



# How to Support a Loved One with a Mental Health Diagnosis

*Supporting a loved one through mental health challenges can feel overwhelming, but it's important to care for both their well-being and your own. This guide offers practical steps to help you navigate the process.*



# reliancematrix

A MEMBER OF THE TOKIO MARINE GROUP



## 1

### UNDERSTAND YOUR LOVED ONE'S DIAGNOSIS & WELLNESS PLAN

#### Open Communication

- Engage in open and supportive conversations with your loved one. If possible, join them in a therapy session to better understand their diagnosis.
- With their consent, the therapist can provide insights into your loved one's mental health needs and challenges, and guide you on how to support them effectively.

#### Create an Action Plan

- Work with your loved one and their therapist to develop a clear action plan for distress situations.
- The plan can include:
  - Recognizing symptoms and triggers
  - Identifying when to step in with support
  - Establishing practical strategies that benefit both you and your loved one in times of distress.

## 2

### HOW TO SUPPORT YOUR LOVED ONE

#### Offer Observations, Not Diagnoses

- You don't need to diagnose your loved one, but it can be helpful to share your observations with them, like noticing changes in behavior (e.g., trouble sleeping, increased stress).
- Encourage them to seek help, but don't force it—just express your concern and willingness to assist.

#### Be Supportive with Concrete Actions

- Offer practical support like:
  - Watching their favorite movie together
  - Going for a walk
  - Making them a favorite meal
  - Simply being there to listen
- Encourage them to reach out for professional help if they haven't already. You can offer to help them contact their treatment team or start the conversation if they're unsure how.

# 3

## PREPARING FOR A CRISIS

### Develop a Crisis Plan Ahead of Time

- Planning ahead is crucial, as it's difficult to think clearly during a crisis. Work with your loved one to create a clear crisis plan if possible. This can reduce anxiety and help you feel more prepared.
- If a joint plan isn't feasible, make your own plan to manage potential crises, focusing on:
  - Protecting the person, yourself, and others
  - Knowing when to intervene or when to call for professional help

### Understand the Range of Symptoms

- Not all mental health symptoms require immediate intervention. Symptoms can vary in intensity, and it's important to assess the situation carefully.
- Having open discussions when your loved one is not in distress helps clarify their needs and reduces uncertainty in emergencies.

# 4

## WHAT TO DO IN AN EMERGENCY

### When to Call 911

- If your loved one threatens self-harm or harm to others, it is critical to call 911 or seek immediate medical attention.
- Ensure they are safely taken to a hospital or emergency facility for proper evaluation.

# 5

## SUMMARY OF STEPS FOR SUPPORT

### In Crisis:

- Call 911 if there is an immediate risk of harm.
- Ensure your loved one's safety and seek professional help.

### In Non-Crisis Situations:

- Open discussions about symptoms and feelings can help both of you understand what support is needed.
- Create an action plan for future situations to prevent confusion during distress.
- Ask how you can assist in their treatment and recovery process.

### Care for Yourself:

- Seek support through counseling or your Assistance Program to maintain your well-being.
- A therapist can provide insight and help you manage your emotions while supporting your loved one.



## REMEMBER

Supporting a loved one with a mental health diagnosis is a long-term commitment, but you don't have to do it alone. Use available resources, keep open lines of communication, and prioritize your own mental health as well.

Find guidance and support at  
[allonehealth.com/reliance-matrix](http://allonehealth.com/reliance-matrix)  
Call: 855-775-4357  
Code: RSLI859