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CONVERSATION STARTERS ABOUT

MENTAL HEALTH



"ARE YOU OKAY?"

Ask the question and mean it. Show you are listening by sitting alongside the person, maintaining an open body position and maintaining comfortable eye contact.



"ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT SUICIDE?"

If you are concerned that someone is considering suicide, ask the question directly. Asking a person if they have been thinking about suicide or have made plans will not increase the risk that they will complete suicide.



"I'VE NOTICED THAT..."

Open the conversation by explaining behavior changes you have noticed. For example, "I've noticed you have been showing up to work late a lot lately." Then, express genuine concern.



"DO YOU WANT TO TAKE A WALK?"

Engaging a friend, family member or loved one you are concerned about in a healthy activity like taking a walk together can be a great way to start a conversation. Doing an activity while you talk can take some of the nerves and discomfort out of the conversation.



"HOW ARE YOU, REALLY?"

Sometimes when someone says they're fine, they're not. Know the warning signs to look for so you can know when to offer extra support.

IMPROVE YOUR LISTENING WITH **NON-VERBAL SKILLS**



Pay close attention to what the person says.



Maintain comfortable eye contact. Don't avoid eye contact, but do avoid staring.



Maintain an open body position. Don't cross your arms over your body, as this may appear defensive.



Sit down, even if the person is standing, as this seems less threatening.



It's best to sit alongside and angled toward the person rather than directly opposite him or her.



Do not fidget.

Nonverbal communication and body language express a great deal. Good nonverbal skills show you are listening, while poor nonverbal skills can damage the rapport and negate what you say. Keep these nonverbal cues in mind next time you have a conversation with someone who may need help.

BE THE 1 TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE 