1. **Awareness**
   Look for signs of distress

   Signs of distress can present in school or work, appearance, and behavior.
   **Some examples include:**
   - Loneliness
   - Zoning Out
   - Anxiousness
   - Irritability
   - Mentions feeling hopeless
   - Not acting like themselves
   - Increased substance use
   - Lack of self-care/self-harm

2. **Interaction**
   Reach out and talk with the person in distress

   *Remember that you don’t need to be an expert.*
   **Some tips to remember include:**
   - Let the person know that you care about them
   - Be respectful, compassionate, empathetic, and nonjudgmental
   - Keep it casual and listen
   - Ask open-end questions
   - Avoid offering advice or trying to fix their problems
   - Explain that you will keep the conversation confidential, but that if they plan to hurt themselves or others you have to tell the appropriate person
   - Check in with the person

3. **Direction**
   Provide options for help

   *Avoid giving advice. Instead provide options for the person.*

   **National Resources**
   - Crisis Text Line: Text HOME to 741-741
     - Confidential access to live crisis counselors through text messaging.
   - National Suicide Prevention Hotline: Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
     - Confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones.
   - The Trevor Project: Call 1-866-488-7386 or text START to 678-678
     - Crisis intervention and suicide prevention for LGBTQ young people.
   - Call 911 if there is an emergency
   - Contact your local Mental Health Board and/or Health Department for local mental health resources.

**Hear to Help**

Hear to Help is a campaign from Kent State University to help identify anyone who has taken a mental health awareness training.

[www.kent.edu/mhsu/H2H](http://www.kent.edu/mhsu/H2H)
Practice Scenario

You are grocery shopping and run into your neighbor, Alex. You notice that Alex, who is normally very well put together, looks very disheveled (messy hair, stained clothes, etc.). When you say hello, Alex seems upset and agitated. Your gut tells you something is off. You have completed A.I.D. training and feel like you have confidence to talk to your neighbor.

What do you do?

1. Awareness
What do you notice about your neighbor that indicates they might be in distress?

Helpful Tip: You are not a mental health professional and do not need to diagnose someone with a mental health disorder or illness. Your role is to connect the dots enough to recognize that the person is having a problem and take the necessary steps to help them.

Possible Answers:
- Change in appearance (disheveled)
- Mood change (upset and agitated)

2. Interaction
How would you approach and interact with your neighbor?

Helpful Tip: Keep the interaction casual and treat it like a conversation. Make sure to focus on observable behaviors, ask open-ended questions, avoid giving advice, and be nonjudgmental.

Initiate the conversation with a conversation starter.
- How are you doing?
- Are you okay? You don’t seem like yourself lately.
- I know you are going through some stuff. I am here for you.
- I’m worried about you. How can I help?
- Whenever you are ready to talk, I’m ready to listen.

If they say that they do not want to talk, check back later in the day and try to talk again.

In your conversation with your Alex, they tell you things have been difficult at work. They are very stressed and have become depressed.

3. Direction What direction can you provide for your neighbor?

Helpful Tip: Directions can be resources or self-help strategies. Together, find what works for them.

Possible Answers:
- Let your neighbor know that you care and that you want to help them.
- Provide them with some mental health resources. If they are hesitant, offer to go through them with together to find something that will work for them.
- Mention the Crisis Textline (Text 4HOPE to 741-741) and local resources such as local or county helpline. If they are interested in a helpline, offer to call with them so it is less intimidating.

Center for Public Policy and Health
Division of Mental Health and Substance Use
Mental health self-help tools can be found at: kent.edu/mhsu/help

For more conversation starters and practice scenarios visit www.kent.edu/mhsu/AID