

Ask, Listen, Signpost for Children

If you are worried your child might be struggling with their mental health, here are some helpful pointers to consider when talking to them:



How To Identify A Child Is Struggling With Their Mental Health

- Persistent sadness over a couple of weeks
- Withdrawing from social interactions
- Outbursts of extreme behaviour
- Changes in mood or personality
- Changes in academic performance
- Changes in eating habits
- Changes in sleeping habits
- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Feeling sick
- Avoiding going to school
- Crying a lot
- Avoiding things they used to enjoy
- Spending more time alone or in their room

NOTICE and ASK

1. Notice behaviour changes.
2. Don't overcomplicate it, talk to them how you would normally.
3. Some children find it difficult to identify how they are feeling. We have put together a helpful poster to help them identify and communicate their emotions.
4. If they don't know why they feel this way, don't worry. This can be figured out later, but the main thing is that they are able to say how they feel and be open to getting help.
5. Talk in a space and at a time that feels safe for both of you.
6. Don't worry if they don't want to talk straight away. Letting them know that you are available to talk to is the first step.

LISTEN

1. Be an active listener.
2. Don't jump to conclusions or problem-solve straight away.
3. Reflect back to them what you heard so they feel listened to.

SIGNPOST

1. Continue doing what you would normally do but check in with them regularly and let them know you are available to talk to.
2. Seek professional support.