

“Mental Health Support for Others” Raising Awareness - For All Saints Church Congregation

The details below are based on information from the ‘Mind’ Website. A link to their full website is included at the bottom of this document.

Many people experiencing a mental health problem will speak to friends and family before they speak to a health professional, so the support you offer can be really valuable.

What emotional support can I offer?

If someone lets you know that they are experiencing difficult thoughts and feelings, it's common to feel like you don't know what to do or say – but you don't need any special training to show someone you care about them. Often just being there for someone and doing small things can be really valuable. For example:

- **Listen.** Simply giving someone space to talk, and listening to how they're feeling, can be really helpful in itself. If they're finding it difficult, let them know that you're there when they are ready.
- **Offer reassurance.** Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. You can reassure someone by letting them know that they are not alone, and that you will be there to help.
- **Stay calm.** Even though it might be upsetting to hear that someone you care about is distressed, try to stay calm. This will help your friend or family member feel calmer too, and show them that they can talk to you openly without upsetting you.
- **Be patient.** You might want to know more details about their thoughts and feelings, or want them to get help immediately. But it's important to let them set the pace for seeking support themselves.
- **Try not to make assumptions.** Your perspective might be useful to your friend or family member, but try not to assume that you already know what may have caused their feelings, or what will help.
- **Keep social contact.** Part of the emotional support you offer could be to keep things as normal as possible. This could include involving your friend or family member in social events, or chatting about other parts of your lives.

What can I do if it's an emergency?

There may be times when your friend or family member needs to seek help more urgently, such as if they:

- have harmed themselves and need medical attention
- are having [suicidal feelings](#), and feel they may act on them
- are putting themselves or someone else at immediate, serious risk of harm.

If they are not safe by themselves right now

Stay with them and help them call 999 for an ambulance, if you feel able to do so. Or you could help them get to A&E. They may appreciate it if you can wait with them until they can see a doctor.

If they can keep themselves safe for a little while

You can get quick medical advice by contacting [NHS 111](#) in England, or [NHS 111 Wales](#) (in Wales, you can select option 2 for urgent mental health support). Or you could help them make an [emergency GP appointment](#) to see a doctor soon.

You can also encourage them to call [Samaritans](#) on [116 123](#) to talk to someone, 24 hours a day. Or you could suggest they try another [helpline or listening service](#).

It may also help to remove things they could use to harm themselves, especially if they have mentioned specific things they might use.

If you or others feel in danger right now

You can call 999 and ask for the police to help. You might feel worried about getting someone in trouble, but it's important to put your own safety first.

If you're not in a situation like this right now, but you're worried someone you care about may experience a mental health crisis in the future, it's a good idea to make a crisis plan with them to work out what steps you will take to help them in an emergency. See the Mind website pages on [planning for a crisis](#) for more information.

How can I look after myself?

Supporting someone else can be challenging. Making sure that you look after your own wellbeing can mean that you have the energy, time and distance to help someone else. For example:

- **Take a break when you need it.** If you're feeling overwhelmed by supporting someone or it's taking up a lot of time or energy, taking some time for yourself can help you feel refreshed.
- **Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling.** You may want to be careful about how much information you share about the person you're supporting, but talking about your own feelings to a friend can help you feel supported too.
- **Set boundaries and be realistic about what you can do.** Your support is really valuable, but it's up to your friend or family member to seek support for themselves.
- **Remember that small, simple things can help,** and that just being there for them is probably helping a lot.
- **Share your caring role with others,** if you can. It's often easier to support someone if you're not doing it alone.

For more helpful information and support – please find below a link to the 'Mind' Website:-

<https://www.mind.org.uk/information-support/guides-to-support-and-services/seeking-help-for-a-mental-health-problem/helping-someone-else-seek-help/?n=@>

Please be aware of our Church Safeguarding Policy and Procedure, available on our website. If you have any safeguarding concerns relating to members of our congregation, please notify the Safeguarding Team as soon as possible at the following email address - safeguarding@allsaints.church.