

## Behavioral Health Symptom Management Guide

Condition	Symptoms	Empathic Connections	Management Tools
<p><b>Depression</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feeling sad or depressed most of the time</li> <li>• Feeling little or no pleasure from anything</li> <li>• Doing anything takes lots of effort</li> <li>• Feeling hopeless, worthless &amp; bad about oneself</li> <li>• Hard to concentrate &amp; make decisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Are there days you don’t feel like getting out of bed &amp; doing anything?”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It sounds like it takes a lot of effort to do everything. That must make it hard to get things done.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It must be frustrating to be unable to make important decisions because you have such a hard time concentrating.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that depression is a treatable medical condition</li> <li>• Share your concerns about the impact of depression on the client’s health &amp; quality of life</li> <li>• Be specific about how symptoms become barriers to feeling better &amp; meeting other life needs</li> <li>• Gently encourage to seek treatment</li> </ul> <p>Motivate towards treatment by saying:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“What thoughts have you had about getting help?”</i></li> <li>• <i>“You may not believe it now, but the way you’re feeling can change.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“I can’t understand exactly how you feel, but I do care &amp; want to help.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Tell me what I can do now to help.”</i></li> </ul>

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<p><b>Suicidal Thoughts</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Talking about suicide</li> <li>• Getting the means to harm oneself</li> <li>• Becoming more isolated</li> <li>• Feeling hopeless</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I care &amp; I’m worried, because you appear to be at risk of hurting yourself.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The pain you describe sounds unbearable to you, which is why I’m worried about what you might do.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Life sounds really hard for you right now. I care &amp; am concerned &amp; want to see if there’s some way we can make it better.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Negotiate a no-harm contract in manageable timeframes—an hour, overnight, etc.</li> <li>• Know &amp; follow your agency’s policies &amp; procedures</li> <li>• Encourage talking to a MH professional</li> <li>• Encourage to call family, friends, local suicide prevention or helpline in the interim</li> <li>• Continue to keep checking in &amp; re-contracting until threat has passed or client receives MH treatment</li> <li>• <i>“Let’s slow things down &amp; think about what we can do. Can you sit here for an hour while I check on some resources?”</i></li> <li>• <i>“We’re going to close soon. Can you promise me you’ll call the suicide prevention line tonight if you feel like hurting yourself? I’ll be in tomorrow at 9:00 AM. Can you call me then or would you rather I called you to make sure you’re all right?”</i></li> </ul>

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<p><b>Under the Influence</b></p>	<p><u>Physical Signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Bloodshot eyes or dilated or smaller pupils</li> <li>• Deterioration of personal grooming &amp; appearance</li> <li>• Unusual smells on breath, body or clothing</li> <li>• Tremors or impaired coordination</li> <li>• Slurred speech</li> <li>• Agitation &amp; restlessness</li> </ul> <p><u>Emotional Signs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sudden mood swings</li> <li>• Irritability or angry outbursts</li> <li>• Agitation or hyperactivity</li> <li>• Lethargic or “spaced out”</li> <li>• Fearful, anxious or paranoid for no apparent reason</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“I get that being high makes you feel better right now. It’s also making it hard for you to focus so that I can get the information I need to get you the services you asked for.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“You’re unsteady on your feet &amp; I’m afraid you’re going to hurt yourself if you don’t sit down.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm, reassuring &amp; firm</li> <li>• Avoid arguing or provoking the client</li> <li>• Show concern for their safety &amp; comfort</li> <li>• If unsteady, have client sit down to avoid injury</li> <li>• Be prepared to repeat what you say often</li> <li>• Look for a workable compromise to have client remain safe &amp; then return when sober to address issues or to link to other services or treatment</li> </ul>

