

Mental Health: Know the Warning Signs



Knowing the difference between a person's normal behaviors and the signs of a mental health condition isn't always easy. There isn't a simple test to detect a mental health condition and sometimes a change in a person's thoughts or actions are the result of a physical illness. But the earlier you can recognize the warning signs of a mental health condition, the better.

Each mental health condition has its own set of symptoms but common signs in adults and adolescents can include the following.

- Intense worrying or fear
- Feeling very sad or low
- Difficulty concentrating, learning or staying still
- Drastic changes in mood, behavior, personality or sleeping habits
- Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- Avoiding friends and social activities
- Difficulties understanding or relating to other people
- Changes in appetite
- Seeing, hearing or believing things that are not real
- Inability to perceive changes in one's own feelings, behavior or personality
- Repeatedly using drugs or alcohol
- Multiple physical ailments without obvious causes (such as headaches, stomach aches, vague and ongoing "aches and pains")
- Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress
- An intense fear of weight gain or concern with appearance
- Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so

If you think you may have a mental health condition, don't be afraid to reach out to someone you trust.

Learning all you can about mental health is also an important step. Reach out to your health insurance, primary care doctor or state/country mental health authority for resources and information.

You can also contact the NAMI HelpLine by calling 800-650-NAMI or emailing info@nami.org to find services and supports available in your community.

If you or someone you know needs help now, immediately call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (800-273-8255) or 911.

Receiving a Diagnosis

Knowing and recognizing warning signs can make it easier for you to see if you need to speak to a specialist. Getting help early is important. For many people, having an accurate diagnosis is the first step towards treatment and recovery.

Unlike diabetes or cancer, there is no medical test that can accurately diagnose mental health conditions. A mental health specialist can ask about and assess your feelings, thoughts and behaviors to make a diagnosis.

After you receive a diagnosis, your mental health specialist will work with you to develop a treatment plan that can include medication, therapy and routines that support your wellness like a healthy diet and exercise.

www.nami.org

NAMI HelpLine: 800-950-NAMI (6264)

Facebook: NAMI | Twitter: namicomunicate

Mental Health Providers

Clinical social workers are trained to help with individual and family problems, including mental health conditions.

Psychologists are trained in mental health issues. They provide counseling (therapy).

Psychiatrists are medical doctors, so they can prescribe medications. They specialize in mental health conditions.

Getting Treatment

There's no "one size fits all" mental health treatment. Your treatment will depend on your situation and recovery needs. While receiving a diagnosis is an important early step, knowing your own preferences, needs and goals is just as

important so that they can be incorporated in your treatment plan.

Advances in treatment options have made living with mental health conditions easier. However, a strong treatment plan goes beyond that. There are many tools that can support your wellness including medication, counseling (therapy), social and peer support and education.

Therapy can take many forms. Therapy sessions can be for an individual, a family or a group and can take place in a variety of settings. Therapy can help you learn how to manage your symptoms and better understand your relationships, feelings and behaviors.

Support networks and staying connected to friends, family and peers can also help you live well.

Education about mental health conditions, treatment and supports can empower you on your unique journey to recovery and wellness.

For more information, visit www.nami.org.