



1. Awareness

Look for signs of distress

Signs of distress can present in school or work, appearance, and behavior.

Some examples include:

- Loneliness
- Zoning Out
- Anxiousness
- Irritability
- Mentions feeling hopeless
- Not acting like themselves
- Increased substance use
- Lack of self-care/self-harm

2. Interaction

Reach out and talk with the person in distress

*Remember that you don't need to be an expert

Some tips to remember include:

- Let the person know you care about them
- Be respectful, compassionate, empathetic and nonjudgmental
- Keep it casual & listen
- Ask open-end questions
- Avoid offering advice or trying to fix their problem
- Explain that you will keep the conversation confidential, but that if they plan to hurt themselves or others you have to tell the appropriate person
- Check in with the person

3. Direction

Provide options for help

*Avoid giving advice. Instead provide options for the person.

National Resources

- Crisis Text Line: Text **HOME to 741-741**
 - Confidential access to live counselors through text
- Suicide & Crisis Lifeline: Call or text **988**
 - Confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you and your loved ones
- The Trevor Project: Call **1-866-488-7386** or text **START to 678-678**
 - Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ+ young people
- Call **911** if there is an emergency
- **Contact your local Mental Health Board and/or Health Department for local mental health resources**

Hear to Help

Hear to help is a campaign from Kent State University to identify anyone who has taken a mental health awareness training



www.kent.edu/mhsu/H2H

Practice Scenario

You are grocery shopping and run into your neighbor, Alex. You notice Alex, who is normally very put together, looks very disheveled (messy hair, stained clothes, etc.) When you say hello, Alex seems upset and agitated. Your gut tells you something is off. You have completed A.I.D training and feel like you have the confidence to talk to your neighbor. **What do you do ?**

1. Awareness

What do you notice about your neighbor that indicates they might be in distress?

Helpful Tip: You are not a mental health professional and do not need to diagnose someone with a mental health disorder or illness. Your role is to connect the dots enough to recognize that the person is having a problem & take the necessary steps to help.

Possible answers:

- Change in appearance (disheveled)
- Mood change (upset and agitated)

2. Interaction

How would you approach and interact with your neighbor ?

Helpful Tip: Keep the interaction casual and treat it like a conversation. make sure to focus on observable behaviors, ask open-ended questions, avoid giving advice, and be nonjudgmental

Initiate the conversation with a conversation starter.

- How are you doing ?
- Are you okay ? You don't seem like yourself lately.
- I know you're going through some stuff. I am here for you.
- I'm worried about you. How can I help ?
- Whenever you are ready to talk, I'm ready to listen

If they say that they do not want to talk, check back later in the day and try to talk again.

In your conversation with Alex, they tell you things have been difficult at work. They are very stressed and have become depressed.

3. Direction

What direction can you provide for your neighbor ?

Helpful Tip: Directions can be resources or self-help strategies. Together, find what works for them

Possible answers:

- Let them know you care and that you want to help
- Provide them with some mental health resources. If they are hesitant, offer to go through then together to find something that will work for them.
- Mention the Crisis Textline (**Text 4HOPE to 741-741**), 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline and local resources such as local or county helpline. If they are interested in a helpline offer to call with them so it is less intimidating.

Center for Public Policy & Health

Mental health self-help tools can be found at:

www.kent.edu/mhsu/help

For more conversation starters and practice scenarios visit:

www.kent.edu/mhsu/AID