



# HOW TO Help a Friend



## Signs of Stress

If you have a friend that is stressed because of life challenges, you may notice them:

- Getting upset easily over small problems.
- Often getting angry and yelling for no reason.
- Feeling jittery or tired a lot.
- Having trouble focusing on tasks.
- Worrying too much about little things.
- Not feeling confident in what they can do.
- Having scary or sad thoughts that won't go away.
- Having a hard time making decisions and maybe missing chances because of it.

## Starting a Conversation

You can begin a conversation to support your friend by following three simple steps.

### STEP 1 – ASK:

- Notice and express concern without judgment. Ask if they want to talk.
- Example: "I've noticed ... and I am concerned. Would you like to talk?"

### STEP 2 – LISTEN:

- Give them time to talk and show empathy.
- Avoid saying things like "you'll get over it," "toughen up" or "you're fine".
- Use open questions like, "How did that feel?" and reassure them, "It's normal to feel this way in tough situations."

### STEP 3 – SUPPORT:

- Offer practical help within your means. Connect them with resources if needed.
- Respect their privacy unless safety is at risk (call 9-1-1 in emergencies).



For more information, call the Windsor-Essex County Health Unit at 519-258-2146 ext. 3100 or visit [www.wechu.org/mental-health](http://www.wechu.org/mental-health).