

## How to Talk to Your Child About Mental Health

Talking with your child about mental health can feel uncomfortable at first. Many adults worry about saying the wrong thing or not having all the answers. Starting the conversation, listening, and showing support can help your child feel safe and understood.

### Start the Conversation

You do not need to have a perfect script. Simple, open-ended questions can help your child share how they are feeling.

Try asking:

- What has been taking up most of your energy lately
- How are things going with your friends
- What is something you are looking forward to
- What is something that has been stressful or hard
- How do you usually relax or feel better when you are upset

These types of questions can help build trust and make conversations feel more natural.

### Create a Safe Space to Talk

How you respond matters just as much as what you ask.

- Listen without interrupting or trying to fix the problem right away
- Validate their feelings, even if you do not fully understand
- Stay calm and avoid judgment
- Let them know they can talk to you anytime
- Be patient if they are not ready to open up right away

Talking openly about mental health helps reduce stigma and shows your child that their feelings are important.

### Help Your Child Understand Their Feelings

Children may not always have the words to explain how they feel.

- Use simple language to name emotions like happy, sad, worried, or angry
- Encourage your child to describe what their feelings feel like in their body
- Use tools like a feelings chart or "[feelings wheel](#)" to explore emotions
- Let them express themselves through drawing, play, or creative activities

All feelings are valid, even the ones that are uncomfortable.

## **When to Seek Support**

If your child seems withdrawn, overwhelmed, or their behavior changes in ways that concern you, it may be helpful to seek additional support.

Wyandot BHN offers therapy, psychiatry, and crisis services for children and families. Support is available, and reaching out can be an important step.

To help support conversations, you can print the “[Meet Little Monster](#)” activity book created by NAMI Washington.

If your child is in immediate distress, call **988** for the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline.