

## What to do in a Crisis

Monitoring and responding to symptoms in a timely manner may prevent the development of a crisis.

Encourage an individual to follow up routinely with their health care provider regarding symptoms or side effects.

Seek direction before situations escalate. Family education groups or training such as Mental Health First Aid or ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) can provide the knowledge and skills to intervene before situations escalate to crisis proportions.

Contact crisis services for support:

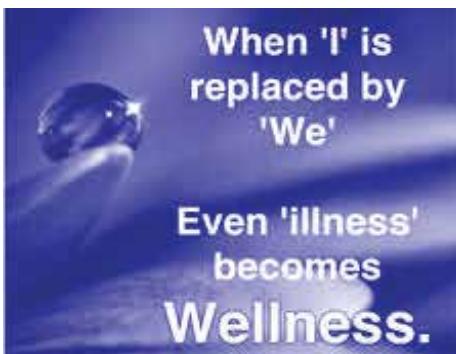
**Crisis Assessment and Support Team**  
(CAST) provides 24/7 mental health crisis support  
for people aged 16 and older.  
**1-866-487-CAST (2278)**

**Child and Youth Crisis Service**  
Haldimand-Norfolk REACH  
24/7 service for children, youth and their families who are experiencing a mental health crisis.  
**1-866-327-3224**



When supporting someone else it is also vitally important to remember to care for yourself. Make sure to take time to do things you enjoy, socialize with others. Talk about how you feel, join a support group. Be realistic about what you can and cannot do. Pace yourself and manage your stress.

Not caring for yourself makes you vulnerable to becoming physically ill or mentally exhausted. Maintaining your own wellness is critical for being able to support someone else. Self-care is not selfish behaviour.



For general information visit the Mental Health & Wellness Collection at the Norfolk County Public Library, Simcoe branch or visit [www.ncpl.ca](http://www.ncpl.ca) for books, videos and DVDs on mental illness/health, addiction and recovery.

Reviewed and recommended web sites:

[www.anxietycanada.ca](http://www.anxietycanada.ca)  
[www.camh.net](http://www.camh.net)  
[www.cmha.ca](http://www.cmha.ca)  
[www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca](http://www.drugandalcoholhelpline.ca)  
[www.nedic.ca](http://www.nedic.ca)  
[www.mooddisorderscanada.ca](http://www.mooddisorderscanada.ca)  
[www.problemgambling.ca](http://www.problemgambling.ca)  
[www.ptsdassociation.com](http://www.ptsdassociation.com)  
[www.schizophrenia.on.ca](http://www.schizophrenia.on.ca)  
[www.suicideprevention.ca](http://www.suicideprevention.ca)



Training opportunities:

[Mental Health First Aid](#)  
[Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training](#)

Pamphlet provided with support from:

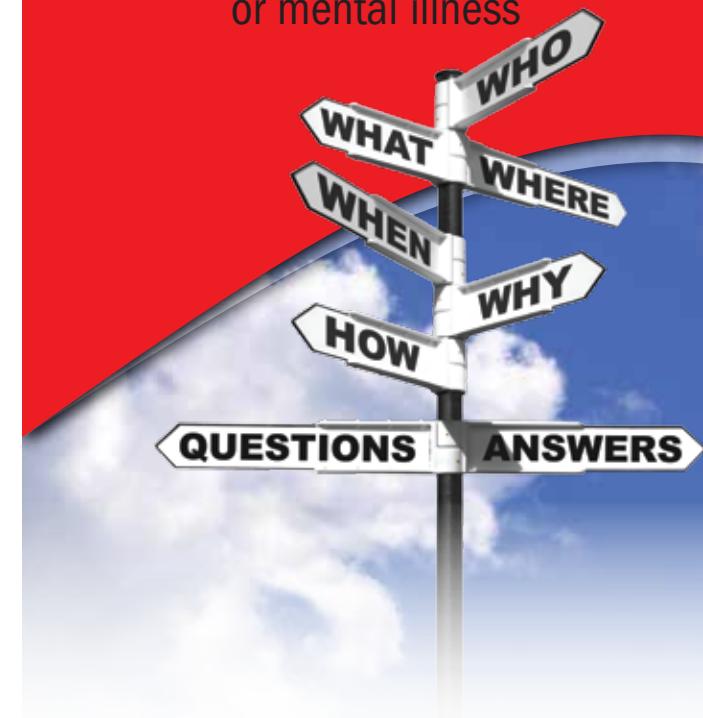


For additional information or pamphlets contact:  
Community Addiction and Mental Health Services

