Tips for Caring Confrontation

Talking candidly with the individual regarding your concern for his or her well-being will often bring the problems out into the open.

As you talk with your friend, the American College Health Association and the Mayo Clinic advise the following:

- **Take the person aside and talk to him / her in private.** Try to give the other person your undivided attention. Just a few minutes of listening might enable him or her to make a decision about what to do.

- **Be honest and direct. Share what you have observed and why it concerns you.** For example: "I've noticed that you've been missing class a lot lately and you aren't answering your phone or text messages like you used to. I'm worried about you."

- **Listen carefully and with sensitivity. Listen in an open minded and nonjudgmental way.** Do not criticize or shame, as feelings of depression cannot be helped. Do not try to “cheer up” the individual.

- **Note that distress often comes from conflicting feelings or demands.** Acknowledge this, and from time to time, paraphrase what the other person is saying. For example: "It sounds like on the one hand, you very much want to please your family but on the other hand, you aren't sure that what they want for you is what you really want to do."

- Do not sympathize and claim that you feel the same way as he or she does.

- Try not to get angry with the individual.

- **Suggest that the person see a professional — a mental health provider such as a licensed counselor or psychologist.** A NU student can contact CAPS for these services.

- **Follow up.** Let the person know that you'll be checking back with him or her later to see how things turned out.

Your primary objective is to let the person know you are concerned and willing to help.

If feelings appear to turn to thoughts of suicide or harm to others, urge the individual to seek professional help. If the person resists such a suggestion and you feel that suicide is likely — contact 911 or CAPS immediately. Seek professional help yourself, so you will know how to best handle the situation.

Students at the Northwestern University can contact CAPS at:

**Phone #** (including after-hrs): 847-491-2151  
**Address:** Evanston: 633 Emerson St., Evanston, IL 60208  
Chicago: 710 N. Lake Shore Dr., Chicago, IL 60611