

# 10 Questions Someone Struggling With Mental Illness **Wishes You Would Ask**



When a friend or family member is struggling with their mental health, it can be tough to know what to do or say. Here are 10 questions you can ask that go beyond, “How are you?”

## **How Are You Feeling?**

Start out with easy, open-ended questions. You can encourage them to expand on their answer by noting some specific things you’ve noticed. “I’ve noticed you [quit the basketball team/lost interest in gaming/have been sleeping more/etc.] How are you feeling?”

## **How would you like things to be different?**

Sometimes, distressing thoughts take the form of wanting things to be different. Someone may regret the decisions they’ve made in the past or be unhappy with where their life is at the moment. Asking this question may encourage them to talk about those thoughts.

## **Is There Anything You Want To Talk About?**

This is another open-ended question that can get people talking. If you know of any specific life events that may be distressing the person, ask directly.

You can say something like:

“I know you recently [broke up with a partner/had a divorce in the family/lost your job/lost a loved one/etc.] Anything you want to talk about?”

## **How are you sleeping?**

Sleeping a lot more or less than usual is a common sign of mental health concerns.

## **How is your appetite?**

Drastic appetite changes are often because of a mental health condition.

## **Have you called a helpline?**

Ask your loved one if they’ve called or have considered calling a helpline, like the 988 suicide line.

## **CAN I RUN AN ERRAND FOR YOU OR HELP YOU WITH SOMETHING ELSE?**

If your friend can’t think of ways you can help, make some suggestions. Offer to run errands or help them with a project.

## **IS IT OK IF I CHECK IN ON YOU LATER THIS WEEK?**

Ask if it’s ok to check in with them later and make sure that if you say you will check in, that you do.

## **CAN I LOOK UP SOME INFORMATION AND RESOURCES FOR YOU?**

If your loved one isn’t familiar with any lifelines or other resources, ask if you can do a little research for them.

