INDICATORS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Verbal Cues
1. Illogical thoughts
   - Loose associations (expressing a combination of unrelated or abstract topics)
   - Grandiose ideas (expressing thoughts of greatness, e.g., person believes self to be Jesus)
   - Ideas of persecution (expressing ideas of being harassed or threatened, e.g., CIA monitoring thoughts through TV set)
   - Obsessive thoughts (preoccupation, often with death, germs, guilt)
2. Unusual speech patterns
   - Nonsensical speech or chatter
   - Word repetition (frequently stating the same or rhyming words or phrases, e.g., “sing-a-song-a-ding-dong”)
   - Pressured speech (expressing an urgency in the manner of speaking)
   - Extremely slow speech
3. Extreme and inappropriate verbal hostility or excitement
   - Talking loudly or excitedly
   - Unreasonably hostile, argumentative, belligerent
   - Threatening harm

Behavioral Cues
1. Physical appearance
   - Inappropriate to environment (e.g., heavy coats in summer)
   - Bizarre clothing or makeup
2. Body movements
   - Strange posture or mannerisms (e.g., continuously looking over shoulder as if being followed, holding unusual body positions for a long time)
   - Lethargic, sluggish movements
   - Pacing, agitation
   - Repetitious, ritualistic movements
3. Responding to voices or objects that are not there
4. Confusion about or unawareness of surroundings
5. Lack of emotional response
6. Causing injury to self (e.g., cutting self with sharp object, cigarette burns on body)
7. Extreme or inappropriate expressions of sadness or grief
8. Inappropriate emotional reactions
   - Overreacting to situation in an overly angry or frightened way
   - Reacting with opposite of expected emotion (e.g., laughing at auto accident)

Environmental Cues
Surroundings are inappropriate, such as:
1. Decorations
   - Strange trimmings; inappropriate use of household items (e.g., aluminum foil covering window)
2. Waste matter/trash
   - Pack-ratting; accumulation of trash (e.g., hoarding string, newspapers, paper bags, clutter)
   - Presence of feces or urine on the floor or walls
3. Childish objects

When making observations:
1. Note as many cues as possible
2. Put the cues into the context of the situation
3. Be mindful of environmental and cultural factors