- 3 Severe loss of interest, loss of energy
- 4 Sudden, overwhelming fear for no reason
- 5 Not eating, drinking or using substances to numb unpleasant thoughts or feelings
- 6 Feeling hearing or believing things that are not real
- 7 Excessive, compulsive thoughts or actions
- 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

### WORRIED? TELL SOMEONE

- ✓ A FAMILY MEMBER
  - ✓ CLOSE FRIEND
  - ✓ TEACHER OR PROFESSOR
  - ✓ COUNSELOR OR COACH
  - ✓ FAITH LEADER
- 1 IN 5** youth and young adults live with a mental health condition

### WHAT TO SAY

- "I haven't felt right lately and I don't know what to do. Can I talk to you about it?"
- "I'm having a really hard time lately, will you go with me to see someone?"
- "I'm worried about stuff that's going on right now, do you have time to talk?"

### WHAT TO DO

- Getting help early for mental health matters in keeping your life on track.**
- Your first step is your primary care doctor, to rule out other physical health conditions
- Be honest about what you're feeling and be clear about what you want
- Ask for help finding a therapist or mental health specialist that works for you

### KEEP IN MIND

- It can take a while to get an appointment with a specialist.
- If you need to see a specialist right away, speak up to get an appointment sooner.
- CONNECT WITH OTHERS**
- Lots of youth and young adults live with a mental health condition. You can connect with them at [DZTalk.org](http://DZTalk.org). Also look in your community for peer and support groups and you will discover that you are not alone.

## Want to Know How to Help a Friend?



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### START THE CONVERSATION

- "It worries me to hear you talking like this. Let's talk to someone about it."
- "I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?"
- "I've noticed you're sleeping more, eating less, etc. Is everything all right?"

### OFFER SUPPORT

- "I really want to help, what can I do to help your right now?"
- "Let's do this together and work for someone to go help you go with you."
- "Would you like me to go with you to a support group or counseling? Or would you like me to go with you to a support group?"

### BE A FRIEND

- Your friend may feel alone, check in regularly and include your friend in your plans
- Learn more about mental health conditions
- Avoid saying things like "you'll get over it" or "you're fine"
- Tell your friend that 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

### GET ADVICE

- You may want to reach out to someone to talk to about how you're feeling or to get advice on how to help your friend. Consider talking to a:

  - FAMILY MEMBER
  - TRUSTED FRIEND
  - SCHOOL COUNSELOR OR ADVISOR
  - TEACHER OR COACH
  - FAITH LEADER

## Taking Charge of Your Mental Health



SCAN ME

### FIND THE RIGHT SPECIALIST

- Ask your doctor or nurse to help you find a specialist and make your first appointment
- There may be a long wait for your first appointment. If you need to see someone right away
- If the first mental health specialist you see can't accept, keep looking for one who will help you

### DON'T FORGET!

- Start your search with family and friends
- Talk to a community social worker, nurse or medical assistant
- Continue doing what you love reading, sports, writing, taking walks, cooking, etc.

### MAKE YOUR FIRST APPOINTMENT COUNT

- Be ready to talk about your health history and what you're experiencing
- You may be asked to fill out a questionnaire describing your mental health experience
- Ask the mental health specialist to explain treatment options so you understand the plan and what you need to do
- Be clear about what you want and need to get better
- Call your insurance company to see what mental health benefits are covered
- Ask your provider what your mental health care plan is and how you can pay for it

### ASK QUESTIONS

- "If I have thoughts that scare me, what should I do?"
- "How often should I meet? What can I do between appointments if I need help?"
- "Do I have to take medication? What does it help with? What are the side effects?"
- "How long will it take for me to feel better, a few days, weeks or months?"

### STAY INVOLVED

- Keep a wellness log and monitor your progress
- Ask for changes if your treatment plan is not working for you
- Stick with it, most therapies and medications take time to work
- Your treatment plan may change, so be an active partner in this process

### LIVE WELL

- Remember that you have control over living well
- Find a routine that works for you that includes a healthy diet, exercise and regular sleep patterns
- Stay close to your support network. Engage family, friends, teammates and your faith community. Think about joining an online community
- Be realistic and mindful of your needs and know your limits
- GETTING THROUGH IT**
- If you're staying away from drugs and alcohol, this is not always easy, so find strategies that work. Using drugs or alcohol to feel better is harmful to you.
- If you use alcohol or drugs, be honest and tell your therapist or doctor because it affects your care plan.
- Stay positive. Surround yourself with positive messages, people and activities. This will help you to feel better.