Part 1: The Power of Language

Here are 8 ways to check in with a friend

What is Mental Health First Aid?
Mental Health First Aid is help for a person experiencing a mental health challenge, mental disorder, or mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate professional help is received, or the crisis resolves.

What do Mental First Aiders do?
Mental Health First Aiders...
- Do not diagnose or treat themselves or others
- Observe changes in behaviors
- Offer a nonjudgmental listening ear
- Respect the privacy of the person
- Serve as a vital link to early intervention
- Respect and honor the culture of the person

What do Mental Health First Aiders need to consider before reaching out?
Staying safe is the most important thing for all Mental Health First Aiders to remember. MHFA does not replace any professional or legal responsibilities a First Aider has or organizational procedures a First Aider must follow as a mandatory reporter, first responder, clinician, or government employee.

Easy Conversation Starters
Remember: helpful approaches center the person (not ourselves); show compassion and empathy; show that we believe what we’re told; and don’t minimize a person’s experience.

- “I am concerned about you.”
- How long have you been feeling like this?
- Have you spoken to anyone about this before?
- Is something bothering you?
- You haven’t been joining us lately at coffee break, are you OK?
- It is hard for me to understand exactly what you’re going through, but I can see that it’s distressing for you.
- Let’s go and have a cup of tea.
- Something seems to be bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?

Tips & Tricks: Body Language
70%-93% of all communication is non-verbal

Video with MHFA Instructor
Kate Noelke

Here are 12 strategies for helping agitated clients or residents

Early Signs and Symptoms of a Mental Health Challenge
MN resources and contact info
Quick Facts and Tools  
for understanding mental health challenges

**Depressive Disorder**

Depression is sad or low mood that persists for at least two weeks.

Major depression affects around 20 million adults each year. Symptoms of depression may include feeling sad or irritable; changes in sleep, appetite, and energy; memory loss, feelings of guilt or hopelessness; moving slower, and not having interest in activities previously enjoyed.

- [Depressive Disorders - quick facts](#)
- [What can you do when a resident is depressed?](#)
- [Depression in older persons](#)

**Post-Traumatic Stress**

Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) is an anxiety disorder that occurs after someone has experienced a traumatic event such as war, abuse, assault, an accident, or a natural disaster.

- [Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder - quick facts](#)

**Bipolar Disorder**

Serious Mental Illnesses: Bipolar Disorder

Bipolar depression (previously called manic depression) is characterized by experiences of mania followed by deep, depressive episodes.

- [Bipolar Disorder - quick facts](#)

**Anxiety Disorders**

Anxiety is a feeling of worry caused by perceived threats in the environment.

About 1 in 9 Americans experience an anxiety disorder every year. Types of anxiety disorders include panic disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder, post-traumatic stress disorder, and generalized anxiety disorder. Worry, edginess, and feelings of overwhelm are common symptoms.

- [Anxiety Disorders - quick facts](#)

**Substance Use Disorder**

Substance use disorders co-occur (or occur at the same time) as nearly all other serious mental illnesses, especially depressive and anxiety disorders. Substance use disorders are highly stigmatized, and many people never seek help.

- [Substance Use Disorder - quick facts](#)

**Myths & Facts about Suicide:**

Let’s dispel some commonly held misconceptions about suicide. [Click Here](#)

**Learn More** Worsening Signs and Symptoms of a Mental Health Challenge
Mental Health Facts - Listening

We know listening has incredible therapeutic power, and that it builds strong connections between people when done well.

- 85% of what we learn is through listening (versus talking or reading)?
- Up to 75% of the time, we are distracted, preoccupied or forgetful when we’re talking with others.
- After listening to someone talk, we can immediately recall about 50% of what we said... even less if we didn’t like the subject or person!
- One hour later, we can remember less than 20% of what was said.
- Less than 2% of the population has a formal education on how to listen.
- We listen at 125-250 words per minute, but we THINK at 1000-3000 words per minute!

Listening is difficult, and so important.

When gearing up to listen, try to suspend your assumptions, refrain from making judgements and silence your inner voice. Listening to someone is a gift: it is a sign of respect that makes people feel valued.

Tips & Tricks: Tips & Tricks: Listening with Your Body

Prep yourself for your next listening session by doing a body scan.

Listening without Judgment

Listening without judgment requires, not only that we school our body language, but also that we evaluate our frame of mind. Before you enter a conversation, ask yourself:

- Am I prepared to express concern without expressing judgment?
- Am I the best person to help?
- Can I invest an appropriate amount of time in this conversation right now?

Deep Listening with OARS

Using the OARS model can help guide your deep listening and gives you a map to follow as you focus on coming to understand what a person is trying to share.

- Open-ended Questions
- Affirmations
- Reflections
- Summaries

For Examples

Click Here

Myths about Mental Health

It’s Not About the Nail

Brené Brown on Empathy

Exploring our Listening Habits

Video with MHFA instructor Kate Noelke
Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one’s own health.

The Self-Care Action Plan can assist you in developing your own plan.

According to the Substance Abuse Mental Health Service Administration, there are 8 areas that we can take action to preserve or improve our health.

1. **Emotional**
   Example: Engage in activities that involve your senses

2. **Environment**
   Example: Being in nature; visiting a garden

3. **Physical**
   Example: Move your body; Take a lap around your building, in your hallway, or around your block

4. **Spiritual**
   Example: Create a quiet space for contemplation and solitude or a place for curiosity and playfulness

5. **Financial**
   Example: Making small changes to expenses

6. **Community**
   Example: Turn to a partner, family member or friend

7. **Occupational**
   Example: Building relationships with coworkers

8. **Intellectual**
   Example: Read a book, talk to an elder, take a break

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**Manage Anxiety Related to COVID-19**

- ☐ Talk to someone you trust for support.
- ☐ Create a self-care plan for when things feel overwhelming.
- ☐ Find a healthy routine that makes you feel productive.
- ☐ Explore new hobbies and activities.

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**Developing a Self—Care Action Plan**

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**Tools**