

The Space We Make:

For Conversations with Youth

Spaces Where Youth Open Up



Car Rides

Eyes forward, no eye contact pressure. Long quiet stretches invite conversation.



Meals

Natural pauses, shared focus. Food creates a reason to be together without pressure.



Outdoors

Movement and rhythm make it easier to say hard things.



Bedtime

Lower stakes, quieter. Kids are often more open when the day is ending.

Go-To Prompts

When something seems off

- "I noticed...can you tell me how that feels?"
- "Tell me about your day."
- "I'm wondering how you are doing?"

When they're challenged by a feeling

- "What does that feel like in your body?"
- "If it were a color, what would it be?"

When they want to go deeper

- "What would help right now?"
- "Do you want to tell me more about that?"
- "How have you been handling that?"

When you don't have answers

- "I don't know. Let's figure it out together."
- "That's hard. I'm glad you told me."

When You Mess Up

Hearing that a child or youth is struggling can be scary.

Remember your heightened emotion can look like anger to them. It's OK to say you are worried or afraid and that you are there to listen and help them get the support they need.

What not to do

- Jump to solutions
- Minimize ("It's not that bad")
- Turn it into a lesson
- Ask yes/no questions
- Lead with your own experience
- Say "You're overreacting" or "You're being dramatic"



**Opening
Minds**

MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION
OF CANADA

If You Are in Distress

If you are in distress or supporting someone in distress, call or text 9-8-8 anytime. If it is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency department.