Advisor Strategies: Explore + Validate + Support

1. Invite them to have a conversation
   - Ask the student if they’d like to/need to talk – to you or someone else.

2. Express your concerns non-judgmentally and genuinely
   - Tell them, non-judgmentally, what you notice and are concerned about them.
   - If you have a relationship with them, ask what has changed since you last spoke.
   - Ask open-ended questions that invite students to speak about themselves and their concerns about seeking help.
     - “Tell me more about your concern about…”
     - “I would like to know more about how you…”

3. Explore information and roadblocks to motivation
   - Ask about their knowledge or experience about counseling.
   - Ask what it is like for them to hear the suggestion about talking to a counselor.
     - Reframe mental health as physical health.
       - (They’d go to the doctor with a broken arm.)

4. Acknowledge the roadblocks with validation
   - Empathize both the content and the emotion.
   - Validate with compassion, and avoid judgment or criticism.
     - It makes sense to feel and think like that... (stigmas of mental health)
       - “It makes sense why you would not want help because…”
     - It is difficult to take the first step to ask for help.

5. Reframe with normalization
   - Normalize it as a common human experience.
     - You are not alone: “College/Graduate school is really difficult…”
   - If you have a relationship with the student, share your own story or experience.
     - Keep it short and simple to normalize their experience.

6. Highlight their strengths
   - Highlight their strengths after validating their vulnerable part.
   - Share what it is like for you to hear their stories, letting them know they have an impact on you.
     - “You are so courageous…”

7. Support with introducing appropriate resources
   - Summarize their challenges and strengths.
   - Ask what they need.
   - Ask if the student has heard about the resources on campus.
     - If not: explain the services and how they can access the service.
       - “In case you or a friend need it…”
   - Talk about mental health positively.
     - E.g., it is collaborative work between you and the counselor.