

Express your concern and sympathy

- ★ Ask for more details about how he or she is managing. Really listen to the answers and continue the conversation. Make sure your friend understands that you honestly care.
- ★ Ask what you can do to help. You can leave this open-ended, or you can suggest specific tasks that might help your friend in his or her specific situation. Rides to medical appointments (or keeping the person company in the waiting room) can ease some of the anxiety and reluctance that people feel when faced with life-changing diagnoses.
- ★ You might also offer to help your friend with errands, but be careful not to be condescending or make the person feel inadequate.
- ★ Reassure your friend that you still care about him or her, and be sure to include him or her in your everyday plans—going out to lunch, catching a movie, taking a jog. If your friend resists, reassure and re-invite without being overbearing.
- ★ Remind your friend that mental illness is treatable. Find out if the friend is getting the care the friend needs and wants. If not, offer your help in identifying and getting the right kind of care.
- ★ If a friend needs immediate help for mental illness, ask them what kind of help they need and respond immediately. It is important to give them hope and encourage them to seek support, including calling a crisis line, or the National Suicide Prevention Line at **1.800.273.TALK**.
- ★ Encourage your friend to seek immediate medical attention if your friend tells you your friend is weak or ill from an eating disorder.

