

***It's Not Contagious: Connecting With
Customers Who Have Mental Health Problems***

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1. HOW TO RECOGNIZE SYMPTOMS

- Severity of an illness equals the amount of disruption to one's life it causes
- Disruptive behavior that seems erratic or illogical
- Decreasing hygiene
- Increasing agitation
- Delusions of grandeur
- Constantly speaking down to oneself
- For teens behaviours normal to puberty may be mistaken for mental health illness

2. MAINTAIN APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

- Have another staff member present when discussing inappropriate behavior
- Speak to the person, not the illness
- Include the person in decision making for their well-being
- Do not give personal information

3. WHAT YOU CAN DO

- Develop a working relationship
- Be confident
- Lead by example
- Learn your local resources
- Make contact with local resources

4. HELPFUL THINGS TO SAY

- I am concerned about you.
- I am right here with you.
- How long have you been feeling like this?
- Have you spoken to anyone about this before?
- Is something bothering you?
- You haven't been to the library lately-are you OK?
- Would you like me to call someone for you?
- For teens ask "Have you told an adult how you are feeling?"

5. MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES

- American Psychological Association apa.org
- Children's Mental Health Resource Center mentalhealth4kids.org
- Crisis Text Line crisistextline.org
- DBSA (Depression Bipolar Support Alliance) dbsalliance.org
- Mental Health America www.mentalhealthamerica.net
- Mental Health Resources, Inc. mhresources.org
- Police Department (Emergency) 911
- PsychCentral psychcentral.com/resources/
- NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness) namivirginia.org
- Narcotics Anonymous na.org 1-800- 777-1515
- National Suicide Prevention Hotline 1-800-273-TALK
- Substance Abuse, Mental Health Admin <http://store.samhsa.gov/home>