

Having Supportive Conversations with Peers

Teens tend to turn to their friends rather than their parents for support. It can be difficult to know how to respond when someone opens up to you about their mental health. Below are ideas about how to have supportive conversations with your peers.

Listen more & talk less. - Listen non-judgmentally - Make eye contact - Reassure your friend but don't make promises or keep secrets - Ask direct questions - Use empathy

What a Peer might say or do	Unhelpful Response	Helpful Response
I'm not feeling like myself lately.	Things could be worse.	I care about you. What do you think is causing you to feel so bad?
I know we don't talk much, but I'm having a tough time.	Yea, me too. I'm so stressed out.	I'm so sorry you're going through this. It sounds really hard.
A friend confides in you that they have had suicidal thoughts recently.	I promise I won't say anything to anyone.	Let's go talk to (a trusted adult). I'll go with you. I'm really glad you told me.

IMPORTANT: if you feel like someone is at risk for immediate harm, or has mentioned suicide, you need to act right away. Do not keep it a secret. Walk with them to an adult if possible or immediately tell an adult.

If you need to speak with someone immediately, please text or call 988.
If this is an emergency, please call 911.



What are Some Helpful Responses?

Now it's your turn. For each unhelpful response listed below, try and come up with a helpful response.

What a Peer might say or do	Unhelpful Response	Helpful Response
What's the point? Nothing's gonna change.	You have so much to live for.	
A friend used to care about their work in school, but they don't seem interested in school anymore.	You'll catch up if you just put in a little effort.	
I should be able to handle this on my own.	Yea, just figure it out.	
I don't want my coach to find out I'm struggling in case he thinks I shouldn't be on the team	Just relax. Stop worrying so much.	

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