

What are the possible signs that someone is struggling with their mental health?

Are you worried that a friend, family member or colleague is behaving differently? We all have mental health in the same way that we all have physical health. But it can be much harder to know if someone is experiencing problems with their mental wellbeing.

Everyone's mental health can change at different times and we will all experience ups and downs along the way. It's important not to make assumptions about what someone might be experiencing or going through. However, some of the common signs that someone might be struggling can include:

Changes in mood

- Low mood or changes in mood, from very high to very low.
- Being easily irritated, overreacting to situations or appearing aggressive.
- Sounding hopeless or very self-critical.

Changes in behaviour

- Withdrawing from family, friends, colleagues or fellow students.
- Avoiding situations or loss of interest in usual activities.
- Coming in late to work or college; being absent from work, missing lectures or not turning up to social engagements.
- Change in appetite or sleeping less or more than usual.
- Working longer hours than usual or trying to do too many things at once.
- Not taking care of personal appearance or leaving living space untidy/unclean (if this is unusual or out of character).
- Posting worrying messages on social media or going quiet when they're usually very active.
- Increased drug use or drinking more alcohol than usual.
- Reckless or addictive behaviour that puts them in danger.

Changes in thinking, feeling and physical sensations

- Feeling anxious, panicky or worrying more.
- Poor concentration, low energy, tiredness or being easily distracted.
- Loss of confidence or feeling overwhelmed by tasks.
- Expressing false beliefs or hearing/seeing things that others do not hear or see.

It's only natural that you want to be a good friend to someone you care about. It can be difficult to know how to talk to someone about their mental health. See our resource [How can I talk to someone about their mental health?](#) for our TALKS technique which can help you to start a conversation.