



America is at a crossroads when it comes to how our society addresses mental health. We know that one in five of our citizens has a diagnosable mental health condition, and that more Americans are expected to die this year by suicide than in car accidents. While many of us are comfortable acknowledging publicly our physical suffering, for which we almost always seek help, many more of us privately experience mental suffering, for which we almost never reach out.

### **Purpose**

The Change Direction initiative is a collection of concerned citizens, nonprofit leaders, and leaders from the private sector who have come together to change the culture in America about mental health, mental illness, and wellness. This initiative was inspired by the discussion at the White House National Conference on Mental Health in 2013, which came on the heels of the Newtown, Conn., tragedy.

### **By bringing together this unprecedented and diverse group of leaders we plan to spark a movement that:**

- frees us to see our mental health as having equal value to our physical health
- creates a common language that allows us to recognize the signs of emotional suffering in ourselves and others
- encourages us to care for our mental well-being and the mental well-being of others

### **The Pledges**

The simplest pledge is one that anyone can do. **Learn the *Five Signs*** of emotional suffering so you can recognize them in yourself or help a loved one who may be in emotional pain. In short, the *Five Signs* are **change in personality, agitation, withdrawal, decline in personal care, and hopelessness**. Someone may exhibit one or more signs. Please visit [www.changedirection.org](http://www.changedirection.org) to learn more.

A long and growing list of nonprofit organizations and private sector companies are making additional pledges to deliver educational tools and programs that will help change the national conversation about mental health. **This collective impact effort will reach millions of Americans over the next five years with specific efforts focused to educate:**

- military personnel, veterans, and family members
- corporate employees
- federal, state, and local government employees
- first responders
- students, teachers, school officials, and coaches
- members of the faith-based community
- healthcare professionals

### **Help Change the Direction: Make a Pledge**

Join the movement and let your voice be heard. We urge you and your organizations to **make a pledge**, however large or small. Visit [www.changedirection.org](http://www.changedirection.org) to find out how.