

## How to Talk About Mental Health

Do you need help starting a conversation about mental health? Try leading with these questions and make sure to actively listen to your friend or family member's response.

- What else can I help you with?
- Who or what has helped you deal with similar issues in the past?
- Sometimes talking to someone who has dealt with a similar experience helps. Do you know of others who have experienced these types of problems who you can talk with?
- It seems like you are going through a difficult time. How can I help you to find help?
- How can I help you find more information about mental health problems?
- I'm concerned about your safety. Have you thought about harming yourself or others?

### When talking about mental health problems:

- Know how to [connect people to help](#)
- Communicate in a straightforward manner
- Speak at a level appropriate to a person's age and development level (preschool children need fewer details as compared to teenagers)
- Discuss the topic when and where the person feels safe and comfortable
- Watch for reactions during the discussion and slow down or back up if the person becomes confused or looks upset

Source: [www.mentalhealth.gov](http://www.mentalhealth.gov)

## **Communicating With Someone Who Has a Psychiatric Illness**

- Speak calmly and quietly
- Keep a reasonable safe distance
- Remember your personal safety
- Get beyond strong language hurled at you
- Respond to rage with quiet reassurance
- Slow down the pace
- Be willing to repeat yourself
- Listen carefully and don't interrupt
- Be respectful
- Do not challenge his or her delusions
- Make no sudden moves
- Do not try to hurry a resolution
- Be patient and take your time

Source: [www.nami.org](http://www.nami.org)