



## Supporting a Friend – Tips for students by students

Worried about a friend, family member or acquaintance? Here are some tips that may help you to best help them!

### What **to do**:

- Stay calm! (even if you don't feel it on the inside) and just be yourself
- Trust your gut- if you feel that something is going on for your friend, be honest and express your concerns directly
- Thank them for opening up and sharing with you, it takes a lot of strength to do so
- Practice what you want to say ahead of time with someone else, or in front of the mirror!
- Be genuine, honest, non-judgmental and reassure them you are there and want to help
- Ask open questions to get them talking. "how was that for you?", "Tell me more about that"
- Avoid burnout. Seek professional help for yourself. Fit in self care & draw clear limits to how you can help them

### What **not to do**

- Don't lecture, listen instead. Being a good listener means asking questions, and knowing when to be silent
- Don't ask why. It can put them on the defensive. Rephrase to open questions
- Don't worry about saying the wrong thing. Just you being there is making an incredible impact!
- Stay away from advice; try to empower them to come up with their own solutions. They are their own experts
- Empower by providing them with options, then check in to what they want to do
- Avoid "you" statements. Use "I" language instead. *E.g. "I'm worried about your safety" not "you're out of control"*
- Don't take it all on yourself! Connect them with helpful resources or professionals

### Conversation starters:

- "I've noticed some things lately that have me concerned..."
- "I just wanted to check in and see how you've been doing..."
- "You haven't been yourself lately, is everything alright?"

### How to bring up your personal limits:

- "I want to help you as best I can, but I'm starting to feel burnt-out..."
- "I am definitely here as a friend, but feel a professional may be best equipped to help with..."
- "In order to help you, I need to take care of myself first..."

### Helpful Resources:

- 24/7 Edmonton Distress Line.....(780) 482-4357
- Canadian Mental Health Association. ....(780) 482-6576
- 211 Edmonton.....211
- 24/7 Mental Health Helpline.....1-877-303-2642
- 24/7 Addictions Helpline .....1-866-332-2322
- Peer Support Centre.....Helpline: (780) 492-4357
  - *We can sit down and talk about how this is affecting you, and can connect you with excellent campus & community resources!*