

# RAISING *mental health awareness*

## *The facts*



## Everyone has mental health.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) defines mental health as:

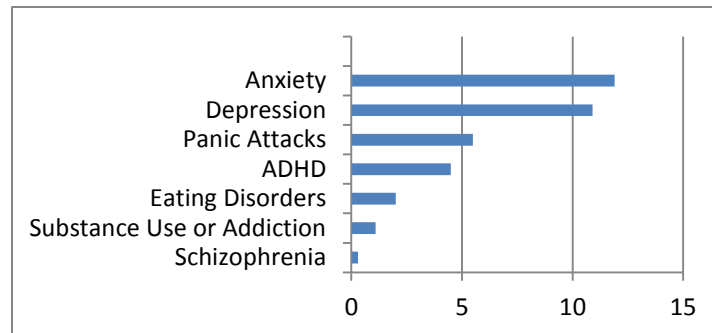
*A state of well-being in which a person realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.*

The CDC defines mental health conditions as:

*Health conditions that are characterized by alterations in thinking, mood, or behavior (or some combination of those) associated with distress and/or impaired functioning.*

Did you know that mental health conditions are common? **1 in 4** young adults has a mental health condition.

The percent of college students diagnosed or treated by a professional for mental health conditions in the past twelve months...



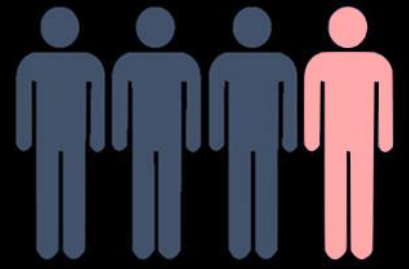
Mental health conditions are a result of a variety of factors, including **biological** and **environmental**.

**Stigma** is the number one barrier to college students seeking help.

**Raising mental health awareness with *the facts* helps to end stigma and to create more supportive communities.**

For citations and to learn more, visit [www.nami.org/namioncampus](http://www.nami.org/namioncampus).





### **10 common warning signs of a mental health condition:**

- Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks  
(*e.g.*, crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated)
- Seriously trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so
- Severe out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others
- Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing
- Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or weight gain
- Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships
- Repeated use of drugs or alcohol
- Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits  
(*e.g.* waking up early and acting agitated)
- Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that puts a person in physical danger or causes school failure
- Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes

**Raising mental health awareness about *common warning signs* leads to more individuals in need getting help. Learn how to help a friend at [www.nami.org/namioncampus](http://www.nami.org/namioncampus).**

# RAISING *mental health awareness*

## *Suicide prevention*



### **Did you know...?**

- Suicide is the 2nd leading cause of death in college students.
- More young adults die from suicide than from cancer, heart disease, AIDS, birth defects, stroke, pneumonia and influenza and chronic lung disease **combined**.
- 7% of students have “seriously considered suicide” in the past year.
- 90% of those who commit suicide had an underlying mental health condition.

### **Common suicide warning signs**

- Talking about hopelessness, worthlessness, being a burden to others, feeling trapped or having no reason to live
- Having no motivation or losing interest in activities once enjoyed
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Sudden change in personality or behaviors
- Giving away possessions, behaving recklessly
- Talking about death or not being here tomorrow. Looking for ways to kill oneself such as searching online or buying a gun

If you or someone you know is exhibiting these signs:

#### **Take action immediately and always take it seriously**

Tell someone you trust to assist you in taking action  
or call the National Suicide Lifeline at  
**(800) 273-TALK (8255).**

**Raising mental health awareness about *suicide prevention* could help save a life.**

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# RAISING *mental health awareness*

## *How to help a friend*



### **Be there for a friend with a mental health condition...**

**Reach out to Someone you Trust.** You don't need to go at it alone. You may want to involve others who can help provide the right support. Here are some people you can reach out to:

- Friends and family
- Residential assistants/advisors
- Campus counseling center staff
- On-campus health care providers
- Faith-based leaders
- Faculty advisors
- Sorority and fraternity chapter mentors and advisors

**Share your Concerns.** Share your observations with your friend. Focus on being nonjudgmental, compassionate and empathetic. Use these "I" (instead of "you") comments to get the conversation started:

- "I've noticed you're [sleeping more, eating less, etc.]. Is everything okay?"
- "I've noticed that you haven't been acting like yourself lately. Is something going on?"
- "It makes me afraid to hear you talking about dying. Can we talk to someone about this?"

**Offer Support.** Ask the person what you can do to help. You can suggest specific things that might help like:

- How can I best support you right now? Is there something I can do or can we involve others who can help?
- Can I help you locate mental health services and supports? Can I help you make an appointment?
- Can I help you with your errands until you're feeling better?
- Would you like me to go with you to a support group or a meeting? Do you need a ride to any of your appointments?

**Be a friend.** You can play an important role in helping your friend build a positive, social support network. Here are ways to do that:

- Check-in regularly
- Include your friend in your plans
- Learn more
- Avoid using judgmental or dismissive language, such as "you'll get over it," "toughen up," "snap out of it"

**Raising mental health awareness about *how to help a friend* provides hope and lets others know that they are not alone.**

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