



## *Know Someone Who Is Struggling?*

### **HOW TO HELP TOOLKIT**

- ⇒ Signs & Symptoms
- ⇒ Communication Tips
- ⇒ Sample Dialogue
- ⇒ Information about COLAP

### **SIGNS & SYMPTOMS**

- ⇒ Irritability, short-temper, withdrawn, isolating
- ⇒ Disheveled appearance or compromised personal hygiene
- ⇒ Missed court appearances, appointments, or deadlines
- ⇒ Declining work product, absenteeism, tardiness
- ⇒ Confusion or difficulty focusing
- ⇒ “Ghosting” or avoiding clients, co-workers, friends, family
- ⇒ Non-sensical, hyperbolic, or excessively negative communication
- ⇒ Repeating the same information without awareness
- ⇒ Poor motor coordination
- ⇒ Impaired judgement, self-sabotaging or reckless behavior
- ⇒ Disregard for the well-being of others
- ⇒ Self-medicating with substances (drugs or alcohol) or processes (gambling, shopping, eating, etc.)

### **CONVERSATION TIPS**

- ⇒ Explain why you are concerned, using examples of behaviors you have noticed.
- ⇒ Be non-judgmental and do not blame the person for their situation.
- ⇒ Let them know you care and are willing to listen.
- ⇒ Be prepared to hear difficult or upsetting information.
- ⇒ Turn off technology to prevent interruptions.
- ⇒ Do not diagnose, problem solve, or second guess their feelings.
- ⇒ Do not promise confidentiality, especially if the person is thinking about harming themselves or others, or if there has been professional misconduct.
- ⇒ Ask what you can do to support them.
- ⇒ Reiterate that they are not alone.
- ⇒ Offer to assist them in finding resources like COLAP.

## SAMPLE DIALOGUE

- ⇒ I've noticed you seem (unhappy, on edge, etc.) lately, and I'm worried about you.
- ⇒ Take your time, there is no rush. I know talking about this can be difficult. Thank you for trusting me enough to share.
- ⇒ You don't have to deal with this on your own. I'm here for you. Things can get better.
- ⇒ I want to help but I don't want to interfere, so tell me how I can best support you.
- ⇒ Would you like me to call COLAP with you or get you their contact information?

## FEELING HESITANT?

If you are having a hard time starting a conversation, call COLAP and we will consult with you about the situation. COLAP has a heightened level of confidentiality; we cannot identify the concerned caller, and we cannot release any information about the person we reach out to.

## IF THERE IS A SUICIDE RISK

If the person might be suicidal, ask if they are thinking of harming themselves. Research shows that asking this question does not cause or create suicidal thoughts that did not already exist. If the situation is urgent and they are in immediate danger, do not leave them alone unless you fear for your own safety. Dial 911, call the Suicide Hotline at 1-800-273-8255, or take the individual to the nearest emergency room.

## ABOUT US

COLAP is the free, confidential, and independent program for Colorado's legal community. Our mission is to promote well-being, resiliency, and competency in the legal profession. We provide a variety of resources to help individuals mitigate professional stressors and address personal concerns. Pursuant to [Rule 254](#), all communications with COLAP are privileged and confidential.

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