Wellness & Recovery Centre 1-877-909-4357 x2

# Providing SUPPORT

for those living with addiction  
or mental illness



**Working hand in hand for  
wellness and recovery**



Community Addiction and Mental Health Services of Haldimand and Norfolk  
**Achieve Mental Health  
Wellness & Recovery Centre**

Dedicated to the enhancement of our community through the provision of addiction and mental health services that promote and support wellness.

## The First Hurdle

Major mental illnesses rarely appear “out of the blue.” Most often family, friends, teachers, or the individual themselves recognize that “something is not quite right” about their thinking, feelings, or behavior before an illness appears in its full blown form. Being informed about warning signs, can lead to early intervention that can help reduce the long term impact and severity of an illness BUT stigma, shame, fear, denial, and other factors often prevent individuals or their families from seeking help. However, just as with other medical illnesses, early intervention can make a crucial difference in reducing the impact of what could become a lifelong and potentially disabling mental illness or substance use disorder.



It's important, especially for families, to know that they did not cause the disorder and they cannot cure it. Assuming you can 'fix' the problem can negatively impact the ways in which you interact with those living with an illness and generate frustration for everyone.

**There are people, who the more you do for them, the less they will do for themselves.**

Doing too much for an individual may undermine their sense of control over their life and diminish their self esteem and hope. Individuals living with a disorder need to have realistic expectations placed upon them by others and by themselves as a foundation for recovery and wellness.

## Providing Support

Supporting someone with a mental illness may present some practical and emotional problems from time to time. There is no right or wrong way to support someone;



how you provide support will depend on you, the person you are supporting and the challenges they are facing. There are however some tips and suggestions which you might find useful.

**Open dialogue** about what is happening is critical as a foundation for providing positive, ongoing support. Unanswered, anger about the presence of the illness, guilt, confusion or a sense of loss or grief at how a person has been changed by the illness will all impact one's capacity to offer support. It is important to acknowledge and talk about the feelings.



**Educate yourself** about the illness. Not knowing results in misinformation and roadblocks to providing effective help. Research has shown that families who have developed enhanced illness knowledge have family members who have reduced symptoms, hospitalization days and relapse. Knowledge and education is also vitally important for the person being supported as self stigma and believing in myths can significantly impact their wellness and recovery.



## Providing Support

When living with a mental illness individuals may feel they have lost control over their lives, feel judged or stigmatized or may struggle with their self esteem... providing support with realistic expectations and appropriate limits can help to address these feelings.

**Set realistic expectations.** Expectations will have a significant impact on recovery. With mental illness, as with any medical illness, allowing time to regain wellness is imperative. Trying to do too much, too soon will likely have negative results - disappointment, frustration, loss of confidence. Self doubt will undermine hope and leave individuals feeling unable to successfully manage their illness and achieve recovery. Too few expectations, or an 'I can't' attitude will also undermine hope and cause an individual to 'freeze' and fail to move forward. Stepping in to do for the individual may get the task done but will not serve to encourage and support the individual to take control and move forward.



**Set appropriate limits.** Mental illness is not an excuse for 'bad behaviour'. It is appropriate and necessary to set limits to ensure that choices made by the individual and their behaviours do not disrupt the home, impact others or cause harm or risk to the person.

**Recognize courage.** It takes courage to battle the symptoms of mental illness and to seek and stay in recovery, acknowledge this effort.

# Support for Wellness and Recovery