

Helping Others in Distress

No one should have to handle a mental health challenge on their own. You can help a friend, sibling, neighbor or classmate. You may be all the help they need, or may be the one who can encourage them to get more help. Here's how:

- 1 **TALK TO THEM.** Do not force anyone to talk, but simply offer that you are available if they want to talk.
- 2 **SHOW THAT YOU CARE.** Simply saying that you are there for the person helps them know they are not alone.
- 3 **STAY CALM.** Speaking calmly, quietly and slowly helps set the tone for them to do the same.
- 4 **LISTEN.** Sometimes, just being there and giving the person the chance to talk is the best help you can provide.
- 5 **SHOW EMPATHY.** Don't tell them you are sorry for them, but recognize their feelings for what they are, such as "I can see how frustrating that is" or "You must be really upset."
- 6 **TELL THEM YOUR CONCERNS.** Bring up anything you've seen. Do not make it about how it affects you or anyone else; keep the focus on them. Do not use guilt, sarcasm, or convey a negative judgment about them or their actions.
- 7 **REMIND THEM OF ACTIVITIES THEY ENJOY.** Don't tell them what to do, just offer suggestions.
- 8 **ASK/THINK ABOUT WHO IS HELPFUL IN THEIR LIFE.** Who has helped in the past? Can they be helpful now?
- 9 **TAKE CARE OF YOURSELF.** Helping others can be tiring. Know the limits of what you can do. You can help and listen as a friend, but you can't do everything on your own.
- 10 **KNOW WHO TO GO TO FOR MORE HELP.** Trusted adults might be able to connect them to care. A variety of professionals can help with different kinds of mental health challenges, including doctors, nurses, mental health counselors, school psychologists, drug and alcohol specialists, nutrition experts, and peer specialists.

Visit www.braverytips.org for more information on who else can help.