How do we respond to emotional health crises?

We know how to respond to physical health crises like a broken leg or heart attack.
Looking Ahead…

This can be hard.

This content we are going to discuss can be difficult.

If you need an emotional timeout to take care of yourself – that’s okay.

If you want to connect, I would love to touch base after.
Suicide

3rd

Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death in youth ages 10 - 24.¹

90%

90% of those who died by suicide had an underlying mental illness.¹
Nationally, 1 in 5 are diagnosed with a mental health condition.

CDC, 2017
THE STATS

Fact: 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.¹

- 20% of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition¹
- 11% of youth have a mood disorder¹
- 10% of youth have a behavior or conduct disorder¹
- 8% of youth have an anxiety disorder¹
What are the warning signs for an emotional health crisis?
WARNING SIGNS

- Inability to perform daily tasks
- Rapid mood swings
- Increased energy levels
- Increased agitation
- Verbal threats
- Abusive behavior towards self and others
- Isolation from usual daily activities and people
- Losing touch with reality
- Paranoia

NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness)
It is more likely that you’ll have a first contact with a friend or peer about emotional health than a medical provider will through...

- 48% of teens DO NOT turn to their parents for help with problems online
- 40% of teens turn to friends for help with problems online

National Survey of Children’s Health, 2017
BARRIERS

• Adults not taking you seriously.
• Being told you’re being dramatic.
• Not knowing how to access care.
• Struggling with the process of accessing care.
• Not knowing who to go to.

• Not feeling seen or heard.
• Lack of connection.
• Feeling hopeless.
• Not knowing resources.
• Feeling like nothing will make a difference.
• Scared to ‘tell on’ a friend.
Emotionally Connect Partner Respond
Be an Ally!

It’s easy to dismiss and downplay: “You’re being dramatic” “You just want attention”
Instead try: “I am here for you” “I would be hurting too”

Be a Meaningful Listener!

Make eye contact, repeat what they’re saying, “tell me more”

Be Validating!

Don’t try to analyze, fix or sole their emotions,
“Your feelings are real” “You have a right to feel this way”
SCENARIOS

1. A friend of one of the students in the group is posting hurtful content online telling another person to “go kill yourself”.

2. Over a period of days you notice a friend is acting weird or different. Something is off.

3. A student at school posts a photo with a caption saying, “today is my last day”.
Ask Specific Questions

- “I’m worried about you, are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?”

- “I feel like you’ve been acting differently. Are you OK?”

- I’ve noticed you’ve been really distant lately, are you ok?

- It seems like you’re pretty checked out, how are you doing.

- How are you doing since _____ happened?

Expanding Dialogue vs. Shutting Down

- Open ended questions
  - ‘tell me more…’
  - Not leading questions
  - ‘you’re not suicidal, are you?’

Ask Directly

- Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?
- Are you having thoughts of suicide?
- Do you have a plan for hurting yourself?
1. A friend of one of the students in the group is posting hurtful content online telling another person to “go kill yourself”.

How would you respond?

Based upon what you learned today, how would you reach out and support the victim as well as the person who wrote the comment?
2. Over a period of days you notice a friend is acting weird or different. Something is off.

How would you approach that person and offer help?

Do you think this is easy or hard? Why or why not?

What are some things you could say to that person to offer help or direct them to help?
3. A student at school posts a photo with a caption saying, “today is my last day”.

Based upon what you learned today, what could you do to help?

Would you respond directly online?

Who could you share this information with at school?
True or False?

• Asking directly about suicide will cause someone to contemplate or complete suicide.

FALSE!

• Direct questioning and providing space creates a safe environment for opening up an authentic dialogue.
How To Connect?
How do you partner with a person in need when they don’t want to be connected?

- “I’m worried about you; I want to make sure you’re supported.”
- Reaching out for help on someone’s behalf:
  - Anonymous call to a Hotline
  - Connect with a trusted adult

It is essential that you don’t feel you have to hold this information alone!

- Dialogue: Is it ok for your friend to be mad at you, if they’re still safe?
How Can I Respond?

1. Continue to make a meaningful connection with your partner.
2. Reach out to a trusted adult, counselor, parent, or community member.
3. Call a hotline or text a helpline.
4. Go to a medical provider.

How to respond to social media posts?

- Check-In with the person
- Give resources
- Inform a trusted adult
- Report self-harm or suicidal ideations on the app
Connect
• I feel like you’ve been acting differently. Are you OK?
• I’ve noticed you’ve been really distant lately, are you ok?
• It seems like you’re pretty checked out, how are you doing?

Partner
• Meaningfully listen
  • Don’t try to analyze, fix, or solve
• Validate emotions
• Ask how you can help

Respond
• Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?
• Are you having thoughts of suicide?
• Do you have a plan for hurting yourself?

Practice is Key
MY ROLE is to start the dialogue.
I am NOT and CANNOT be RESPONSIBLE for maintaining another person’s safety.
Responding also means taking good care of you!

These conversations are difficult! They can impact us emotionally and physically.

How can YOU take care of YOU after difficult conversations?
Take a moment to pause

1. **Feet on the floor**
2. **Nice deep breath**
3. **Check-in with 2 people next to you**
   - How are they doing?
   - How are you doing?
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