

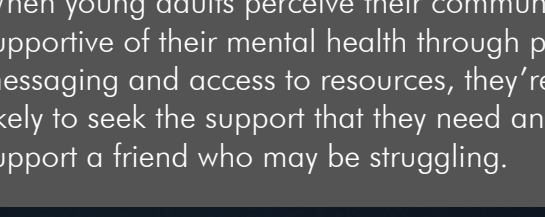
GAMER IN DISTRESS



MORE THAN TILT: RECOGNIZING SIGNS OF DISTRESS

The gaming community is a place of strong connection and belonging. For that reason (and more) it's important to have the skills to recognize the signs of possible distress among fellow gamers.

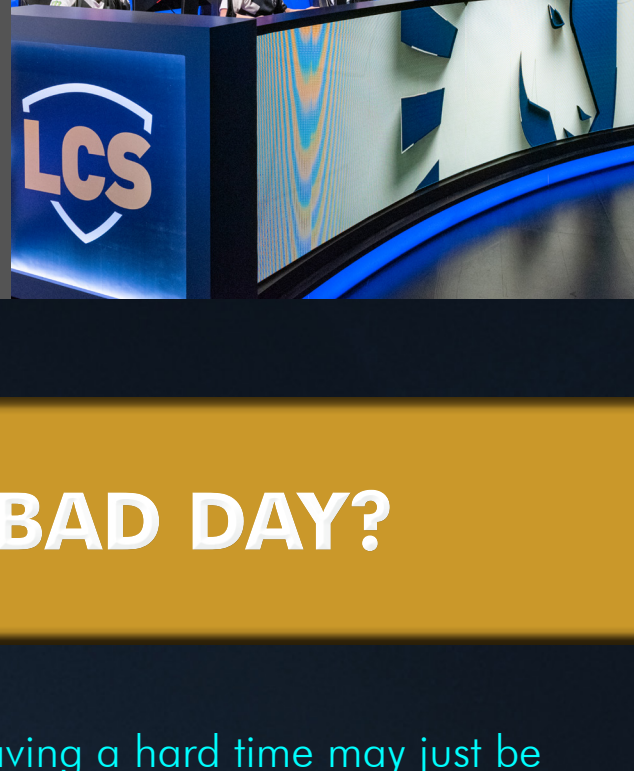
Mental health challenges are on the rise.



In any given year, **one in four** people will be affected by a mental health issue, with most emerging by the age of 25.

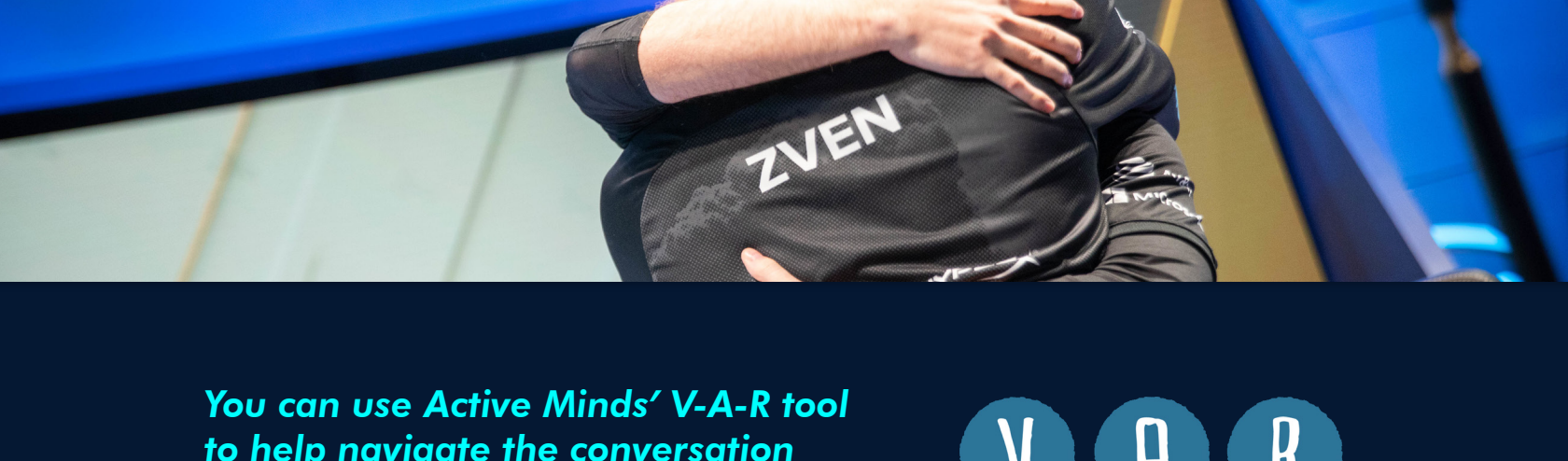
What the studies show:

