



Here are **8 ways to check in with a friend**



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?



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.

Video with MHFA Instructor Kate Noelke



Tips & Tricks: Body Language

70%- 93% of all communication is non-verbal



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](#)

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](#)

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](#)



Say This, Not That
(with person-centered and trauma-informed language)

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**



Part 2: The Power of Listening

Check out the [Mental Health First Aid website](#)

Did you know...?

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!

[Myths about Mental Health](#)

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.



[Video with MHFA instructor
Kate Noelke](#)

Tips & Tricks: Listening with Your Body

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



[Brené Brown on Empathy](#)
[Exploring our Listening Habits](#)
[It's Not About the Nail](#)

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?



[Learn More Listening without Judgment](#)

Deep Listening with OARS

- O** **Open-ended Questions** 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.
- A** **Affirmations**
- R** **Reflections**
- S** **Summaries** [For Examples Click Here](#)



Mental Health
FIRST AID

from NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR
MENTAL WELLBEING

Part 3: Self-Care Action Plan

QUICK REFERENCE

Check out the [Mental Health First Aid website](#)

Self-care looks different for everyone.

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.

Self-Care Action 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.



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.

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

6

Intellectual

Example: Read a book, talk to an elder, take a break

[Developing a Self—Care Action Plan](#)
[Exercises for Personal Reflection](#)
[Methods for Compassionate Conversations](#)



Tools