



**If they're feeling down,  
you can help lift them up.**

## How to Help a Friend

If you notice someone is stressed, having a difficult day, experiencing emotional pain or having a mental health need, you can start a conversation and respond in a way that may make all the difference in the world. For many situations, you don't have to be an expert to help – you just have to be there.

Listen actively and respond compassionately by keeping in mind the acronym V-A-R: **Validate** their feelings, **Appreciate** their courage in sharing their struggles with you and **Refer** them to skills and support. Learn more and find sample conversations at [ActiveMinds.org/var](https://ActiveMinds.org/var)

If you hear a friend mention the word suicide or suggest they are considering hurting themselves, it's critical to help them seek professional help. Keep in mind that the Crisis Text Line (text "BRAVE" to 741-741) and the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline (1-800-273-TALK) are available to people in distress, and their supporters 24/7. Learn more about how to recognize the signs and start a conversation [SuicidelsPreventable.org](https://SuicidelsPreventable.org).

And, always take care of yourself as well. You are doing the right thing by looking out for your friends, and it can be challenging.

