

# FACE *t h e* FIVE | Signs to Notice

Living with a chronic or rare disease, or caring for someone who is, can take a real toll on mental health. These “Five Signs” offer a common language for noticing emotional struggle and responding with compassion, especially when someone may not have the energy to ask for help.

## THE 5 SIGNS

## WHAT IT CAN LOOK LIKE

## WHAT CAREGIVERS CAN SAY

1



### PERSONALITY CHANGES

*May seem different, showing behaviors that don't match their usual self.*

- Stressed-out or checked-out
- Often anxious or depressed
- Acting unlike their usual self
- Eerily “at peace” or joyful after a hard stretch, which can be a warning sign

“I’ve noticed that lately when we talk or hang out, you seem distant and not like your usual self.

Can you tell me more about what’s going on? I want to find ways to support you.”

2



### UNUSUALLY ANGRY, ANXIOUS, OR MOODY

*May struggle with frequent mood swings.*

- Lashing out or angry outbursts
- Panic attacks
- Always in “crisis mode”
- Strong reactions, with or without a clear trigger

“I can’t imagine how stressful that must be. It sounds like you’re having a really tough time dealing with all of this. I want to understand what you’re going through.

Can you tell me more about how you’re feeling?”

3



### WITHDRAWAL OR ISOLATION

*May pull away from family and friends, a sign they need support and understanding.*

- Not answering texts or calls
- Needing to be alone
- Sleeping much more than usual
- Skipping plans or rarely leaving home
- Avoidance when questioned

“I’ve noticed you haven’t been answering my texts like you used to, and you’ve been spending more time alone. It’s okay to take time for yourself, but you don’t have to do this alone. I’m here if you need someone to talk to.”

4



### NEGLECTING SELF-CARE OR RISKY BEHAVIOR

*Financial strain, physical limits, and distress can lead to neglected self-care.*

- Reckless spending
- Drinking or substance use
- Neglecting hygiene or appearance
- Big changes in weight or sleep
- Letting daily tasks slide

“This might be hard to talk about, but I’ve noticed you’ve been drinking more [or name what you’ve noticed] lately, and I’m concerned about you.

I’m here for you. Would you feel comfortable talking about it?”

5



### OVERWHELMED BY CIRCUMSTANCES AND HOPELESS

*May feel extreme or prolonged grief, worthlessness, or guilt.*

- Saying “There’s no point” or “It’s hopeless”
- Shutting down emotionally
- Giving things away or making end-of-life plans
- Talk of suicide or self-harm

“I know it can be hard to open up, and I want you to know I’m here for you.

I’ve noticed you’ve been really struggling lately, and I care about you. Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself or ending your life?”

For US residents: In crisis? Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) or call 911.