

## **Early Warning Signs that Client needs to be referred to FSW**

### **1. Sudden, unexplained mood changes**

Those with bipolar disorder or depression experience changes in mood that strike suddenly with no apparent cause and can last for long periods of time.

### **2. Unable to handle minor problems and daily activities**

If small concerns are sending the client into an emotional tailspin, or if they find it difficult to get out of bed and get to work or get their day started, something more serious may be going on. When a reaction to the loss of a loved one or a broken relationship spirals into not being able to function in day-to-day life, it can suggest that deeper troubles are on the horizon.

### **3. Loss on interest in hobbies and social withdrawal**

In many cases when people develop a mental illness they suddenly stop participating in activities that were very important to them in the past. They may also go out of their way to avoid social gatherings with family, preferring to spend time on their own. Excessive use of drugs or alcohol can also be a sign of a mental illness as they will try and mask their symptoms by 'self-medicating'. This is not only unhealthy, it can make the problem worse. If this is evident then it's important to seek professional help as soon as possible.

### **4. Unexplained physical changes**

Most people grappling with a mental illness show physical symptoms. These can include sudden weight gain or loss, unexplained chronic physical pain, headaches or digestive problems.

### **5. Loss of confidence**

Clients struggling with a moderate or serious mental illness may make comments like, "I'm worthless," or, "It would be better for everyone if I wasn't here."

### **6. Strange or overelaborate ideas**

This is not to be mistaken with ambition or a decision to change one's life path; thoughts that would not be considered appropriate to discuss with friends and family, or a pursuit of fantasy in an effort to avoid daily life could signal instability.

### **7. Problems thinking clearly**

Trouble organizing or presenting thoughts in a clear way can also signal mental health challenges. The client may have trouble staying on topic during a conversation, or might

be unable to explain their ideas properly. Some common signs of clients suffering from schizophrenia and bipolar disorder are things such as false beliefs, delusions or hallucinations.

**8. Talks about suicide**

If a client starts making comments about suicide, you need to take it seriously and seek professional help immediately. These comments may be paired with risky or reckless behavior and attempts by the client to put his or her affairs in order. **ANY COMMENT ABOUT SUICIDE SHOULD BE ADDRESSED ASAP!**