



Supporting Someone who is Struggling

Jordan Friesen, O.T. Reg. (MB)
Mindset Mental Health Strategy



Chat Panel

**What are you hoping to get out of
today's session?**

Questions we'll answer today:

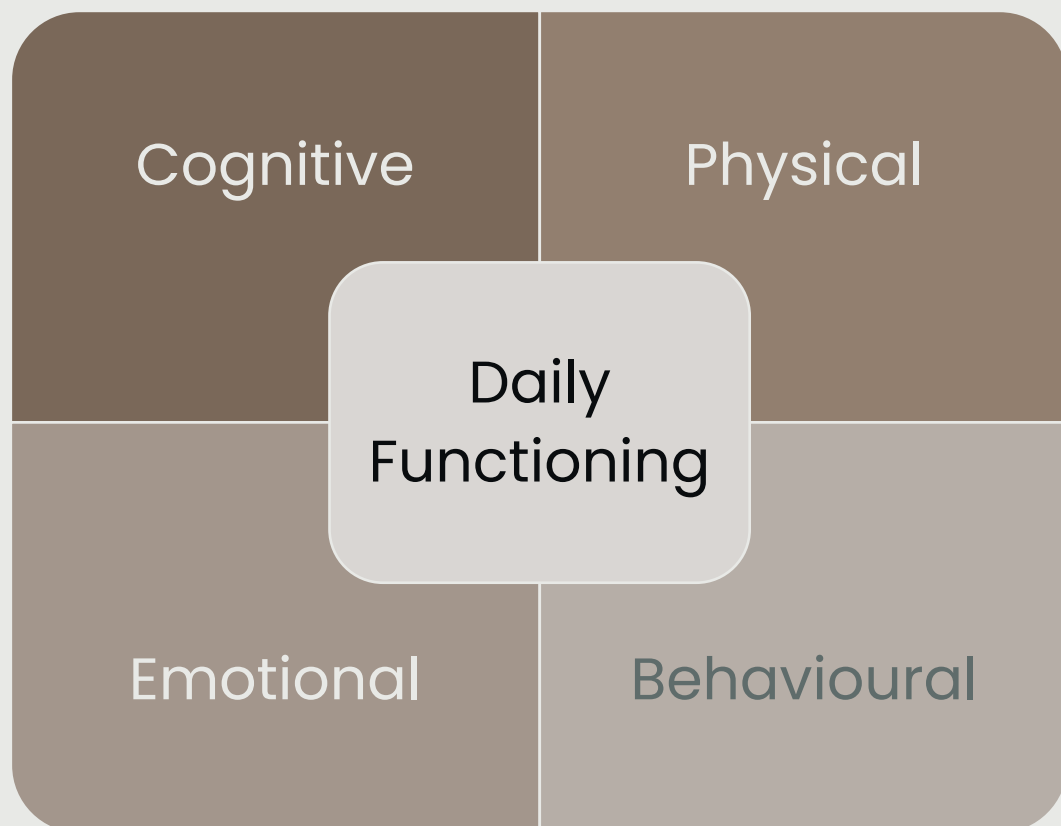
- What is mental health and how can I talk about it?
- How can I tell if someone I care about is struggling?
- What should I say and do to help?
- Where can I direct them for more help?

Mental Health Continuum

Healthy	Reacting	Injured	Ill
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stable mood• Calm/confident• Good concentration/focus• Physically and socially active• Sleeping well	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nervousness or irritability• Sadness, impatience• Distracted• Trouble sleeping• Decreased activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness• Negative attitude• Difficulty concentrating• Intrusive thoughts• Restless, fatigued	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Excessive anxiety• Depressed mood• Cannot concentrate, diminished cognitive function• Suicidal thoughts• Cannot fall asleep or stay asleep

Source: Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2017). *Mental Health Continuum Model*.

Signs of Struggle



Look for changes in:

- Their routines or habits
- The way they present themselves
- The way they talk about themselves
- The feelings they are expressing

What to say and do.

1. Say what you see

- Describe the changes you've observed
- Avoid making assumptions

Intense	Long-lasting	Negatively affecting
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stronger and more persistent than the usual ups and downs	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Typically a period of two weeks or more	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Their relationships, routines, or responsibilities

Source: Jack.org (2021) *Be there basics*. www.bethere.org

2. Show genuine human concern and care

- Make time and space for a conversation
- Clear away distractions
- Express your appreciation and care for them, based on your relationship
- Ask “How can I help?”
- Offer practical support (life stuff!)

3. Do more listening than talking

- Your goal is to understand their experience, even if it doesn't make sense to you
- Pay attention to your non-verbal language
- Use an empathy first approach
- Thank them for sharing whatever they're comfortable with

Remember OARS for Active Listening

Open-ended



- How do you feel?
- What does that mean?
- What helps?

Affirmation



- Thank you for sharing
- I'm so glad you're talking
- It means a lot to me...

Reflecting



- You seem to be feeling...
- Do you feel...?
- I can see...

