

FamilySmart™ Practice Tool



ABOUT FAMILIES

what it is...

This is a tool created by families for families and caring adults who are parenting a child or youth who is struggling with their mental health. It is for those times when you are feeling concerned for your child and are looking for some different ways to talk about it with them, so it can help the conversation go well. This tool offers some suggestions of language we use and how we say things to further support our relationship with our children and youth and stay connected to them.

how to use it...

Use these ideas as a guide to think about some different ways of talking about your concerns. These are only a few examples, and we know that what helps one child or youth, doesn't necessarily work for everyone. But, you know your kids best, and hopefully some of our ideas will help you.

why it's important...

It's important because how we talk to each other matters and it plays a vital role in maintaining connection and relationships. Families and caring adults need to be able to talk about some of their concerns with their kids and it doesn't always go well. We know that even when we try our best, conversations can go badly. It's important that we keep trying, and that families and caring adults are supported as they try. We know that a connected relationship with a caring adult is a vital protective factor that will make a positive difference to a young person's mental health.

Some Ideas for Helping Conversations Go Better

Instead of...

I need to know where you are at all times.

You need to talk to a counsellor.

You need to calm down!

You need to just stop hanging out with those people!

You're just overreacting, it's not that bad.

You need to go out more and see your friends

You need to _____

Be careful! Don't get into trouble!

I can't leave you alone because I don't trust you to keep safe

You need to try harder!

You should.....

Why don't you ever tell me what's going on?

Try saying...

If you are ever feeling unsafe or are in a situation that makes you uncomfortable you can count on me to pick you up. I don't need to know all the details. My priority is knowing you are safe.

Sometimes it's hard to sort this out on your own, would you be open to talking with a professional?

I can see you're really upset, I'm here if you need me.

Tell me what you like about them?

I can see this is really important to you.

What's getting in the way of you seeing your friends more?

I've noticed_____

Please think twice about the decisions you make. I find it helps me.

I worry about your safety. Is there a way we can check in with each other regularly so I know how you're doing?

I can see how hard you're trying.

I wonder if.....

I'm here for you. Let me know how I can support you.