

How can I support someone with mental health difficulties?

Be patient – getting better can take time. The best approach is to acknowledge that mental difficulties are common. Educate yourself about your friend's/relative's diagnosis. This can help you to know what to expect and to learn how to recognize the signs and how to offer help.

Avoid being judgmental, keeping an open mind may help to create a safe environment for your friend /relative which may mean they are more likely to relax and enjoy themselves.

Try asking what helps them when things are tough. By talking openly, you are letting the person know your love and support for them. You may like to talk about what you've read and ask how they feel about it. Resist the temptation to give advice or dismiss their concerns.

Ask what you can do to help. You can leave this open-ended "I want to know how I can best support you." You may not understand exactly how they feel, but showing that you care about them and want to help. Let them know they are important to you.

Many people with mental health difficulties tend to withdraw from family and friends. Continue to invite your friend to go to dinner, study, talk, or just hang out. Even if he/she doesn't always feel like talking or spending time together, it can be a comfort just to know that he/she has friends that care.

Support your friend's /relative's/students healthy behaviours. Certain strategies, such as getting enough sleep, eating healthy and exercising can be helpful when managing one's mental health. Know that alcohol and other drugs interfere with most psychiatric medications, making them less effective and, in some cases, dangerous.

What does Sussex Partnership NHS Foundation Trust do?

Sussex Partnership provides mental health care and treatment for people with conditions such as psychosis, depression, anxiety, and dementia and personality disorder in Sussex and Hampshire. Their specialist learning disability services provide community and inpatient care for people with complex health needs which can't be met by other services.

They have a number of services that provide very specialist care for people with complex health conditions and social care needs.

They provide care in people's homes, in specialist clinics, hospitals, GP surgeries and prisons. Their services are aimed at children, young people and adults of all ages and many are provided in partnership.

To find out more about Sussex Partnership, their services, how to get help or advice and support if you are a family, friend or carer please contact **Patient advice and liaison service (PALS): 01903 843022**

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www.sussexpartnership.nhs.uk