

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