



**Here for Recovery Month.
Here for Every Day.**

A guide for giving support

Are you concerned someone you care about is living with a mental health and/or substance use concern and not getting effective care? Rest assured, people can and do engage in successful treatment for behavioral health disorders. And support from family and friends can make a significant difference.

Here are some ways you can help:

Talk to them and show compassion.

Express your concern in a nonjudgmental way and tell them you're there to help. Create a supportive environment to foster conversation and openness. For example, start by saying something like this:

- "I've been worried about you. Can we talk?"
- "If not, who are you comfortable talking to?" And "How can I help you?"
- "I see you're going through something. How can I best support you?"
- "I care about you and am here to listen. Do you want to talk?"
- "I've noticed you haven't seemed like yourself lately. How can I help?"

Acknowledge their feelings.

Listen openly, actively and without judgment.



Be open.

Discuss your family history of mental health or substance use concerns, if relevant. It may help them feel less alone.

Offer to help seek support.

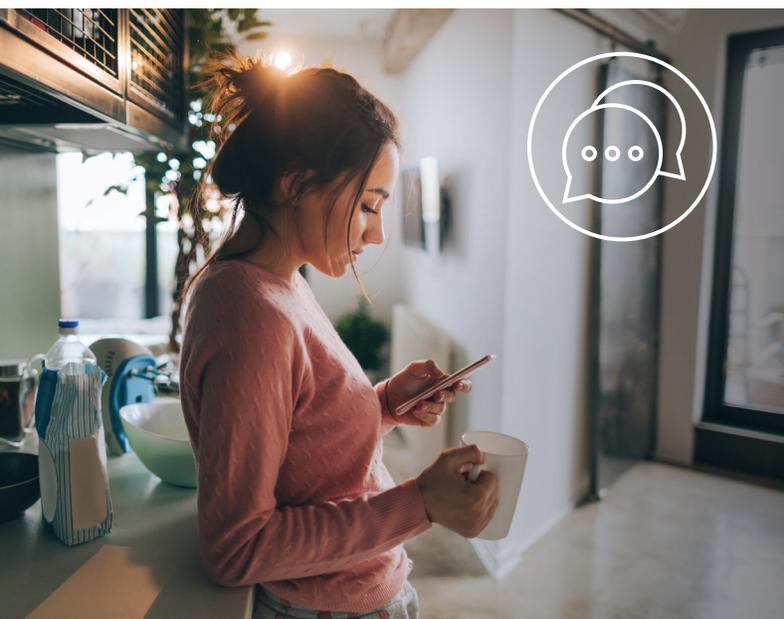
Provide reassurance that their condition is treatable. Help them locate resources and connect to treatment services. For example, call **1-800-662-HELP (4357)** for free and confidential information and treatment referral. Encourage getting an assessment to explore what the best next steps might be.

Be patient.

Helping someone get engaged and on the recovery path takes time. Continue reaching out with offers to listen and help.

Remember to take care of yourself too.

Being a caregiver can be stressful and emotionally draining for you. Take time for your own mental health and well-being.



Recovery. We're in this together.

Signs and symptoms

It's important to remember that mental health and substance use disorders are not character flaws or signs of weakness. They are common, often serious conditions that affect millions of Americans every year. It's also important to remember that they are treatable.

Substance use disorder

A substance use disorder can occur when drugs and/or alcohol are used repeatedly or to excess. The continued use causes significant negative effects on a person's life, including health problems, disability and failure to meet major responsibilities. Substance use disorder is a medical condition and can include the following:

- Not being able to quit or control your use of drugs and/or alcohol
- Making mistakes or not being able to do your main jobs at work, at school or at home
- Putting yourself in dangerous situations to use drugs and/or alcohol
- Stealing to afford access to drugs and/or alcohol
- Being arrested or hospitalized for drug and/or alcohol use
- Developing a tolerance and needing larger amounts of drugs or alcohol to achieve a high
- Experiencing relationship difficulties with significant others due to drug/alcohol use

Mental health disorders

Mental health disorders involve changes in thinking, mood and/or behavior. These illnesses are medical conditions, and they're a product of the interaction of biological, psychological and social factors. Some of the feelings and behaviors that may be experienced with a mental health condition include:

- Changes in eating and sleeping (eating too much or too little, sleeping too much or unable to sleep enough)
- Withdrawing from the people in your life
- No longer finding interest in things you once enjoyed
- Feeling confused, forgetful, angry, upset or on edge more than usual
- Feeling anxious, worried or scared more than usual
- Hearing voices
- Thinking of harming yourself or others or not wanting to live anymore

A complete evaluation conducted by a qualified mental health or substance use disorder provider is important, as many different conditions can display similar signs or symptoms.

For more information about Recovery Month, visit:

www.stampoutstigma.com/recovery



Need help now?

If you are experiencing thoughts of suicide or something else that is urgent or an emergency, **call 911** or **1-800-273-TALK (8255)**.

To connect with specialists trained in addressing substance use disorders, call the Optum Substance Use Disorder Helpline at **1-855-780-5955**. It's confidential and available 24/7.

This program should not be used for emergency or urgent care needs. In an emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest emergency room. This program is not a substitute for a doctor's or professional's care. Consult with your clinician for specific health care needs, treatment or medication. Due to the potential for a conflict of interest, legal consultation will not be provided on issues that may involve legal action against Optum or its affiliates, or any entity through which the caller is receiving these services directly or indirectly (e.g., employer or health plan). This program and its components may not be available in all states or for all group sizes and are subject to change. Coverage exclusions and limitations may apply.