Supporting someone in Crisis
Recognizing the Signs

MENTAL HEALTH CONTINUUM MODEL

HEALTHY
- Normal fluctuations in mood
- Normal sleep patterns
- Physically well, full of energy
- Consistent performance
- Socially active

REACTING
- Nervousness, irritability, sadness
- Trouble sleeping
- Trouble energy, muscle tension, headaches
- Procrastination
- Decreased social activity

ILL
- Anxiety anger, pervasive sadness, hopelessness
- Restless or disturbed sleep
- Fatigue, aches and pains
- Decreased performance, presenteeism
- Social avoidance or withdrawal
- Excessive anxiety, easily enraged, depressed mood
- Unable to fall or stay asleep
- Exhaustion, physical illness
- Unable to perform duties, absenteeism
- Isolation, avoiding social events

ACTIONS TO TAKE AT EACH PHASE OF THE CONTINUUM

STEP #1

- Focus on task at hand
- Break problems into manageable chunks
- Identify and nurture support systems
- Maintain healthy lifestyle

- Recognize limits
- Get adequate rest, food and exercise
- Engage in healthy coping strategies
- Identify and minimize stressors

- Identify and understand own signs of distress
- Talk with someone
- Seek help
- Seek social support instead of withdrawing

- Seek consultation as needed
- Follow healthcare provider recommendations
- Regain physical and mental health

Supporting someone in Crisis
Actions and Words matter

DO:
- Start with your Heart to adjust your emotions - what do you want for them and your relationship with them long term?
- Make eye contact, come to their level and adjust your tone to show focus and compassion
- Explain you’re there to listen and help them find the next step together
- Validate their feelings eg. “I can see you care for your patients deeply and how much this is affecting you.”
- ASK if they are experiencing thoughts of suicide, ASK if they have a plan to harm themselves (consider emergency processes if needed)
- Take the next step with them using the resources provided (Step#3) - ensuring they know what you can and can’t do for them - while you are getting them the right help

DON’T:
- Ghost them, Avoid them, Ignore them
- Personalize their behaviour - how they are behaving right now is NOT an accurate reflection of who they are
- Blame or Shame - even if we have seen them make choices to go down this path
- Give immediate advice or attempt to solve the problem
- Presume to know what they are thinking or feeling
- Try to relate by sharing your own experience - this will minimize their suffering
- Make Decisions without their consent

Supporting someone in Crisis
Knowing your 24/7 Resources

STEP #3

Physicians / Residents/ Health care:

OMA Physician Health Program (24/7)
1-800-851-6606

PARO Resident Helpline (24/7)
1-866-HELP-DOC

CMHA - "Here for Healthcare" (24/7)
1-844-HERE-247

Anyone:

Wellness Together Canada (24/7)
Adults - text WELLNESS to 741741
Youth - text WELLNESS to 686868

Mental Health/Addictions - REACH OUT SERVICES
1-866-933-2023 OR 519-433-2023

Crisis Support Canada - National Suicide Prevention Support (24/7)
1-833-456-4566