

A group of diverse young people, including students and staff, are smiling and looking towards the camera in a hallway. The image is overlaid with a yellow filter. In the background, a sign on a door reads "285 AUDITORIUM".

**SOMEONE I KNOW IS
STRUGGLING WITH
ANXIETY AND/OR
DEPRESSION
CHECKLIST**

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When you are supporting someone with anxiety and depression, it can be overwhelming. So, remember to look after yourself too, and seek support when you need it. (Love you real big!)

First: For strengthening mental, emotional and relational health, download the free + anonymous Be Strong App. If you stay ready, you don't have to get ready, and when those tough moments happen, be courageous enough to take action. People in crisis need a friend who knows how and where to get help, and you can be that bridge with the Be Strong App.

CHECK IN WITH LOVE

LEAN IN

- **“You haven't been yourself lately – is everything OK?”** Don't hesitate to talk to someone you are worried about. Your care and love may make all the difference.
- **“I've noticed that you're not going out with us as much, is something going on?”** Raise the topic in a way that feels comfortable to you. There is no right or wrong way to say that you're concerned. Just be genuine.
- **“Would you like to talk with me about what's happened? I'm worried about you.”** Explain why you are concerned. What have you noticed that has left you feeling worried about them? (Their mood, the way they've been acting, lack of appetite, disengaged, etc.)
- **“OK, but you know you can talk to me if you ever need to.”** They may not want to talk about it yet, but at least they know you care and are willing to have the conversation when they're ready.

TRUSTED EAR

- **“Just take your time, there is no rush. I know talking about this can be difficult.”** Encourage them to talk about what’s going on (how they feel, what they’re thinking, what’s been challenging them).
- **“I can hear that the last few months have been really terrible for you. Thank you for trusting me, please tell me more about it.”** Take time to listen and try to understand their experience. Everyone’s experience is unique. Recognize and validate what they are feeling.
- **“How are you feeling about that? How’s that affecting you?”** Resist the temptation to offer solutions, give advice, make assumptions, or diagnose their problem. The most helpful thing you can do is listen.
- **“What’s that like for you?”** Help them to feel at ease and follow their lead. The silence may make you feel uncomfortable at first, but it allows for you both to gather your thoughts.
- **“Can I just check that I have understood you correctly?”** Be non-judgmental if they share things that are hard to hear, or things you don’t understand. Remember, you don’t need to be an expert; you need to be a friend.

BE SUPPORTIVE - NOT AN EXPERT

- **“I know it can be hard to talk about this – thank you for trusting me with it.”** Keep what they tell you private (unless they’re at risk of hurting themselves or someone else).
- **“Does it feel like you have to deal with this on your own? I’m here for you. Things can get better. It takes hard work, but I know you can do it.”** Reassure them they are not alone and there is hope that things can get better.
- **“I want to help but I’m not an expert, so tell me when I’m getting in the way.”** Be patient, help them to overcome the idea of getting help, and point out any improvements you see. Celebrate that they did choose to speak with you about it.
- **“What can I do to support you?”** Check your understanding of the situation and what you might be able to do to help get them to the right support.
- **“What have you tried already? Have you thought about seeing your doctor or speaking with a therapist?”** Help them explore their options for feeling better. You could suggest they contact their doctor or download the Be Strong App and show them how to use the immediate help options and local resources. Remind them that mental health is a journey. You’re not with them as an expert, but a friend, through the journey.

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What if they deny there is a problem or don't want to talk?

Accept that they might not be ready to talk. Tell them you're someone they can talk to if they ever want to. Instead of talking about the issue, focus on staying in touch and doing things together that might make them feel less alone. If you're still concerned over time, look for opportunities where they might be more receptive to the conversation. You could also suggest other people that they may prefer to talk to, such as a friend who has experienced anxiety or depression, or text with a counselor on the Be Strong App.

*Remember, you don't want them to feel pressured and it's their personal choice to talk about it or not. If these are younger people, they are going to need a parent for a doctor or professional.

What if they won't see a professional?

Try to understand that it can take time for people to be ready to talk to a professional. The word alone can be intimidating. You might not agree but be respectful of their decision. Reassure them that they are not alone and plant the seed that professional support is available when they are ready. Discuss with the person how you can help, such as taking them to the appointment, or finding a health professional they feel comfortable with. 50% of therapy doesn't work because the therapist is a bad match for the patient. Keep in touch with them.

*Don't make your care for them conditional upon seeing a health professional.

GET HELP NOW

If you or someone you know needs help immediately, take one or more of the following actions:

- Stay with them while you assist them in getting help.
- Open the Be Strong App, go to the immediate help section and send a text to the crisis counselor about what is happening.
- If you do not have the Be Strong App, move to the next step.
- Text START to 741-741 (immediately connected to a crisis counselor)
- Call 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Bring your friend or loved one to the nearest hospital emergency room.
- If someone is agitated or potentially violent, avoid putting yourself in a personally dangerous situation – call rather than bringing someone to the hospital yourself.
- Call 911
- Contact your campus counselor or other mental health professional.



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