

Mental health: Signs that someone may need help



Managing daily routines, coping with emotions like fear and anxiety, and dealing with uncertainty can affect everyone differently. According to the [National Alliance on Mental Illness \(NAMI\)](#), it is more important than ever to pay attention to the health and emotional well-being of family and friends. The following information includes signs that may indicate a need to seek professional help and ways to support loved ones or yourself.

Helping a friend or loved one

Staying connected with loved ones by phone, video chat or email is a meaningful step you can take to help them feel less isolated and lonely. Talk to them about how they are feeling, listen carefully and pay attention to signs of distress or changes in mood or behavior.

When to suggest professional help

Certain emotions or behaviors may signal the time to encourage a family member or friend to seek professional help, according to [Beacon Health Options](#), a behavioral health services company.

Signs that someone should seek help:

- Struggling to work, parent or keep up at home
- Unable to handle stress with normal coping strategies
- Difficulty maintaining a healthy appetite or experiencing significant weight loss
- Using drugs or alcohol to cope
- Engaging in risk-taking behaviors
- Unable to focus
- Sleeplessness
- Lack of interest in activities that once brought enjoyment
- Panic attacks
- Fear of being around others, even children or family
- Mistrust of people they normally confided in or counted on
- A sense of guilt and unworthiness
- Restlessness or agitation
- Anger and violent outbursts

If a friend or family member talks about suicidal or homicidal thoughts, [Beacon Health Options](#) recommends you take those statements seriously and immediately call a professional for help.

What you can do to help

You can take proactive steps by suggesting professional help, such as a licensed therapist or online support group. Other suggestions include:

- Make a meal or pick up groceries.
- Offer to call their workplace with them if they would like, or help with paperwork if they need a leave of absence.
- Call and check in daily while distress continues.
- Research support networks to share with your friend or family member.

For extra support

- If you, or someone you love, is in a life-threatening situation, call 911.
- If your benefits are administered through your employer, you may have an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). EAPs can help you access resources for emotional health, managing stress, and coping with anxiety and depression.
- If you feel overwhelmed, you can call the toll-free [SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](#), 24/7, at 1-800-985-5990.

Use these helpful tips and resources as a guide to recognize serious signs of a problem and seek help when you or loved ones need it.