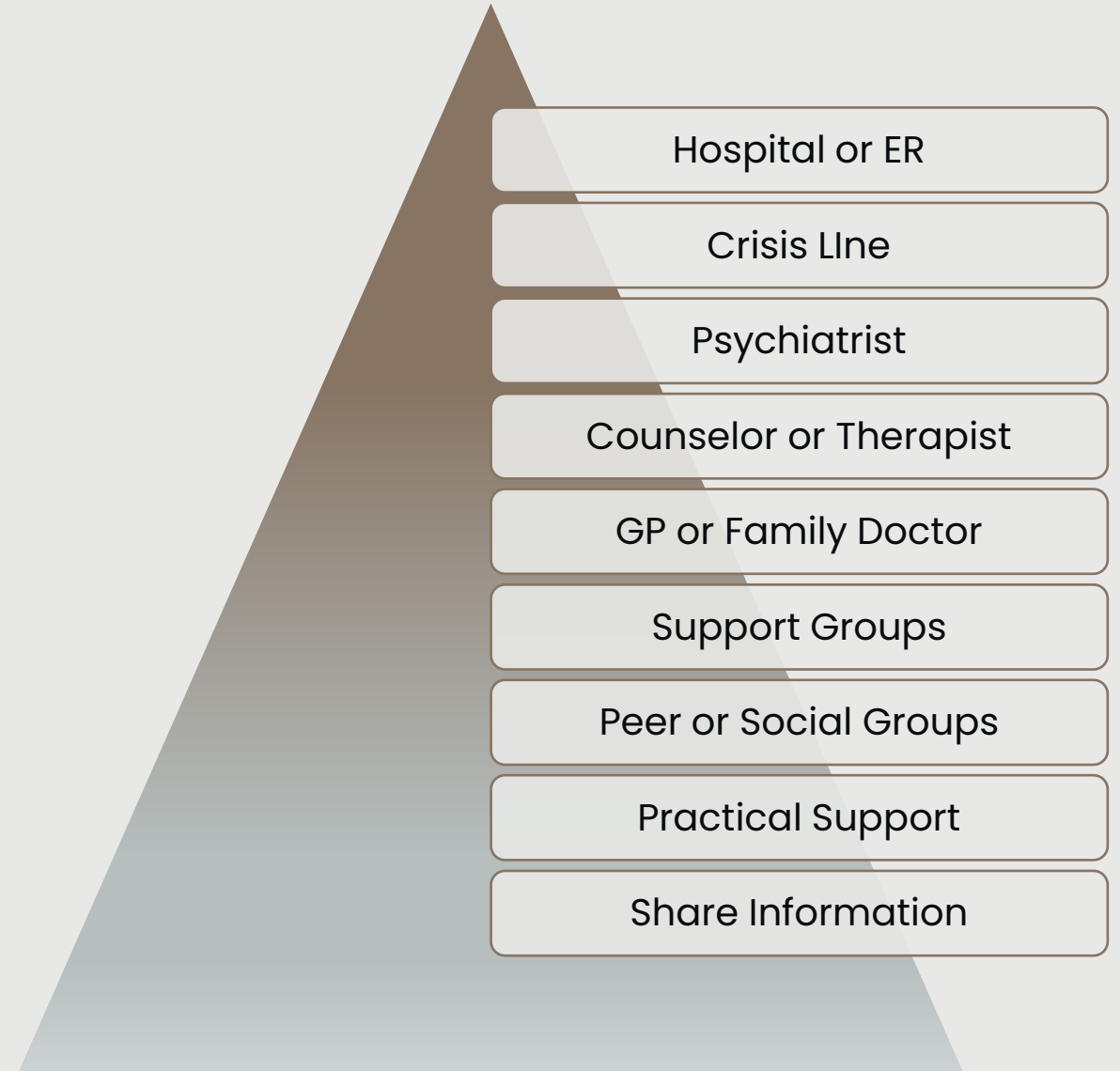
Summarizing



- Let me see if I've got this
- I get it...
- What I heard was...

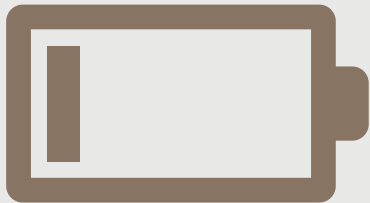
4. Connect to help

- Your job is to be one support of many
- Offer suggestions, not advice
- Go with them
- Follow up
- Share what has helped you (if applicable)



5. Look after yourself

- Set boundaries for what you can do to help
- Don't try to be a counsellor or therapist, maintain your role
- Remember, they care about you too!
- Be mindful of your own mental health or “battery level”



5 Tips to Support Someone who is Struggling:

1. Say what you see
2. Show genuine care and concern
3. Do more listening than talking
4. Connect to help
5. Look after yourself

What if it doesn't help?

What if it doesn't help?

- Own what's yours, not what's theirs
- Stay optimistic and hopeful for them
- Keep throwing spaghetti at the wall



Recognize and respond to needs for immediate help:

- Expressing thoughts of suicide or self-harm
- Unable to meet their basic needs, or those of their family
- Disconnecting from reality

Useful Resources

- [Bethere.org](https://www.bethere.org/) – 5 Golden Rules
- [CMHA Ontario](https://www.cmha.on.ca/) – Supporting a Loved One

Need help now?

- [Crisis Services Canada](https://www.crisisline.ca/) – 1-833-456-4566 (Text 45645)
- [Kids Help Phone](https://www.kidshelp.org/) – 1-800-668-6868 (Text 686868)

Questions?

Ask me anything about mental health.



MINDSET

MENTAL HEALTH STRATEGY