



## How to Talk to Your Parents About Your Mental Health



Noticing signs of depression, anxiety, or other mental health struggles? Even though it feels scary, opening up to your parents is a brave first step toward getting help. Here are some tips to have a productive convo with them about what you're going through:

### **Validate Yourself for Recognizing the Issue**

Give yourself major props for being self-aware and honest that something is wrong. A lot of people bury their heads in the sand when stuff gets hard mentally. But you had the courage to admit you're struggling - be proud! That awareness is the only way change can start.



It's totally normal to feel ashamed or afraid to speak up. But remind yourself that this is about your health and well-being. You deserve support. Consider writing down reasons why talking to your parents is a brave step. Writing it down can provide a tangible reminder of your bravery. And it will help boost your confidence in starting the conversation.

### **Pick a Neutral, Low-Stress Time**

Timing is key, but don't overthink it. Avoid springing this on your parents right as they get home from work or before a stressful event. But, don't stress about finding the "perfect" moment – it rarely exists.

Your best bet is for example, if your mom asks about school, use it as a chance to talk about your mental health challenges. Let's say your mom asks about how your day at school went. You could respond that you've been feeling overwhelmed lately. Use it to talk about struggling with some anxiety or stress.

This opens the door for a deeper conversation about your mental health challenges. It allows your parent to provide support and understanding.

### **Don't Keep Harmful Secrets**

If your friend confides that they are struggling with self-harm, an eating disorder, substance abuse, or suicidal thoughts, you must tell a trusted adult like your parent or school counselor. Your loyalty is to your friend's life and safety above all else. They may be upset at first, but you are doing the right thing by getting them help. These issues need professional support.

### **Consider Having the Conversation During an Activity**

Doing an activity together can create a more relaxed environment for the topic. Whether you're taking a walk, or doing chores like folding laundry, focus is away from eye contact. This can be especially helpful if emotions start to feel overwhelming.

Consider what activities your parents enjoy and suggest doing something together. If a side-by-side activity feels most comfortable, suggest going for ice cream or taking the dog for a walk. Then use that relaxed mood to open up.

### **Share Specific Details and Examples**

Explain what's going on using objective facts about your symptoms. This can look like "I've been feeling super anxious lately, especially at school. It's this constant worry about getting bullied again, you know?"



Last year was rough. And I've kinda lost interest in stuff I used to love, like drawing and basketball. It's just not hitting the same anymore".

Being specific about what's going on. It will help your parents see it's more serious than regular teen worries. Stick to the facts without getting too emotional or dramatic.

### **Come Equipped with Potential Solutions**

It's time to brainstorm some ideas. Do a bit of digging on therapists and support groups. It will show you're serious about feeling better. Look into treatment options covered by your insurance in your area. Then talk to your parents, providing your solutions.

Suggest a check-up with your doctor to rule out any physical causes. Other underlying causes could need different treatment. Having some solutions ready will make the chat more productive.

With the right support system behind you, the fog will start lifting. Appreciate yourself for having the courage to reach out. Stay hopeful - you've already made huge progress. Brighter days are coming!