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Anxiety</b></p> <p><b>Panic Attacks: Sudden onset Peaks within 10 minutes</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Purposeless, restless activity to release emotional tension—pacing, talking, crying, etc.</li> <li>• Overwhelming worry or self-conscious about social situations or life events</li> <li>• Inability to stop thinking about worrisome things &amp; relax</li> </ul> <p><u>4 or more of the following:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Pounding heart, rapid or irregular heart rate</li> <li>• Sweating, hot flashes or chills</li> <li>• Trembling or shaking</li> <li>• Feeling short of breath, smothering or choking</li> <li>• Chest pain or discomfort</li> <li>• Feeling dizzy, lightheaded or unsteady</li> <li>• Fear of losing control, going crazy or dying</li> <li>• Stomach distress or nausea</li> <li>• Numbness or tingling</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“What you just described sounds overwhelming. It must be difficult to decide what issue to deal with first.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It sounds like your life is really stressful right now &amp; that all that stress is making it hard for you to take care of yourself.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“That’s a lot to be dealing with all at once. No wonder you’re having trouble sleeping &amp; getting any rest.”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm—don’t take on the client’s anxiety</li> <li>• Use deep breathing &amp; muscle relaxation to calm the client</li> <li>• Help contain the anxiety by keeping the client focused on one thing at a time</li> <li>• Challenge &amp; reframe unhelpful thoughts</li> <li>• Set &amp; complete 1 or 2 goals at a time</li> </ul>

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<p style="text-align: center;"><b>Trauma</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repeatedly thinking about &amp; reliving the trauma</li> <li>• Persistent avoidance of internal &amp; external reminders, including “forgetting,” numbing &amp; self-medicating</li> <li>• Being constantly alert &amp; on guard</li> <li>• Feeling of detachment or mistrust of others</li> <li>• Difficulty falling or staying asleep</li> <li>• Irritability or angry outbursts</li> <li>• Difficulty concentrating</li> <li>• Physical symptoms—headaches, back pain, dizziness, stomach problems, etc.</li> <li>• Mental health issues—panic attacks, depression</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“After what you’ve been through, I can see how it would be hard to trust people. It’s a way of protecting yourself.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“If I ask you something that makes you uncomfortable or anxious, let me know &amp; I’ll stop. If I sense you’re uncomfortable, I’ll check in with you before continuing. Will that work for you?”</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Set &amp; maintain clear rules &amp; boundaries</li> <li>• Be clear about consequences</li> <li>• Respect client privacy &amp; choice whenever possible</li> <li>• Provide genuine empathy &amp; validation</li> <li>• Say what you mean &amp; mean what you say</li> <li>• Be consistent</li> <li>• Say no with compassion &amp; assist with finding alternative solutions</li> </ul>



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<p><b>Psychotic Disorders</b></p>	<p><u>Hallucinations</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Seeing, hearing, feeling things that are not real to anyone else</li> </ul> <p><u>Delusional Thinking</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Persistent, organized false beliefs that remain intact in the face of more accurate or logical information</li> </ul> <p><u>Other symptoms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confused thinking</li> <li>• Disorganized or incoherent speech</li> <li>• Strange, possibly dangerous behavior</li> <li>• Slowed or unusual movements</li> <li>• Loss of interest in personal hygiene</li> <li>• Inability to express emotions –overly detached</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“It sounds like lots of times people don’t understand what you’re talking about &amp; that gets in the way of getting the services you want.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It must be hard to think straight when the voices keep interrupting your thoughts.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“It sounds like it’s hard for you to resist when the voices tell you to do things you don’t want to do.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><u>Managing Self &amp; Environment</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stay calm—do not argue, criticize or get loud</li> <li>• Minimize distractions—noise, bright lights</li> <li>• Move slowly</li> <li>• Respect personal space &amp; avoid touching the client</li> <li>• Keep it simple—avoid information overload</li> <li>• Give client time to process information &amp; respond</li> </ul> <p><u>Managing Symptoms</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do not challenge their beliefs or delusions</li> <li>• Find areas of agreement &amp; try to work within their logic system</li> <li>• Let hallucinating clients know you do not see or hear what they do</li> <li>• Set very specific, concrete achievable goals &amp; action steps</li> <li>• Stay focused on helping clients get what they need</li> </ul>