Mental Health Concerns: What to Look For

Part of being a friend and brother is looking out for one another. Here are some signs to look for when you suspect someone is struggling.

**Signs of Substance Use Disorders**

Substance use disorders can refer to substance use or substance dependence. Symptoms of substance use disorders may include:
- Behavioral changes, such as:
  - Drop in attendance and performance at work or school
  - Frequently getting into trouble (fights, accidents, illegal activities)
  - Using substances in physically hazardous situations such as while driving or operating a machine
  - Engaging in secretive or suspicious behaviors
  - Changes in appetite or sleep patterns
  - Unexplained change in personality or attitude
  - Sudden mood swings, irritability, or angry outbursts
  - Periods of unusual hyperactivity, agitation, or giddiness
  - Lack of motivation
  - Appearing fearful, anxious or paranoid with no reason
- Physical changes, such as:
  - Bloodshot eyes and abnormally sized pupils
  - Sudden weight loss or weight gain
  - Deterioration of physical appearance
  - Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing
  - Tremors, slurred speech or impaired coordination
- Social changes, such as:
  - Sudden change in friends, favorite hangouts and hobbies
  - Legal problems related to substance use
  - Unexplained need for money or financial problems
  - Using substances even though it causes problems in relationships

**Signs of Depression**

Depression is a disorder of the brain. Symptoms of depression are ones that persist and interfere with everyday life. Symptoms can include:
- Sadness
- Loss of interest or pleasure in activities you used to enjoy
- Change in weight
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Energy loss
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Thoughts of death or suicide


**Warning Signs of Suicide**

If someone you know shows one or more of the following behaviors, he or she may be thinking about suicide. Don’t ignore these warning signs. Get help immediately.
- Talking about wanting to die or to kill oneself
- Looking for a way to kill oneself
- Talking about feeling hopeless or having no reason to live
- Talking about feeling trapped or in unbearable pain
- Talking about being a burden to others
- Increasing the use of alcohol or drugs
- Acting anxious or agitated; behaving recklessly
- Sleeping too little or too much
- Withdrawing or feeling isolated
- Showing rage or talking about seeking revenge
- Displaying extreme mood swings