

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

DO'S



Plan an activity to do whilst discussing mental health.
e.g. a walk, a drive, cooking, or build something

Carefully listen and pay attention when the person is speaking

Empower the person. Ask what they need from you to feel better

Normalise. Reassure them that having mental health worries is common, and doesn't mean that they can't get better

Share your experiences if you feel comfortable, and it would be useful in helping the person feel heard

Ask open-ended questions to allow the person space and time to speak, nod and use words to encourage



DON'TS



Minimise the problem or concern, or tell them they shouldn't feel what they are feeling

Become emotional, angry or confrontational

Make excuses, place blame on the person or others in their life

Use the word "crazy" or try and diagnose the person with a mental health disorder

Make the assumption that you need to have all the right answers or say all the right things

Ask too many detailed questions, or rush the person into telling you more than they want to



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INSTEAD OF SAYING



You are overthinking things. Try not to think so much

You worry too much

What's wrong with you?

It's not that big a deal. Other people have it much worse

When I was your age, things were different, we just had to deal with our problems

You should keep this stuff to yourself, it might upset/worry/put off other people

This is what you should do... OR Here's how you should fix it

TRY SAYING THIS



What is making you feel this way?

I understand why you may find this hard

You don't seem like yourself at the moment, is something going on for you?

Your experience of this is important, and I want to hear about it

Things were tough for me but they don't have to be for you



Thank you for sharing this with me, it can be really hard to have these conversations

Do you want my help with a solution, or do you just need to talk about it right now?

REFERENCES

<https://www.thinkmentalhealthwa.com.au/supporting-others-mental-health/how-to-help/how-to-start-the-conversation/>

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health/>

<https://www.mhanational.org/talking-adolescents-and-teens-starting-conversation>

<https://www.voicesofyouth.org/talking-mental-health-at-home>