

Parent Help and Advice Sheet 1 - 2019

Consider these things:

- + Notice changes in your child's mood. Your instinct will probably tell you if your child is not feeling their best.
- + It is important to let them know that you care about them, want what's best for them and are willing to help if you can.
- + Be open and available for them to talk over problems, things that are bothering or stressing them or how they are feeling.
- + Pick a time that is good for you both, where you have enough time to have a proper conversation without being interrupted.
- + Ask what you can do to help. Stay calm and positive and try to be the 'strong one'.
- + Be positive about counselling as an option.
- + Respect their confidentiality. Make it clear you will not say anything to anybody else if they don't want you to. (An exception will be if you have a significant concern for their safety).
- + Help with practical support; for example, if your child has to go for an appointment but feels uncomfortable about going on their own, go with them, even if you wait outside.

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- + Provide emotional support; this is often a case of listening and being empathetic, rather than trying to find answers or solutions.

- + Suggest people your child might be safe to confide in (e.g. mum, dad, sibling, other relative, GP, helpline). Encourage them to think about:
 - who they feel easy talking to about personal matters
 - who is non-judgemental and a good listener
 - someone they have known for a while rather than a new friend
 - someone who may have been in a similar situation and would have empathy (This is often why people choose forums because they feel comfortable talking to people who have experienced similar things to them).

- + Encourage them to spend time with other people. Friends and family can be vital sources of support and can help young people cope with stressful situations and difficult times. When a young person is feeling down or having a hard time, it is important for them to spend time with others doing things they might enjoy.

- + Have practical ideas on coping with difficulties leaflet available to share with your young person. You might like a copy of the 'U can cope!' leaflet (Royal College of Psychiatrists) nearby to read for practical strategies they could try. And remember to be hopeful! <https://www.rcpsych.ac.uk/mental-health/parents-and-young-people/young-people/u-can-cope!-how-to-cope-when-life-is-difficult-for-young-people>.

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