

*R'fuat HaNefesh R'fuat HaGuf:*  
Healing of the Body and Spirit – Caring for the Whole Person  
Caring Committee Shabbat Service on April 1, 2016

Just as physical illness is found commonly in our communities, mental health issues also effect 1 in 6 members of the general public.

It is likely that someone you know, a family member, friend, colleague or acquaintance, has at some time struggled with mental health issues.

Below is some material on how to be helpful during a difficult time:

**When a person with a mental illness:**

is withdrawn

is overstimulated

becomes insecure

is fearful

**You need to:**

initiate relevant conversation

limit input, do not force discussion

be accepting

stay calm

**When symptoms or medications  
cause behaviors such as:**

disorientation

stress in ordinary situations

trouble remembering

unsound judgment

**You need to:**

keep to a known, structured routine

slow down, and perhaps repeat;  
use simple, short sentences

create an uncomplicated,  
predictable environment

remain rational and reinforce  
common sense

**When a person with a mental illness:**

**You need to:**

is not grounded in reality

listen for kernels of truth, or wait for a better time

believes delusions

avoid arguing

displays little empathy

recognize this as a symptom; try not to respond in kind

has difficulty making contact

make direct contact and keep the initiative

seems totally lacking in self-esteem and motivation

affirm the person's value; treat accomplishments positively

**When a person with mental illness:**

**You can:**

shows a talent such as music, writing, or art

be open to the person sharing with you

retains an inborn generosity

acknowledge the gifts (which may not always be monetary)

expresses an interest in his or her illness and its consequences

learn together

wants to have a serious discussion

remember, even the most severely

ill are rational as much of the time as they are psychotic

Adapted from Caring for the Soul: *R'fuat HaNefesh* A Mental Health Resource and Study Guide (edited by Richard F. Address, UAHC Press, 2003)

Visit the Shir Hadash Library Caring Committee section for this and other helpful resources