

Tips for Having Supportive Conversations

As schools begin to gradually re-open, it is essential that you feel prepared and confident in having a supportive conversation. Use the guidance below to help you support a young person to open up and speak to you.



1. Opening a conversation



Try to ask broad questions and allow the young person to open up.

- ⊙ **It's nice to have you back at school, I was hoping we could have a chat to make sure everything's going OK for you?**
- ⊙ **Can you help me understand how things were for you at home?**
 - What did you like about being at home? / What did you not like?
 - Who else was at home?
 - What support did you have at home during the lockdown?



2. Exploring risks and issues



Allow them to explain their feelings or experiences, without asking leading questions.

- ⊙ **Can you tell me more about X?**
- ⊙ **How long have you felt like this?**
- ⊙ **How have you been coping?**
- ⊙ **Is there anything I can do to support you?**
- ⊙ **What would you like to be different?**



3. Outcome and closing



Close the conversation with clarity, signpost to appropriate support and make referrals (if necessary).

- ⊙ **Use affirmative statements**
What you're going through is difficult, but with the right support and some time, things can change for you. I'm here to support you however I can.
- ⊙ **Signpost to support**
If you need more support with how you feel, you can speak to the school counsellor.
- ⊙ **Explain what happens next**
I will speak to Mr/Miss/Mrs X about this. They are in charge of safeguarding in our school and will know how to support you further.



Young people may make a disclosure about risk or potential abuse. In these instances, it is important you remember to make sure to follow your schools' procedures, whether that involves making a record of the conversation or making a referral to the appropriate person. If you think a child is at risk of immediate harm, **please contact the police by calling 999.**