

How to encourage someone to seek help

When a person you care about is going through a difficult time or has been out of sorts for an extended period, it's hard to watch and it's only natural to want to do everything you can to help him or her feel better.

While this person may feel very grateful to have your support, there's really only so much you can do as a friend, family member, or colleague. There comes a point where the person could really benefit from seeing a professional who can provide some unbiased advice and insight.

Treatments for mental illnesses are highly effective. According to the National Library of Medicine, only one out of three people who need help might actually seek it. Of that, the people who need help the most are typically the least likely to get it. People may worry about appearing weak if they seek therapy, or they may not even realize they really are sick.

Approaching the person and encouraging him or her to seek therapy can be a tricky situation. If done the wrong way, you could aggravate the person or turn him or her against the idea entirely. There is an effective way to have this conversation, but keep in mind that each person is unique, and what works for one person with mental illness may not be the solution for every person.

Nine steps to set up the conversation

1. Let the person know that you need to have an important conversation.
2. Pick a good time and a quiet place without other distractions.
3. Approach the person with empathy and consider using a phrase such as "If I didn't care about you, we wouldn't be having this talk."
4. Be prepared for the person to be upset, but try not to get defensive.
5. Use "I" statements such as "I'm concerned about you."
6. If the person has expressed concerns or frustrations to you, repeat these back to the person.
7. Avoid using words such as "crazy" or "abnormal."
8. Offer to help in the process of finding a therapist or counseling service and scheduling an appointment.
9. Remind the person that you care about him or her and are here to provide ongoing support.

As a friend, family member, or close colleague, you have a lot of power in helping the mentally ill person that you care about. Use it.

Help is available. For additional information, visit [MagellanHealth.com/MYMH](https://www.MagellanHealth.com/MYMH)

Source: Psych Central