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# “I’m worried someone in my family needs mental health support. What can I do?”



One in four people will develop a mental illness in their lifetime. Being able to recognize signs of mental health problems can help you connect to professional help and resources for yourself or for family and friends who need support.

## Recognizing need for support

It is common for people to have mental health concerns from time to time. But a mental health concern becomes a mental illness when ongoing signs and symptoms cause frequent stress and affect your ability to function. Mental illnesses can be caused by a traumatic event(s), chemical imbalances in the brain, genetics, and/or the environment (i.e. illnesses, drugs, alcohol, or other toxins).

Although each illness has its own symptoms, in general they affect thinking, feelings, mood, ability to relate to others, and daily functioning. Pay attention to signs and behaviors including:

- Excessive worrying or fear
- Confused thinking or problems concentrating and learning
- Extreme mood changes including prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in daily routine and habits, such as sleeping or eating habits
- Difficulty perceiving reality
- Inability to recognize changes in one’s own feelings, behavior or personality
- Thinking about suicide
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress

## Educate yourself and address the stigma

Many people are still afraid to talk about mental health illnesses due to shame, misunderstanding, negative attitudes, and fear of discrimination. It is important to talk more openly about mental health and to take the opportunity to educate yourself and others. Learning about mental health issues leads to better recognition of early signs of mental health problems, earlier support and treatment, as well as greater understanding and compassion. Here are some ways to get started:

- Be conscious of language. Avoid adding shame and blame to mental health issues.
- Show compassion for those with mental illness.
- Be honest about treatment. Mental illnesses, like physical illnesses often require professional support and treatment. Offer support and encouragement to get right help and treatment.
- Let the media and other people know when they are being stigmatizing.

## Finding support

Most mental illnesses can be treated effectively with medication, therapy, diet, exercise, and family and community support.

*Beacon Health:* Fallon Health partners with Beacon Health Strategies LLC (Beacon), a Beacon Health Options company, to provide behavioral health services. Behavioral health services include mental health and substance abuse care. Beacon is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at 1-888-421-8861.

If you or a family member are experiencing a mental health or substance use disorder crisis, the Emergency Services Program/Mobile Crisis Intervention (ESP/MCI) is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. Call toll-free at 1-877-382-1609.

*National Helplines and Emergency Crisis Lines:* These resources are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week and are always confidential and free to everyone.

### National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

1-800-273-8255

### Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, or SAMHSA's National Helpline and Treatment Referral Line

1-800-662-HELP (4357)

TTY: 1-800-487-4889

**If you or someone you know is in need of immediate medical attention, call 911.**

