

How To Talk To Kids About Mental Health : The Do's

If you notice a change in your child's behaviour or that they seem to be struggling, there are many ways you can offer support. Here are some ways you can do that.



Offer Support

Let your child know that you're there for them. Allow them to express themselves without fear of repercussions.

Validate Their Feelings

Tell them that it's normal to feel sad, angry, scared, and stressed, and that you feel that way too sometimes. Empathise with them by saying things like, "That sounds really difficult".



Express Your Intentions

Tell your child that you have noticed them feeling sad or acting differently, and let them know that you are there to help.

Start The Conversation Early

Give your child opportunities to open up to you by creating space for healthy discussions from a young age. Start by asking open-ended questions like, "Did you talk to your friends today?".



Model Conversations About Mental Health

Encourage your child to talk about their feelings, by sharing yours. Do not share age-inappropriate information with them, but share that you—for example—do yoga because it keeps you mentally fit.

Seek Help

If you are struggling to connect with your child, reach out to a mental health professional. Sometimes children feel more comfortable speaking to external parties. Your family doctor can refer you to a mental health professional.



Conversation Starters:

I'm here to listen to you anytime you need, no matter what.

Don't worry. It's normal to feel sad/angry/scared sometimes. How can I help?

I know what you're going through is really difficult, and you're so strong.

I've noticed you've seemed to be struggling recently. Do you want to talk about it?

I love you no matter what!

When I am upset, I like to practise yoga/write in my journal/talk to a friend because it helps me feel better.

Sometimes it's easier to talk to someone outside of the family. Would you be comfortable talking to [insert name]?