

How to recognize Mental Health Needs – Warning signs?

- Crying for no immediate reason several times per day
- You've gained or lost weight without consciously trying to. Increase or decrease in appetite
- You just can't concentrate. Your grades may be plummeting because of it.
- You feel helpless and hopeless.
- Withdrawal and isolation both emotionally and physically
- Apathetic – Show no emotion or concern
- You constantly feel irritable, sad, or angry
- Nothing seems fun anymore, and you just don't see the point of trying
- You feel bad about yourself—worthless, guilty for no reason, or just "wrong" in some way
- You sleep too much or not enough. Wanting to stay in bed all day
- Having difficulties maintaining hygiene
- You have frequent, unexplained headaches, stomach aches and pains or other physical problems
- State comments like feel like a burden, the world will be a better place without me, I can't do anything right
- Feeling trapped, confused, overwhelmed with several emotions
- Abusing drugs/alcohol
- Giving away belongings
- Uncontrollable mood; mood swings
- **You're thinking about death or suicide. (If this is true, talk to someone right away!)**

Ways to minimize risk and suggestions how to keep a home safe and increase protective factors (when needed)

- Remove all guns/weapons from the home or keep them locked up (if not possible to remove) making sure safe key and/or combination is not accessible
- Secure all medications in the home to include over the counter and prescribed medications. Some over the counter medications can be potentially toxic/lethal
- Have your children identify an adult at school and outside of school that they will go to when there is a fear of crisis
- Monitor text messages and social media sites regularly such as facebook, instagram, etc.
- Open communication and daily check ins – Ask how was your day? Gently confront the individual if they appear stressed even if they are saying they are ok. (i.e. I know you say that your day was okay but you seem stressed. I care and am here to listen. Is there anything I can help you with?)
- Provide a safe place to discuss feelings without judgment being passed or fear the person may be punished
- Let your child know it is ok for them to say when their friends may be at risk to. Inform your child this can be done anonymously
- Seek and/or have an effective outpatient mental health and/or substance abuse treatment
- Having a supportive family and community
- Increase problem solving, assertive communication skills, and good coping skills to handle stress
- Being aware of your feelings without judging them
- Cultural/religious beliefs that discourage suicide