

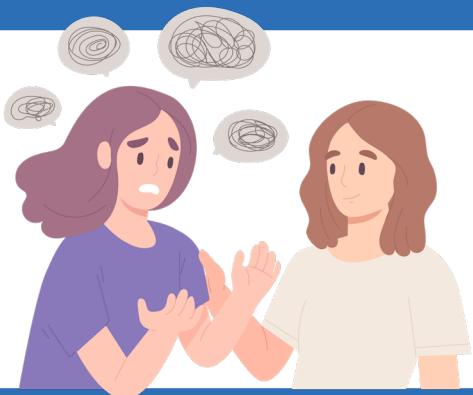
Being healthy means taking care of your body, emotions and more. Just like your heart and lungs, your brain needs care and attention to stay healthy and help you be your best self. Taking care of your mental health is just as important as taking care of your physical health! Here's how you can help support yourself and your friends.

NOTICE.

Pay attention to changes in how you and your friends act. Sometimes, it can be hard to notice when we're showing signs of stress. That's why it's important to **NOTICE** when someone might be acting different than usual.

If you are unsure, trust your gut or ask an adult. These signs might not be as easy to spot but can help you know when you or a friend needs help:

- Spending more time alone
- Changes in mood like getting angry or annoyed easily
- Talking about feeling bad, sad, or alone
- Getting scared or worried easily
- Big changes in how they act like not caring about school, starting to use drugs or drink alcohol
- Negative online posts



- **When you're not sure what to say because you've not been feeling yourself, try to be honest about how you're feeling:** *"Sorry I haven't been around lately, do you have time to talk?"*
- **When you don't know what to say to a friend:** *"Hey, we haven't talked in a while. What's up?"*

TALK.

If you notice a change in yourself or someone else, it's important to **TALK** about it. Talking things through can often help improve how you or a friend are feeling. Sometimes, it will even help you think of how to help.

Here are some tips on how to create a safe space to feel comfortable talking about mental health:

- Choose a private place where it is quiet and free from distractions.
- Be a good listener.
- Respect their feelings and try to show you care. Don't shame or blame yourself, or your friend for yours or their feelings or actions.
- Remember to be open to others checking in and asking how you're doing.

ACT.

You're not alone—everyone needs support sometimes, whether it's for us or for friends going through tough times. It's important to **ACT** and seek help when needed.

Remember, reaching out to an adult isn't "telling on your friend" - it's helping them get the support they need because you care about them. If something doesn't feel right, it's important to speak up. The best thing you can do for yourself, or a friend, is to get the help you need.

If you or a friend may hurt themselves or others:

- **Talk** to a school counselor or other trusted adult immediately. This could be a teacher, parent, caregiver, school counselor, or coach.

If you or a friend is in crisis or need someone to talk to but you're not sure where to start:

- **Call or text** the National Suicide and Crisis Hotline at **988**, which is free and available 24/7.



References

- apaf.org/our-programs/schools/notice-talk-act-at-school/
- seizetheawkward.org/
- nami.org/Your-Journey/Kids-Teens-and-Young-Adults/Teens/How-to-Talk-to-My-Friends

To view the full digital resource visit apaf.org/schools free resources page

