



**Elgin Community College  
Wellness Services**

**The Breakdown ~ Worried About a Friend**

Worried About a Friend

- Vinny Cascio: Welcome to The Breakdown with your wellness professionals here at Elgin Community College. I'm Vinny Cascio.
- Angela Ogburn: I'm Angela Ogburn. In this podcast, we're going to talk about how to help a friend who's really struggling. One of the things that Vinny and I see all the time in our office is students coming in and they're concerned about other people. It's really hard when you care about someone and you know that they're having a hard time.
- Vinny: Right. And sometimes they won't even tell you that. When you ask them, "Hey, are you okay? What's going on?" or "How are you doing today?" They'll say, "Oh, it's fine" but their behavior is completely different, it's the complete opposite. They're not taking care of themselves, their hygiene might be a little bit poor or they're a little disheveled, or they seem to get agitated very easily. Their behavior is just completely the opposite of what they're saying.
- Angela: Right. Sometimes people won't use that language: "I feel depressed" or "I'm struggling with panic attacks." Maybe they don't want to say things, so one of the ways that you can show your concern is to point out their behaviors to them. Don't try to interpret anything. Don't say, "Vinny, you're sad, you're depressed." You don't want to play therapist here, you just want to point out certain things to them. "Hey, I've noticed that you never seem to want to hangout anymore" or "Every time I call, you tell me you've been sleeping or something, and that's just not typical for you." A lot of times people can hear that a lot more easily than they can if you try to diagnose them.
- Vinny: Right. It's always good to remember to be supportive, so don't say anything dismissive like, "Oh, it's okay. Suck it up, you'll be fine," or "It's not a big deal," or "Things will be fine, just go through the motions." Those are pretty dismissive statements so you want to be more positive, you want to be there, you want to ensure them that you're there to be supportive.
- Angela: Absolutely. One of the best ways that you can do that is by giving somebody your full attention if they do want to talk to you. So let's say that you point out one of those behaviors: "I noticed that you don't want to go out anymore, you're sleeping all the time." Then the person opens up and says: "You know I'm not really feeling like myself right now." You want to listen and you want to be really attentive. Put the phone away, quit typing your paper, quit trying to find a different music station. Just give them all the attention that you can.



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- Vinny: If they happen to be an ECC student, direct them to wellness services. We're here to always talk to them about anything and everything. If it's also somebody that's saying they're in immediate danger, they're having suicidal thoughts or whatnot, definitely call the authorities, call 911. Get them that help because their well-being is most important.
- Angela: Absolutely, you don't want to take a risk with that. If someone's in danger, call 911. It's not going to hurt anything. Lastly, if you're concerned about someone, stop in Wellness Services. You can always come and talk to us about it, get some more tips, or get some ideas about how to have this conversation and how to help out. We're located in B120 and we're open for you Monday through Friday. Until next time. I'm Angela Ogburn.
- Vinny: I'm Vinny Cascio.
- Together: And we're your wellness professionals.