

SAFEMinds.

SCHOOLS AND FAMILIES ENHANCING MINDS



NOTICE

...changes in mood and behaviour that may indicate your child is having difficulties managing emotional distress



INQUIRE

...about your child's circumstances – ask if they are OK



PLAN

...first steps towards getting your child the help and support they need, in partnership with school or outside services

NIP IT IN THE BUD!



INQUIRE – TIP SHEET

SAFEMinds is a partnership between:



headspace
National Youth Mental Health Foundation



THINGS TO REMEMBER

- Call 000 if the situation is an emergency.
- Ask if your child is OK. Gather important information to make decisions about the need for additional support or action. Inquiring shows that you are concerned and want to support your child.
- Model the values of respect, compassion, cooperation and friendliness. Children and young people are more likely to express vulnerability in a place that they feel is safe or that is private.
- Work together to find solutions to problems. It is important for your child to feel that they don't need to go through things on their own.
- Focus on their strengths and small victories. Believe in them, listen sensitively and don't pass judgement.

CHECK YOUR REACTION

- Do you feel equipped to support your child at this stage?
- Is there someone you can contact who can help?
*The school, GP, Accident and Emergency, your local Child and Youth Mental Health Service, **headspace**?*



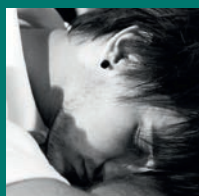
INQUIRY DO's

- Ensure they know you are available to talk to
- Stay calm and connected
- Listen and find out what your child needs
- Consider language and tone of voice
- Make positive statements about hope and help seeking
- Give your child a choice about where to go for help
- Recognise that if they are self harming, this may be their main coping strategy



INQUIRY DON'Ts

- Don't get angry
- Don't use shaming or blaming language or be judgemental
- Don't interrogate and grill for answers
- Don't give advice
- Don't insist on them stopping now
- Don't make promises you can't keep
- Don't carry the entire burden alone; get help with your own reactions





SUGGESTED PHRASES

Everyone has their own style of talking to their children. Below are some suggested phrases for conversation starters and ways of encouraging them to talk about difficult issues. You might like to say them like this or adapt them to ensure you are comfortable with what you are saying.

CONVERSATION STARTERS:

- “_____, are you OK?
You seem a bit down.”
- “You’ve seemed a bit upset lately.
Do you want to talk about it?”
- “_____, you know I’ll be there
for you if you need me.”

ENCOURAGERS:

- “If you want to talk, I’m happy to listen.”
- “Why don’t you try to write down
what’s on your mind? Sometimes
that helps.”
- “What could we do together
to make things a bit better?”

PROMOTING HELP SEEKING:

- “Would you like some help in
handling this? We could get some
more help from someone who
knows more about this.”
- “Have you spoken to anyone else
about this, anyone at school?
Has that helped?”
- “What have you tried so far
that’s helped?”
- “This sounds really upsetting for
you. Have you thought of talking to
someone more about this? I can help
with finding someone, if you want.”

SHARING INFORMATION:

- “There are some things we can keep
between ourselves, but there are other
things that we need to get help with.”
- “We may need to tell the school
about some of these things. Let’s work
out what they need to know.”



RISK AND PROTECTIVE FACTORS

As a parent/caregiver, awareness of risk and protective factors can help you consider the best ways to support and optimise the wellbeing and academic achievement of your child.

Risk factors are circumstances or ‘warning signs’ that indicate an individual may be more vulnerable to emotional distress. They can increase the likelihood of a child or young person developing physical, mental health and/or social difficulties.

Protective or ‘resilience’ factors can counter-balance the effects of risk factors and lessen their impact on an individual. People with more protective factors have a decreased possibility of developing physical, mental health and/or social difficulties.

Inquiring about and understanding your child’s circumstances can help you identify where additional support or intervention is needed.

RISK	PROTECTIVE
INDIVIDUAL	
■ Low self-esteem ■ Poor social skills ■ Poor problem solving ■ Difficult temperament ■ Birth injury/disability/low birth weight	■ Social competence – ability to relate and work with others ■ Problem solving skills ■ Optimism – hopefulness, confidence ■ Positive coping style ■ School achievement ■ Healthy physical environment
SCHOOL	
■ School failure/dropout ■ Bullying ■ Peer rejection ■ Deviant peer group	■ Pro-social peer group – positive, supportive ■ Positive achievements and sense of belonging ■ Opportunities for participation and success
FAMILY	
■ Family conflict/breakdown ■ Inconsistent discipline ■ Lack of warmth and affection ■ Abuse and neglect ■ Parental substance abuse	■ Supportive parents/carers ■ Secure and stable family ■ Supportive relationship with other adults ■ Attachment to family
COMMUNITY	
■ Socio-economic disadvantage ■ Exposure to violence and crime ■ Homelessness ■ Refugee experience ■ Racism/discrimination	■ Sense of belonging ■ Access to support services ■ Participation in community (e.g. plays sport, belongs to school band, scouts) ■ Strong cultural identity/pride ■ Secure home/housing