

## what's this?

This display is here to help everyone practice how to help a friend who is struggling with their mental health.

**speak up**

**act louder!**

## why?

Teens often turn to their friends or peers when struggling with their mental health before an adult, but some don't reach out because they're afraid of being a burden. If you practice how to help a friend and what to say, you can feel more confident reaching out first to a friend who might need you. You could help save a life.

## what do I say?

When checking in on a friend, it's best to come from a place of **understanding and empathy**. Instead of saying something they might feel is judgmental ("You're acting weird") **you can say what you see** ("I noticed you haven't been coming to practice lately" or "It seems like you've been quieter than usual"). Then **let them know that you care about them** and are there to listen ("I'm here if you need anything" or "I care about you and I want to help.")

If they don't feel comfortable talking about their struggles, that's okay - just let them know that you're there if they ever want to talk & **offer to go with them to talk to someone else** (i.e. school counselor, favorite teacher, or other friend). Remember - you can be there for your friends but **you can't do it all, and they might need more than you can give**. You can help start the conversation and help them get the help that they need.

**so what would you say if you got the text on the poster from your friend?**