

For further information please contact: DJI @ NDCPD, 1-800-233-1737

- Accelerated speaking or hyperactivity.
- Delusions and paranoia, such as false beliefs that s/he is a famous person or that others are trying to harm them.
- Hallucination, such as hearing voices or seeing, feeling, or smelling imaginary things.
- Depression.
- Inappropriate emotional response.
- Unintelligible conversation.
- Loss of memory, such as inability to remember the day, year, or where they are.
- Catatonia, indicated by lack of movement, activity, or expression.
- Unfounded anxiety, panic, or fright.
- Confusion.



IDENTIFYING THE PRESENCE OF MENTAL ILLNESS CHARACTERISTICS MAY INCLUDE:

Tips On How To Interact With A Person Who Has Mental Illness

DISABILITY JUSTICE INITIATIVE

- Approach in a non-threatening and reassuring manner. Make the victim feel they are in control.
- Introduce yourself by name first, then your authority.
- Determine if the person has a support system such as family, guardian, or mental health provider you can contact . If necessary, contact the local mental health crisis center.
- Keep interviews simple and brief. Be aware that rational discussion may not be possible on all topics.
- Be aware that the person may be experiencing delusions, paranoia, or hallucinations. However, they still may be able to provide information on details related to victimization.
- Avoid standing too close or surrounding the person. Do not touch them, even to offer reassurance, unless absolutely necessary.
- Do not whisper, joke, or laugh in the presence of the person.
- Avoid direct eye contact, forced conversation, or indications of impatience.
- When possible, back off and allow the person to calm down if they are agitated.
- Break into nonstop talking by interrupting with simple questions, such as asking their name.
- Don't assume that victims who are unresponsive do not hear you or are being uncooperative. They may be experiencing hallucinations.
- Never try to convince victims that their hallucinations do not exist. Rather, reassure victims that the hallucinations will not harm them and may disappear as they calm. Acknowledge paranoia and delusions by emphasizing with them, but do not disagree or agree with their statements.
- Be honest. Well intentioned deception will only increase fear and suspicion.

