

## *Working with people who have a mental illness*

- **Focus on their goals, strengths, skills and resources rather than their illness.**
- **Treat them with the same respect you would others.**
- **People with mental illness are usually experts on their own needs, so if you have any questions about what will make them most comfortable, ask them first.**
- **Relax. A sincere commitment to being inclusive will compensate for most mistakes.**

***Significant indications of a possible mental illness include:***

- **marked personality change over time,**
- **confused thinking; strange or grandiose ideas,**
- **prolonged severe feelings of depression or apathy,**
- **feelings of extreme highs or lows,**
- **heightened anxieties, fears, anger or suspicion; blaming others,**
- **social withdrawal, diminished friendliness, increased self-centeredness,**
- **denial of obvious problems and a strong resistance to offers of help,**
- **dramatic, persistent changes in eating or sleeping habits,**
- **substance abuse,**
- **thinking or talking about suicide.**

## *Things to Remember about Mental Health*

- Mental health treatment is most effective (e.g., makes you feel better sooner) when your care is **holistic**.
- Your mental health has a **direct and measurable** impact on your physical health and overall well-being.
- Knowing and learning more about yourself is the best investment you can make today.
- We are still learning about the mind, much as we were learning about the heart 200 years ago.
- The first professional you go to for treatment is often **not the one** you will receive treatment from.
- Your doctor or therapist **doesn't know everything** about your condition or the best treatment for you. You may know more than he or she does (especially if you've been living with the condition for a long time, or the condition is rare).
- **You may be your own best (but secret) treatment provider.**
- **Mental health care is not always affordable, timely, or easy to access.**

## ***Signs of Depression***

- fatigue
- unhappiness
- excessive forgetfulness
- irritability
- propensity for crying spells
- indecisiveness
- lack of enthusiasm
- withdrawal

## ***How to Support a Valued Employee Who Is Managing Mental Illness:***

- Accommodations
- Participating
- Providing workshops
- Offering an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)