Supporting Someone who is Struggling

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Mindset Mental Health Strategy
What are you hoping to get out of today’s session?
Questions we’ll answer today:

• What is mental health and how can I talk about it?
• How can I tell if someone I care about is struggling?
• What should I say and do to help?
• Where can I direct them for more help?
# Mental Health Continuum

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Healthy</th>
<th>Reacting</th>
<th>Injured</th>
<th>III</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Stable mood</td>
<td>Nervousness or irritability</td>
<td>Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness</td>
<td>Excessive anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Calm/confident</td>
<td>Sadness, impatience</td>
<td>Negative attitude</td>
<td>Depressed mood</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Good concentration/focus</td>
<td>Distracted</td>
<td>Difficulty concentrating</td>
<td>Cannot concentrate, diminished cognitive function</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Physically and socially active</td>
<td>Trouble sleeping</td>
<td>Intrusive thoughts</td>
<td>Suicidal thoughts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sleeping well</td>
<td>Decreased activity</td>
<td>Restless, fatigued</td>
<td>Cannot fall asleep or stay asleep</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Signs of Struggle

Look for changes in:

- Their routines or habits
- The way they present themselves
- The way they talk about themselves
- The feelings they are expressing
What to say and do.
1. Say what you see

- Describe the changes you’ve observed
- Avoid making assumptions

**Intense**
- Stronger and more persistent than the usual ups and downs

**Long-lasting**
- Typically a period of two weeks or more

**Negatively affecting**
- Their relationships, routines, or responsibilities

Source: Jack.org (2021) _Be there basics_. www.bethere.org
2. Show genuine human concern and care

- Make time and space for a conversation
- Clear away distractions
- Express your appreciation and care for them, based on your relationship
- Ask “How can I help?”
- Offer practical support (life stuff!)
3. Do more listening than talking

- Your goal is to understand their experience, even if it doesn’t make sense to you
- Pay attention to your non-verbal language
- Use an empathy first approach
- Thank them for sharing whatever they’re comfortable with
## Remember OARS for Active Listening

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Open-ended</strong></th>
<th><strong>Affirmation</strong></th>
<th><strong>Reflecting</strong></th>
<th><strong>Summarizing</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>How do you feel?</td>
<td>Thank you for sharing</td>
<td>You seem to be feeling...</td>
<td>Let me see if I’ve got this</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What does that mean?</td>
<td>I’m so glad you’re talking</td>
<td>Do you feel...?</td>
<td>I get it...</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What helps?</td>
<td>It means a lot to me...</td>
<td>I can see...</td>
<td>What I heard was...</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4. Connect to help

- Your job is to be one support of many
- Offer suggestions, not advice
- Go with them
- Follow up
- Share what has helped you (if applicable)
5. Look after yourself

- Set boundaries for what you can do to help
- Don’t try to be a counsellor or therapist, maintain your role
- Remember, they care about you too!
- Be mindful of your own mental health or “battery level”
5 Tips to Support Someone who is Struggling:

1. Say what you see
2. Show genuine care and concern
3. Do more listening than talking
4. Connect to help
5. Look after yourself
What if it doesn’t help?
What if it doesn’t help?

- Own what’s yours, not what’s theirs
- Stay optimistic and hopeful for them
- Keep throwing spaghetti at the wall

Recognize and respond to needs for immediate help:
- Expressing thoughts of suicide or self-harm
- Unable to meet their basic needs, or those of their family
- Disconnecting from reality
Useful Resources

- Bethere.org – 5 Golden Rules
- CMHA Ontario – Supporting a Loved One

Need help now?
- Crisis Services Canada – 1-833-456-4566 (Text 45645)
- Kids Help Phone – 1-800-668-6868 (Text 686868)
Questions?
Ask me anything about mental health.