

How to have a conversation about your mental health



It is normal to worry about telling someone how you feel but trying to deal with things on your own can make things feel worse.

Talking to someone you trust can help you to feel less alone, and feel supported by people around you including those who have been through similar things.

Preparing for the conversation

It's okay to ask for help You may worry about being treated differently or not being taken seriously, but talking could help you get the support you need and stop things getting worse.

Find a way that feels right for you You might want to talk face-to-face but if this feels too difficult you could try talking on the phone, sending a text or email, writing a letter, or drawing how you feel.

Find a good time The time may never feel perfect, but it can help if they can give you their full attention and it's somewhere you feel comfortable. It might help to talk whilst doing something together, like going for a walk or in the car, so the focus isn't just on you.

Practise what you want to say This could be in your head or with a friend. You could also try writing things down.

Having a conversation about mental health with a trusted adult

Starting the conversation You could start with 'Can I talk to you about...?' or 'I'm finding it hard to cope at the moment'.

Explain how you've been feeling And how this affects other parts of your life, like eating, sleeping, and school or college.

Try finding useful information or examples If you've seen something on TV, online or in a book that feels similar to what you're experiencing, showing them could help explain how you're feeling.

Suggest things they could do to help Like helping you find information, talking to your school, making a doctor's appointment for you or just being there to listen and support you.

Only share what you're comfortable with You don't need to tell them everything at once.

What if I want to talk with a friend?

If you want to talk about your mental health with a friend, the tips given for talking to an adult can help. But there are **things that can be good to think about** when talking with a friend:

- Try to think of someone you trust who has supported you before when things have been difficult, or is kind, understanding and a good listener.
- It's important to remember that they might need to talk to someone they trust, especially if they are worried about you and are not sure what they should do.
- Asking a friend to promise not to tell anyone or keep what you've told them a secret can put a lot of pressure on them.

If they don't understand or don't take you seriously, it isn't your fault – they may feel shocked and need time to think about what you've told them. Even if you feel hurt, it might help to try talking to someone else you trust or give them time and try again.



Who can I talk to?

You're not alone, and you deserve support. There are lots of places you can find help:

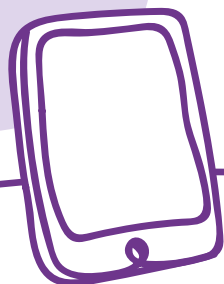
Someone at school you trust like a teacher, or a school nurse or counselling service.

Your doctor

Mind (mind.org.uk/youngpeople)

Childline (childline.org.uk) – for a free 24-hour helpline, email service and online and phone counselling service for children and young people in the UK. They can also provide Welsh speaking counsellors.

The Mix (themix.org.uk) – for a helpline, email, live chat, telephone counselling service and crisis text line for anyone under 25 years old wanting support.



mind.org.uk

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