

Advice for Kids Who Are Struggling



Speaking up about mental health struggles can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. These tips can help.

- When you're struggling, identifying what you're feeling can help. Check in with yourself. Are you sad? Anxious? Angry? Writing those feelings down can help you understand more about what you're going through.
- When you are ready to talk, reach out to someone supportive. Talking to friends can be a good place to start, but don't stop there. Talking to a parent, a teacher, or your school's counselor can help you get the support you need.
- Once you've decided who to talk to, let the person know you'd like to have an important, private conversation. If someone falls through, or the talk doesn't go as you'd hoped, don't stop trying. When you do connect with someone, it will be worth the effort.
- There's no "right" way to talk about your mental health. It's okay to take it slow. It's okay if you're not sure what to say. The important thing is to communicate in whatever way works for you and focus on sharing your feelings as clearly as you can.
- Try not to minimize or downplay what you're struggling with. Even if you're worried that your concerns will sound silly or you think your problems aren't that serious, they're worth talking about if they matter to you.
- Saying what you need right at the beginning can help others understand what to do and make conversations go more smoothly. For example: "I don't want advice right now, I just need you to listen." Or: "I'm not sure what to do. Can you help me figure out what comes next?"
- If you are in crisis, don't wait. Your safety is the most important thing. Tell a parent, counselor, or teacher immediately if you are having thoughts of suicide or you're afraid you might harm yourself or others.

Conversation starters

Ideas to help you get started when you're not sure what to say.

- "I've been having a hard time lately. Can we make time to talk?"
- "Are you free later? I need to talk about something important."
- "I haven't been feeling like myself. I think I need some help. Can we talk?"