

Helping A Fellow Zag

When we're having a hard time, the first place most of us turn is to family and friends. If you have friends who have come to you for help, the tips below can help you with those conversations.

Listen

- Take a break from what you are doing to focus solely on your friend and simply listen to what is being shared.
- Find a place to talk in private so they are able to feel more open to talking

Acknowledge

- Express interest, care, and concern. Make sure they know you are interested in what (s)he is sharing.
- Be cautious about promising confidentiality. If your friend shares that they are thinking about harming themselves or others, you need to get others involved. Talk with your friend about your limitations and be open to helping them get connected to others who are specially trained.
- Set and maintain healthy boundaries. You are a student, too. You can't take on the role of a counselor and you can't be available 24/7. Establishing boundaries is a healthy way to help your friends know when and how you are available to help them.
- Avoid criticizing or sounding judgmental.

Assess

- Ask open ended questions to help clarify.
- Help explore what options your friend may be open to for getting assistance (e.g. meeting with a case manager in the Center for Cura Personalis, scheduling an appointment with a counselor).

Refer

- Connect your friend to the appropriate resources. Consider walking them to the Center for Cura Personalis (729 E. Boone Ave.) or Health & Counseling Services during business hours where one of the professional staff can quickly assist.
- Don't ignore comments about suicide, violence, or harm to self or others. Call Campus Security and Public Safety immediately (509-313-2222), or ask someone around you to call while you stay with your friend.

Practice Self-Care

- Supporting a friend can have a big impact for you. These conversations can be very difficult or emotionally challenging. You may need to take time for yourself. Whether it's quiet time to reflect, going to the gym, or spending time with family, be sure to take care of yourself.
- If appropriate, it may be helpful to discuss these concerns with a professional staff member at the University who can support you or help you process the situation. Whether it's at the Center for Cura Personalis, Health & Counseling Services, University Ministry or another faculty or staff member who you trust, reach out for your own support and well-being.