



How to Speak to Your adolescent Who is experiencing a Mental Health Problem

Acknowledge their feelings. We all have bias, nobody is excluded. Recognizing this in yourselves is important when thinking to have a conversation with your loved one. Please don't try to "talk your adolescent out of" their depression, even if their feelings appear irrational to you. Well-meaning attempts to explain why "things aren't that bad" will just come across as if you don't take their emotions seriously. Simply acknowledging the pain and sadness they are experiencing can go a long way in making them feel understood and supported.

Focus on listening, not lecturing. Resist any urge to criticize, pass judgment or give advice once your teenager begins to talk. The important thing is that your child is communicating. You'll do the most good by simply letting your teen know that you're there for them, fully and unconditionally. If they ask for your advice then offering that in a [mindful](#) way is so important

Be gentle but persistent. Don't give up if they shut you out at first. It takes patience and creating moments to connect with them. This takes time as talking about depression can be very tough for anybody, including your adolescent. Even if they want to, they may have a hard time expressing what they're feeling. Be respectful of your child's comfort level while still emphasizing your concern and willingness to listen.

Trust your instincts. If your adolescent claims "nothing is wrong" but has no explanation for what is causing the depressed behavior, you should trust your instincts. If your teen won't open up to you, consider turning to a trusted third party: a school counselor, coach, favorite teacher, pastor, or a mental health professional. They have some professional supports which operate all online, even via text, which might meet your adolescents needs more especially if that is the way they are most comfortable to speak. The important thing is to get them talking to someone.

Explore How Your Adolescent Views Therapy- Do this with an awareness of how you have been messaging this message. A common fear for many adolescents which prevent them from seeking help is their belief that it will cause shame for the family. Reflect on your own views of accepting help and of people living with a mental health problem. If you may have unintentionally sent a message which now may be preventing your adolescent from receiving help, own it. Speak to them about your understanding of why you viewed it that way and the reason you have a new perspective. Transparency and sincerity will go a long way.

Encourage Social Interaction- Depending on how these symptoms are impacting your adolescents' level of sleep they may feel exhausted to engage with others. In addition, [anxiety](#) often accompanies depression, thus, the thoughts of judgment, inability to interact with others and/or

Encourage Physical Interaction- First of all please be mindful of the words you use around this part of support. Using the word “exercise” or expected it to “look” a particular way can result in your adolescent not feeling motivated to do anything. Even if they are willing to simply change the environment by participating in gardening, washing your car, walking the dog or engaging in other less intense activities just go with it, it might just be the change they need.

Encourage Sleep- Your adolescent requires up to 9-10 hours per night. Make sure your adolescent isn't staying up until all hours at the expense of their mood-supporting rest. [Sleep](#) is an enormous contributor to not only how your youth manages their emotions, but also there are significant health implications which can be detrimental to their overall wellbeing. Insomnia, challenges falling asleep or remaining asleep disrupts the brains need to detox; negatively impacting levels of concentration, memory and ability to regulate their moods.