

Let's talk: A conversation guide for families

It's essential to create an environment for open communication with your children. Starting a conversation can be difficult, but it's important to address what is going on in your child's everyday life. By using this family conversation guide, families can foster a supportive environment and navigate important topics. Often, these discussions can give you an idea of your child's mental health status as well as encourage them to prioritize their well-being. Remember, finding open-ended questions that provoke a deeper discussion is most helpful.

Addressing a child at any age:	Addressing elementary-aged children:	Addressing Teens:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the most special part of your day? What was the most difficult part of your day? • What made you the happiest this week? What brought you feelings of stress/worry this week? • How does your body feel today/this week? • What are things you recognize that make you feel better when you are sad/upset? • What is your favorite part of being yourself? • Can I help with anything? • What can I do to support you/ make you feel better? • Do you ever feel like you don't matter? • What are you most proud of? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tell me about your favorite and least favorite experience today/this week • What was the highlight of your day? • What challenges did you experience today? What made it hard to be successful? • Can you tell me about your best friend? • What activity makes you the happiest? • What learning opportunities excite you the most? • What do you feel you could improve in? • How does your body feel today/this week? • Is there anything making you scared or concerned? • Have you ever thought about hurting yourself? • Do you ever feel alone, unseen, or unheard? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What makes you the most excited in life right now? • What is something that is causing you stress? • What is something that makes you concerned or worried? • Tell me about your friends and what you enjoy the most about being with them • What do you see yourself doing in the future? • Have any of your friends ever mentioned or thought about suicide? • Do you feel you have one or more people you would feel comfortable reaching out to if you needed help? • Have you ever thought about self-harm? (If yes) What led you there? • Have you ever thought about suicide? • Do you think you need help with how you are feeling?
Tips for parents		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Starting a conversation can happen anytime (in the car, during breakfast, after dinner, during a walk in the park) • Don't be afraid to ask questions • Be ready to listen without judgment (The more judgment, the less children will feel safe in the conversations) • Listen more than you talk • Show love, support, and empathy • Allow them to take the lead the conversation in topics they want to discuss • Practice these types of conversation often • You can explore non-verbal communication practices (Suggestion: Use Family Engagement "Family Conversation Journal") • If the conversation develops further and you feel concerned you can utilize Erika's Lighthouse "Intervention Language" resource to communicate 		