Struggling with mental health is very common. For some, there are blatant and overt signs of struggle, for others the signs may be very subtle. With the exception of some cases of accidental death or spontaneous death by suicide, there are fundamental indicators of struggle we should be able to recognize.

Mental health challenges are experienced differently from individual to individual, and those suffering will act, express, and interact differently.

**WHAT ARE THE SIGNS OF STRUGGLE?**

**WHAT DOES IT LOOK LIKE?**
- Feeling worthless, withdrawn, helpless, or overwhelmed
- Loss of hope for future or sense of futility
- Loss of interest in previously enjoyed activities
- Feelings of guilt, self-blame, or self-hatred
- Isolation or loss of interest in friends
- Fear of losing control, hurting oneself or others
- Mood changes, irritability, agitation, or apathy
- Poor school performance, attendance, or motivation
- Complaints of physical symptoms (ex. stomachaches)
- Anxiety over schoolwork, money, relationships, or illness
- Pressure towards perfectionism or high self-criticism
- Change in sleep, insomnia, or difficulty getting out of bed
- Suicidal ideation, talk, plans, or statements

**WHAT DOES IT SOUND LIKE?**
- “It’s all my fault... I hate myself.”
- “Everyone would be better off if I wasn’t here.”
- “I don’t care anymore. Just leave me alone, things will never get better.”

**While all of these are important to consider, pay close attention if there are signs of:**
- A recent loss: death, divorce, separation, job, finances, status, or self-esteem
- Drug and alcohol use, increased risk-taking behavior, or impulsivity
- Self-harming behaviors, unexplained wounds, use of band aids, inappropriate clothing for weather
- Preoccupation with death or morbid topics, and/or an ambivalence towards living
- Suicidal gestures: statements, making a plan, giving away personal possessions, putting affairs in order