**A.I.D.**

awareness. interaction. direction.

Center for Public Policy and Health  
Division of Mental Health and Substance Use

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### Awareness:
Look for signs of distress

Signs of distress can manifest amongst academics, appearance, and behavior.

- They don’t like hanging out as much
- Their mind seems to be elsewhere
- They are so anxious, they cannot relax
- They haven gotten negative about life
- They are not acting like themselves and are more irritable than usual
- They are taking more risks than usual
- They talk about feeling hopeless
- They seem to be angry or sad for little or no reason
- They are taking more drugs or drinking more
- They are harming themselves

### Interaction:
Reach out and talk with the person in distress (you don’t need to be an expert)

- Explain to the person that you are going to be confidential but if they plan to hurt themselves or others you have to tell an appropriate person
- Let the person know that you care about them and want what is in their best interest
- Keep it casual and treat it like a conversation
- Ease into the conversation, it is okay if they are not ready to talk
- Listen up and let them take the lead
- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid offering advice or trying to fix their problems
- Be respectful, compassionate, and empathetic
- Tell them you will not judge them
- Check up on the person occasionally and be someone they can rely on

### Direction:
Provide options for help

- Avoid giving advice and instead provide options that the person will likely pursue

#### Resources (local & national)

- Step Up Speak Out ([www.kent.edu/stepup speakout](http://www.kent.edu/stepup speakout)) includes a wide range of mental health resources for students
- The Counseling Center in White Hall  
  330-672-2208 (free)
- Psychological Clinic in Kent Hall  
  330-672-2372 (fee of $5.00)
- Psychological Services in DeWeese Health Center (takes insurance)
- Crisis Text Line, text *4hope to 741-741*
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline, call  
  800-273-TALK (8255)
- University Police Services, for emergency, call 911, non-emergency call 330-672-2212
- Speak and report to a “Pro-Staff” about student in distress

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**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/H2H](http://www.kent.edu/H2H)
"Conversation starters" for interacting with students in need

- Are you okay? You don’t seem like yourself lately.
- I know you are going through some stuff. I’m here for you.
- I’m worried about you and would like to know what’s up so I can help.
- Whenever you are ready to talk, I’m ready to listen.

PRACTICE SCENARIO

Alex is a very well-liked person in your hall, with lots of friends, extracurriculars, and a partner who they spend a lot of time with. Over time, though, they start to become more withdrawn, quits most of their extracurriculars, and seems gloomy. This is unlike them, so you become concerned. You have completed A.I.D. training and feel you have the confidence to talk to them. What do you do?

DIRECTION: What direction can we provide to Alex?

Reminder(s): Directions can be resources or self-help strategies. Together, find what works for them.

Possible answer(s): Alex, I care about your well-being. During tough times it is helpful to use resources so you can take care of your mental health just like you would your physical health if you caught the flu. I know of a variety of resources that are helpful. Let’s pick a couple together that you think will work for you. Did you know there are a variety of on-campus mental health options? People seek a counselor, therapist, or other medical professionals for many different reasons and for different amounts of time; for example, a counselor can provide relationship help about a loved one. Fortunately, many people experience the feelings you are having and with some guidance you learn skills to help you be strong. This is available in the Counseling Center in White Hall for free. Want me to call with you to get an appointment or we can walk over together. There is also a free, anonymous text line, if things ever get really bad, a trained professional can help you through, text 4HOPE to 741-741. Know that I am here to listen and help you any time.'

AWARENESS: What do you notice about Alex that indicates they might be in distress?

Reminder(s): We are not mental health professionals, we don’t need to diagnose someone with a mental disorder/illness, we just need to connect the dots enough to recognize a person is having a problem and then take the necessary steps to help them.

Possible answer(s): change in behavior and personality, quitting things they used to like and not replacing them with something else, withdrawing from friends

INTERACTION: How would you approach and interact with Alex?


Possible answer(s): “Hi Alex, do you mind if we chat?” If they say yes then continue, if they say no then try to talk again later in the day. “I’ve noticed you aren’t attending [insert extracurricular] and seem gloomy. How are you doing?” Alex confides in you that their partner has been pressuring them to quit their activities and distance themselves from their friends to spend more time with them, and that they don’t feel happy in their relationship anymore.

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