If you or your child are experiencing symptoms of poor mental health, it is important to talk to your doctor or a mental health expert as early as possible. Getting help early can help stop medical problems becoming worse in the longer term. Visit our mental health hub, where we have a page dedicated to teenager's mental wellbeing.

Being HUMAN: Starting a conversation with teens about mental health

We’re all getting a little better at understanding mental health and knowing how to spot potential problems, but starting a conversation with your teenager about their mental health isn’t always easy. But with the right words, you can help build trust and understanding, find solutions and build resilience. Sometimes these conversations bring the realisation that a teenager needs support from someone outside the family.

Remember you’re

H ow are you?

Conversations about mental health can be even more productive if you make it a two-way conversation with your teenager. Don’t use statements like “I’m worried about you.” This can put them on edge, or make them clam up or rebuff you. Simply asking your child how they are will lead to a more positive conversation.

U nderstand

An upsetting as it may be to hear that your child is struggling with their mental health, try to remain calm. If they sense that you’re agitated it may cause them to become nervous and stop them feeling comfortable enough to open up. Explain that there’s no need to worry about that. Let them know your feelings and don’t offer them a solution. When they share how they feel, acknowledge it.

M yths

Try to dispel any myths they might have about mental illness. Explain that it is just like other medical illnesses, and that help is available.

A cknowledge

Using phrases such as “There’s no need to worry about that.” can undermine their feelings and doesn’t offer them a solution. When they share how they feel, acknowledge it.

G etting the support you need

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