

# 10 TIPS FOR TALKING WITH YOUR CHILDREN ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

## CONVERSATION STARTERS

1. In a non-judgmental way, let your child know **what you've observed or noticed**. Maybe they haven't been hanging out with their friends as often or their grades are slipping.
2. Try taking a **parent screening** or encourage your child to take a screening. Talk with your child about what the results may have indicated.
3. Maybe you, or a family member, have a mental health diagnosis and you're noticing similar symptoms in your child. Discuss your experience **keeping the tone hopeful**.

## DO...

4. **Ask** your child if they've thought about what support they might need to get better. Support them in following through with their needs.
5. Try to stop the voice in your head and actively pay attention. It can be scary for a child to share what they might be struggling with. **Be an active listener**.
6. **Acknowledge your fear**, but don't let it rule your behaviors. As a parent, it is important to confront stigma or discrimination directly.
7. Finding the right mental health treatment takes time and effort. **Prepare to be an advocate** to make sure you're child is getting the care they deserve.

## DON'T...

8. **Minimize** how they are feeling. Remember, your child probably worried about how you would react to this conversation. Don't tell them they "shouldn't feel like this."
9. **Make excuses or blame others**. Avoid saying things like, "This is the school's fault, they should have given you more individual attention" or "You just need to get offline."
10. If you encounter resistance from your child, **avoid arguing**. Go back to actively listening and ask open-ended questions.

SOURCE: MHA

## LEARN MORE FROM THESE ADDITIONAL RESOURCES...

[Seize the Awkward](#)  
[National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)  
[Mental Health America](#)