When young adults perceive their communities as supportive of their mental health through positive messaging and access to resources, they're more likely to seek the support that they need and to support a friend who may be struggling.

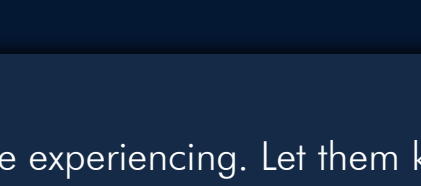


IS IT JUST A BAD DAY?

In many cases, a friend who is having a hard time may just be having a bad day, or perhaps a rough few weeks. They may be feeling down, anxious, or overstressed. This is common and not necessarily indicative of a mental health issue. Ask the person you're concerned about how they're doing and listen to their response.



You can use Active Minds' V-A-R tool to help navigate the conversation and meet them where they are at.



VALIDATE

Validate what they are experiencing. Let them know it's okay to not be okay. Validation sounds like:

"That sounds difficult."

"It seems like you have a lot going on, it makes sense that you might not be feeling great."

"It's totally ok that you're not on top of your game right now. It's okay to feel down."

Appreciate their courage. Let them know that sharing was a good decision. Appreciation sounds like:

"I'm glad you chose to tell me."

"I know sharing what's really going on can be challenging. I appreciate that you did."

"It means a lot to me that you told me how you're feeling."



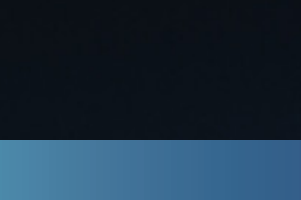
APPRECIATE

Refer them to skills and support. Help them find what will help them at that moment. For some people, professional support is important and for some, healthy coping and resilience skills will help. Refer sounds like:

"Feel like taking a break from games for a bit?"

"Do you think it would help to talk with a therapist?"

"How about we play something a little less intense for a bit?"



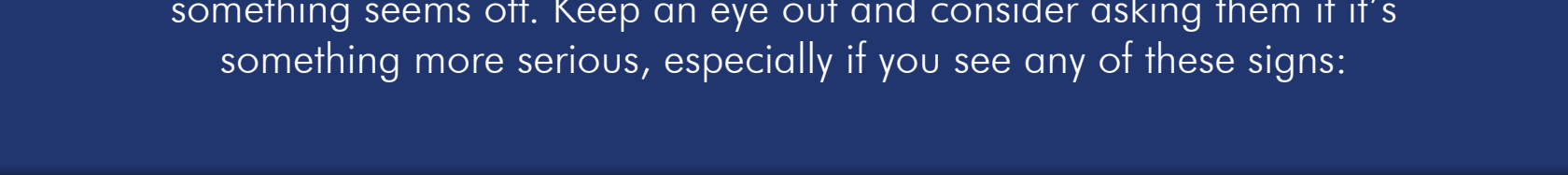
REFER

When practicing V-A-R, it's important to avoid trying to "fix" the issue immediately, or inadvertently minimizing your friend's experience by bringing up your own experiences without having fully validated theirs.

