

How to Start a Conversation with Your Friend About Their Wellness

It can be tricky to bring it up, but if you're worried about saying the wrong thing, don't be. The best way to start is to just ask them if they're okay.

If you think someone might be dealing with depression or anxiety, you might avoid them because you don't know what to do or say, or maybe you don't really understand what it's all about. This can make it harder for them to get through it. To make it go better, for both of you.

Here are a few tips:

- pick a place that's quiet and private
- give yourself plenty of time
- listen, more than talk. Really listen closely to understand how they're feeling
- save your advice for later
- show you're really listening
- listening isn't the same thing as agreeing. You can understand another person's point of view without agreeing with it.
- try to ask open-ended questions like; "How are you feeling?" or "Why do you think you're feeling this way?"
- offer reassurance and hope. Say things like "Thank you for telling me this", "There is a way through this", "I am here for you".

Things NOT to do

It's really important to be kind and accepting. The person has opened up to you, which is probably a big thing for them, so it's important not to:

- tell them to 'snap out of it'
- blame them
- minimize their feelings
- share your own experiences
- offer unsolicited advice
- make it about you

Always ask permission to contact services on a person's behalf however if you feel they are in immediate danger and they won't give permission you may need to go against their wishes.

Looking after yourself

If you are the mai