Iowa State Multicultural Greek Council

Supporting Our Members’ Mental Health

Occasionally feeling anxious and sad are part of life and part of the college experience. However, anxiety and depression as well as other mental health issues are very common among college students. In 2012 the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) completed a nation-wide survey in which 27% of the respondents had been diagnosed with depression, 24% with bipolar disorder, and 11% with anxiety disorders.1 Mental health is part of an individual’s wellbeing. As members of the Greek Community we are obligated to help our community by becoming knowledgeable about mental health and helping each other get treatment.

What are some common mental health issues?

This is a list of common mental health issues that you as a leader may see. Keep in mind that this list is not exhaustive:

* Anxiety Disorders – A constant feeling of worry, fear, or uneasiness
* Depression – Feeling sad, uninterested, low energy, or empty inside
* Eating Disorders – Skipping meals or making excuses not to eat. Persistent worry or complaining about being fat
* Bipolar Disorder – alternating periods of elevated mood and depression

Signs Someone Might Need Help

Here is a short list of potential red flags that you or someone you know may need help:

* Feeling very sad or withdrawn for an extended period (crying, fatigue, unmotivated)
* Out of control, risky behaviors that could harm themselves or others
* Severe mood swings
* Repeated abuse of drugs or alcohol
* Sudden intense fears for no reason. Could also accompany racing heart of fast breathing

Very Important, Keep in Mind

You are NOT a therapist, do not try to be one. It is great to support them, but do not attempt counseling them. Be careful not to hold yourself accountable for their actions.

Helping Someone during a Panic Attack2 3

These are some guidelines to help someone who is having a panic attack:

* Move the person to a quiet, private place
* Express empathy and understanding
* Don’t minimize the severity of the attack
* Avoid shaming the individual
* Stay calm and speak in short sentences

Helping Someone with Depression4

* Encourage them to stick with their treatment and keep appointments
* Let them know you want understand how they feel
* Avoid judging, giving advice, or opinions Just listen
* Remind them of their positive qualities and how much they mean to you
* Help create routines to relieve stress
* Make plans together or with a group

What to do if someone is Considering Suicide5

* If they are in immediate danger to themselves or others, call 911 immediately
* Contact ISU Police, Student Counseling, or another trusted authority
* Encourage them to get help from a professional ASAP

Iowa State Student Counseling Services:

515-294-5056

* Encourage them to call a suicide hotline

National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:

800-273-TALK (800-273-8255)