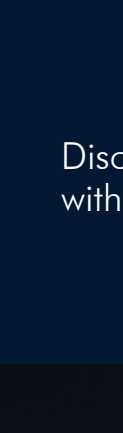
It can be tempting to bring up our own anecdotes for the sake of relating, but keep in mind that the main goal of this technique is to actively listen.

For more information, visit activeminds.org/var.

WHEN IT'S MORE THAN A BAD DAY

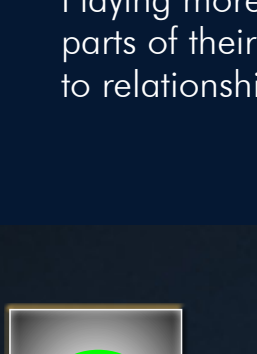


When gaming with people online, especially if you've never met them IRL, it may be challenging to figure out if it's more serious than a bad day. Some gamers suggest paying attention to play-styles to recognize when something seems off. Keep an eye out and consider asking them if it's something more serious, especially if you see any of these signs:



More emotional, angry, or upset than usual.

Disconnected, distracted, or less engaged with the game or team.



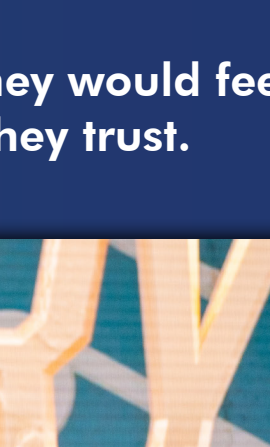
Inexplicably AFK for prolonged time periods.

Playing more than usual and/or neglecting other parts of their lives like sleep, food, work, attending to relationships, etc.



Unusually reckless or impulsive in and out of game. If they're attacking other players, being banned from games due to their behavior, etc.

Not enjoying gaming or just going through the motions. Notice if they're withdrawn or disengaged.



If you see any of these signs, ask your friend if they would feel comfortable talking about it with someone they trust.



HOW TO HELP WITH URGENT CONCERNS

"Another behavior I've noticed is a player's sudden disinterest in gaming in general, and that disinterest eventually leading to attempting to give away their gaming equipment. One of my best friends that I met online tried to give me all of his gaming equipment. I believed this meant he needed help and contacted his fiancé over facebook. Turns out that he was going to kill himself and I was right."

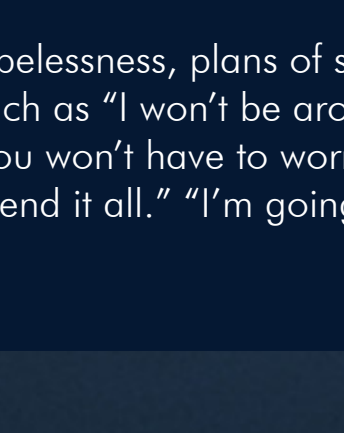


If someone is considering suicide and indicates it in some way verbally or behaviorally, it's important to connect them with professional help as soon as possible.

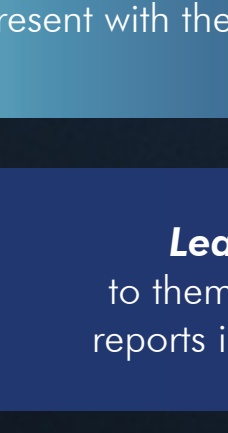
Some warning signs that someone is considering suicide include:



Giving away prized possessions.



Putting personal affairs in order.



Expressing hopelessness, plans of suicide, or other verbal cues such as "I won't be around much longer." "Pretty soon you won't have to worry about me." "I'm going to end it all." "I'm going to kill myself." Etc.

For more information about signs of suicide or distress, visit activeminds.org/signs. If you are worried about someone's immediate safety, call 911. If you are physically present with them, stay with them until help arrives.

League of Legends players: If you see ANY players threatening harm to themselves or others, please reach out to Player Support. Riot takes these reports incredibly seriously and will follow up regarding any reports received.

If you're concerned about someone you know, reach out to the Crisis Text Line by texting **"BRAVE"** to **741-741** or call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at **1-800-273-8255** for real-time support.

