

This is the BENICE program and website is below

<https://www.benice.org/>

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## notice

notice what is right and good about someone so you can notice when something is different about the way that person is thinking, acting, or feeling- their mental health!

***Below are signs and symptoms of a mental illness like depression or anxiety. A change in someone's behavior, physical appearance, or psyche lasting two weeks or longer could be a developing mental health concern.***

## behavioral

- Quitting favorite sport/hobby
- Avoiding social interaction
- Sudden/unlikely drug or alcohol use
- Cry frequently for no reason
- Neglect responsibilities, loss of motivation
- Can't sleep or sleep constantly

## physical

- Lack of hygiene, personal appearance
- Fatigue, lack of energy
- Overeating or loss of appetite
- Weight loss or gain
- Headaches
- Unexplained aches or pains

## psychological

- Acting out, aggressive, quick to anger
- Heightened sadness, guilt, indecisiveness
- Lack of emotional responsiveness

- Frequent self-criticism
- Hopelessness, loneliness
- Thoughts of death or suicide

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## invite

The second step of the be nice. action plan involves taking a risk and reaching out. If you notice changes lasting two weeks or longer, it's time to invite yourself to check in with that person or open up to someone you trust if you are personally struggling.

**Eight out of ten people considering suicide give some sign of their intentions.**

### **invitation to connect:**

- social connection improves mental, physical, and emotional well being.
- individuals who feel more connected to others have lower levels of anxiety and depression along with higher self esteem and greater empathy for others.
- a sense of belonging is a human need. Illnesses like depression can be a lonely journey and feelings of prolonged isolation can have detrimental effects to our health - mental and physical. Feeling like you belong is an important aspect in seeing your value in life and coping with painful emotions or situations.

### **invitation for change:**

- invite yourself to make a change in your school, workplace, or community to create a healthier environment by implementing mental health education and awareness.

### **invitation for conversation:**

- Invite yourself to tell the individual you are concerned using an "I" statement. "Can we talk? I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately, and I'm really worried about you."
- invite yourself to listen with empathy and understanding. Be patient - it could be the first time this person is opening up about their mental health.



## challenge

The challenge step takes on a number of roles; challenge the stigma surrounding mental illness and treatment, challenge yourself or an individual to get help, and challenge yourself to ask the tough questions.

**More than 90% of people who die by suicide have a mental health condition.**

### challenge stigma

- be open when talking about mental health! Don't let stigma create self doubt and shame.
- be conscious of language. Don't use mental illness as an adjective..."He's so bipolar."
- be supportive! Show compassion for individuals with mental illness.
- be aware. Educate yourself with the basics of mental health and complete the **be nice**. Pledge. Knowledge creates the confidence to take action!

### Signs someone is in crisis

- Feeling helpless, hopeless, or worthless
- social isolation
- quitting something they previously loved like a sport or hobby
- increased irritability or rage
- giving away their belongings or saying goodbyes

### Getting help

- If you or someone you know is feeling suicidal, call 9-1-1. A trained professional will be dispatched to help come up with a plan to keep you alive.
- If you need to talk to someone about how you're thinking, acting, or feeling call the Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-8255 (TALK). They are available 24/7 and the call is anonymous. They are trained listeners ready to lend an ear. There is always someone willing to help.

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## empower

empower yourself and others with the knowledge that YOU can have an effect on how a person thinks, acts, and feels. be empowered with the knowledge that there are resources to help and there is always hope.

**Two in five Americans sometimes or always feel that their relationships are not meaningful (43 percent) and they are isolated from others.**

## Protective Factors

- Identifying at least one trusted person in your life
- Access to and utilizing services
- Being involved in activities and groups at or outside of school or work
- Supportive family members, friends, and coworkers
- Having self-awareness
- Positive role models, outlook on life, and/or attitude
- Faith

## Coping with depression or anxiety

- be active! There are plenty of ways to exercise without hitting the weights or running a marathon. Find something you enjoy and stick to it!
- be healthy. Your nutrition plays a major role in your overall health - mental and physical. Balanced meals and staying hydrated fuel your body and mind in a positive way.
- sleep matters! You need to be recharged every day, and without sleep, your body and mind will eventually shut down. Make 8-10 hours a night a priority for maintaining good health.
- be safe. Avoid harmful substances and realize that drugs or alcohol are not healthy ways to cope with stress. They may feel good in the moment, but they can be dangerous in the long run.