

Starting a mental health conversation: top tips



What to say...

“How are you, honestly?”

“You seem a bit down lately, so I’d like to take some time to check in with you.”

“I’ve noticed you haven’t been yourself recently. Is there is anything going on that I can help with?”

“I observed you weren’t quite yourself [yesterday]. Would you like to talk about it?”

“I care about how you’re feeling, would you like to talk?”

How to respond...

Ask simple and open questions.

Actively **listen**.

Give them time and be prepared for silences.

Show empathy and understanding.

Don’t make assumptions.

Responding in a mental health conversation: top tips



What to say...

“I’m really sorry to hear that things have been so hard”

“I’m really pleased you’ve shared this with me.”

“I might not have all the answers, but I’m here to listen.”

“What kind of support do you think might help?”

“What would you like to happen now?”

How to respond...

Stay calm and give them your full attention.

Unless there’s a safeguarding concern, reassure them that what they share is confidential.

Signpost them to suitable and reputable places for support.

Look for ways to lighten their workload and remove stressors.

Set a time to follow up with them at a later stage.