



How to help a friend struggling with mental health



Main points

1. Acknowledge
2. Inquire and Listen
3. Discuss resource options
4. Follow up



Acknowledge

- Be specific on what you've noticed
- Express your concern
- Listen

“I have noticed...”, “I am concerned”

Ask questions instead of assuming what they mean

Validate their feelings



Inquire and Listen

- Ask open-ended questions
- Give full attention
- Validate their feelings

Open ended questions, active listening, paraphrasing

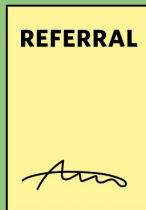
To validate their feelings you might say, "That sounds really difficult. I'm sorry to hear that."

Trust them and believe their experiences



Do's and Don'ts

- Stay in touch
- Don't try to fix them
- Don't give advice
- Show empathy



Check in regularly with a text, phone call, or quick visit.

Mental health is serious and requires professional treatment.

Advice should be avoided as your friend may not want to hear it. Listen and show empathy, then encourage them to access resources.

Stick to empathetic listening and avoid offering advice until asked.

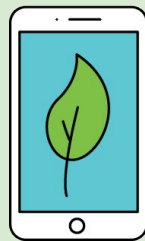
Discuss resources

- Point out what help is available
- Encourage them to contact one of the resources, or
- Contact resources together

What would be helpful? Did you want to talk with the Student Wellbeing Counsellor? I can come with you.

Have you heard of Empower Me? Let's call together now.

Would it be ok to help you look up resources?



Follow up

- Check in
- Be open and accessible



Check in the next day. “I’m here for you”

Text for a chat “How’s your day been?”

Try not to let it get to you if they seem to lash out at you in anger or frustration, keep cancelling plans (or forget to follow up), or don’t want to do much of anything.

Resources for you.

<https://students.ubc.ca/health/crisis-support/help-friend>

<https://www.dentistry.ubc.ca/education/students/healthsafety/>

