

# FamilySmart™ Practice Tool



FamilySmart™  
Together-Centred®

## ABOUT FAMILIES

### what it is...

“This is a tool about families, created by families. It provides information that may help in creating caring connections between families and service providers to support their crucial role in the mental health of children and youth.”

### how to use it...

“Use this tool to enhance your understanding of what it sounds like, looks like and feels like to be a family who may have children or youth struggling with their mental health. Consider this information when you connect with families, knowing that what you say and do has a big impact on the family seeking help.”

### why it's important...

“It's important because families need caring, connected relationships that consider their experience and see them as assets. Considering this information greatly impacts and improves a family's ability to support the mental health of their child or youth.”

## “What to Expect From Me”

“Know that I may not be showing up as my best self due to my concern for my child/youth and how hard all of this is on all of us. Everyone in our family is on a journey with my child/youth who is struggling and we are all doing the best we can at this time.”

“Please realize my life includes going to bed with worry and waking with dread. Don't assume that I am always this way. There is a whole other side to me, my child/youth and my family that you can't see until the crisis has passed.”

“I am looking for you to understand and believe what I say is happening for us.”

“Acknowledge that we each have experience and expertise that is likely different from each other. I will respect your experience and expertise, and ask that you do the same for me. We can be assets to each other.”

“Realize that I may be lacking hope. Help me find some again - hope is essential for me. Hope will help me better connect with you and my child/youth.”

“I may have some fears about people's judgement and blame about my parenting. Please don't judge or blame me.”

“I already feel like our family is a burden to those we are seeking help from. Please don't see, or treat us, as a burden.”

“I may be depleted financially, emotionally, physically or spiritually. Please consider this. I have good intentions in seeking help for my child/youth, but may need your help to overcome barriers.”

“I am not transient in my child/youth's life. I have knowledge, and a commitment, that I want to share, but I may need you to I may need help and encouragement in asking questions.”

“I encourage and respect your honesty.”

“Trust me to be an interpreter and advocate during a time when clear thoughts and words are not coming to my child/youth, but I may need time to process and respond.”

“I need you to bring yourself out from behind your desk so there are no barriers between you and my child/youth and what they have to say to you. I also need you to invite me in from the sidelines to help me feel comfortable to share with you.”

“I am seeking a thread of meaningful, human connection that gives us hope and helps us feel that we are worthy, we are of value, we matter and that we are not alone.”

“Acknowledge that we all hold power and that, if used correctly by everyone, our individual power can unite us and help us work well together.”