



How to Start a Conversation on Mental Health

We all have mental health. Let's start the conversation.

How to get started

You don't need special training to have to talk about mental health. Just talking about it can be the first step in understanding where someone is with their mental health, and helping them get support or treatment if needed. Here are some quick pointers you can use for having a mental health check-in with the people in your life.

Let people know you're willing to talk about Mental Health

Talking about your own journey will let others know you're a safe person to talk to if they ever need to reach out.

- One of the best ways to let others know that you are open to talking about mental health is to share your own experience.
- Much like you might talk about a previous experience with a physical injury, be willing and open to talking about your experience with mental health.
- Are there times in your life when you were "Not OK?" Admitting to others that you needed help, and that talking to others helped you, can have a very powerful impact on others.

The timing doesn't have to be perfect

- If you notice that someone may be struggling don't worry about trying to find the perfect opportunity, but DO find the time to talk to them.
- Be aware that they may not want to talk at that moment and may need some space. Don't give up and let them know that when they are ready, you are ready to talk.
- Try taking them out for dinner, coffee, ice cream to create an opportunity.

"The other day I noticed you seemed upset. Can we talk about how you are doing?"

"When I'm frustrated or overwhelmed I find that talking about things really helps. I'm happy to listen whenever you want to talk."

What to do when you recognize they are having a hard time

- We all know the expression "If you see something say something". It's so important to think about this with mental health too. If you are concerned about someone's mental health it is important to speak up.
- Let them know you care and that they can talk to you about what's going on. Be direct and clear about what you notice. Make sure they know we all have mental health and they are not alone. It's OK and normal to struggle sometimes.
- Make sure they know how thankful you are that they shared their concerns with you.
- Let them know you are open to talking about it whatever they are dealing with.

Recognize when they may be more comfortable talking to someone else

- If you think the other person might be more comfortable talking with someone else, offer to get them connected.
- Reassure them they are not alone and that everyone struggles from time to time.
- "Thank you so much for sharing with me. We all struggle from time to time. Just because you're having these emotions now doesn't mean you'll always feel this way."
- Keep asking for more detail, and let them know they can share how they are really feeling inside.
- Be willing to listen to whatever they are able to share.
- Make sure to include that talking to a professional can truly make a big difference in their situation.
- End the conversation by telling them that you are so glad they felt comfortable talking to you and that you hope to keep talking about these things in the future.
- Remind them you will always be there to listen.

“It seems that you don't want to talk about this with me. It's really important that you talk to someone. Is there someone else you'd feel more comfortable with?”

If you or someone you know is in crisis, Text SAVE to 741741 or Text or call 988 (suicide crisis lifeline)



“I've been thinking a lot about you since we talked. Just wondering how you're doing?”

Follow-up on your conversation

- Be sure to check in again with them to let them know it was okay they talked to you, that you care, and that you're still a “safe” person to talk to.
- Being available to have a conversation about mental health is an important way we can all be there for each other.
- You will be amazed at how good you will feel being there for a friend, teammate, or family member when they need it.
- All you have to do is listen. Be willing to share what's going on in your life too.
- The more open and honest you are with your life, the more others will feel that they can trust you with their feelings.

Sophie's Squad was founded in 2021 to improve the mental health of athletes from youth to college by raising awareness of mental health issues and removing the stigma associated with seeking help.

For more information go to www.sophiessquad.org

