

HOW TO START THE CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

Starting a conversation about a mental health challenge is a powerful way to help stop the stigma that often affects people who are struggling with a mental illness.

Keep in mind that you don't need to be a mental health expert to confront stigma. By talking openly about mental health and showing compassion for those with mental illness, we can end the silence and stop the stigma of mental illness.

Some ways to start a conversation about mental health:

- "I noticed that you haven't been yourself lately. Is everything okay with you?"
- "I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what's been troubling you?"
- "It looks like you're going through a difficult time. How can I help?"
- "You seem really sad/angry. I'm worried that you may be thinking of harming yourself or others. Can we talk?"

Tips for having a conversation with someone who may be experiencing a mental health challenge:

- Find a quiet and comfortable place to talk.
- Recognize that a conversation about mental health may not be easy, but it is important.
- Listen actively, make eye contact, and be responsive.
- Let them know that you are concerned and care.
- Offer encouragement and support.
- Ask them how you can help.
- Ask them if they are aware of sources of support and be prepared to direct them to relevant information and resources.
- If you suspect someone may be suicidal, encourage them to talk, stay with them to provide support, and call 988. If appropriate, consider assisting the person with getting the professional help they need following the crisis – such as counseling and mental healthcare.

Help is available



If you or someone you know is in crisis and needs help, **call or text 988**. The 988 Lifeline connects you with a trained crisis counselor who can help. It is free, confidential, and available 24/7. If this is a life-threatening emergency, call 911 or go to the nearest hospital emergency room.



In crisis? Call or text 988

For mental health and suicide prevention information and resources, visit the Rural Mental Health Resilience Program website at www.RuralMinds/resilience.com

or via the QR code below:



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