**Practice Scenarios**

Scenario 1

You are in the lunchroom at your school. It is the day before Thanksgiving break, when you notice Alex, who is usually a very social student, sitting by himself. Alex appears very disheveled (messy hair, stained clothes, etc.), upset and agitated. Alex usually doesn’t act like this. Your gut tells you something is off. You have completed A.I.D. training and feel like you have confidence to talk to the student.

**AWARENESS: What do you notice about Alex that indicates Alex might be in distress?**

*Reminder(s): We are not mental health professionals, we don’t need to diagnose someone with a mental disorder/illness, we just need to connect the dots enough to recognize a person is having a problem and then take the necessary steps to help them.*

Possible answer(s): Change in behavior. Usually social and not social now. Disheveled. Upset. Agitated.

**INTERACTION: How would you approach and interact with Alex? As you practice this step, say the actual words you would say to Alex.**

*Reminder(s): Keep it casual. Treat it like a conversation. Focus on observable behaviors. Ask open-ended questions. Avoid giving advice. Be nonjudgmental.*

Possible answer(s): “Hi Alex, do you mind if I sit with you?” If they say yes then continue, if they say no then try to talk again later in the day. “I’ve noticed you’re sitting by yourself and seem upset. How are you doing?”

During your conversation, Alex tells you things have been difficult at home. Alex’s parents are getting a divorce. Alex is having a hard time concentrating at school and their grades are suffering.

**DIRECTION: What direction can we provide to Alex?**

*Reminder(s): Directions can be resources or self-help strategies. Together, find what works for them.*

Possible answer(s): “Alex, I care about your well-being. During tough times it is helpful to use resources so you can take care of your mental health just like you would your physical health if you caught the flu. I know of a variety of resources that are helpful. Let’s pick a couple together that you think will work for you. Did you know there is a school counselor? They can help for short term hiccups in life and also long term. Fortunately, many people experience the feelings you are having and with some guidance you will learn skills to help you be strong. There is also a free, anonymous text line, if things ever get really bad, a trained professional can help you through, text 4HOPE to 741-741. Getting enough sleep at night, regular exercise, and healthy food positively influences your overall health. Know that I am here to listen and help you any time.”