



Switching On by Switching Off

Information for
children & young people





We all need someone to talk to.

As you grow you experience new friendships, learn new skills and try new things. Some of these things will be great and some will be difficult.

It is important that we have someone to talk to about the good - and the difficult - things we go through.

Having someone listen to us and understand us helps us feel valued. But it's not always easy to talk with adults. Here are some things that might help.

Start small

Small talk is easier than big talk, so start simple. Ask your close adult about their day or tell them something easy about yours. Practice talking with them every day, so you feel more confident sharing information with them when it really matters.

Conversation starters

"Hi mum, how was your day?"

What's the problem?

Before you start a big talk figure out what you actually really need to talk about.

Write down what you need to talk about and what you want to say, or practice by yourself. This will help you be clear about what you want to say during an important conversation.

"I wish they knew..."

How do you really feel?

Feelings can be confusing. Sometimes they don't come across the way we intend.

Before you get talking, try to figure out how you really feel. Are you confused, angry, hurt, sad, worried, embarrassed?

Be honest with your close adult about how you feel – it will help them understand what is going on for you.



What do you need right now?

Be clear about what you need from your close adult.

Sometimes you don't want advice, you just want someone to listen to you or hear about your problems. Perhaps you have something important you need or want to talk about. Maybe you need to ask a question or you need permission to do something. Let your close adult know what you need from them.

I just need someone to talk to

Make a plan

Before you begin a difficult conversation, make a plan for success.

WHO

should I talk to?

Choose someone who can help you.

WHAT

should I say?

Make a plan of what you need to say.

WHEN

is the best time?

Choose a time when your person can listen.

WHERE

should we talk?

Choose somewhere private or quiet.

Make a Plan B

Some conversations don't go the way we hope they will.

Maybe the adult

- didn't listen
- didn't understand
- didn't react the way you wanted them to, or
- didn't help the way you needed them to.



Have a Plan B in case the talk doesn't work out the way you need it to. Having another strategy can help you stay positive. Perhaps you can

- try again later
- describe the problem using different words, or
- find someone else to talk to.

The most important thing is to try again until someone listens and helps.

Give it a go



When you are ready, let your close adult know you need to talk.

If starting to talk is too difficult, write them a note or send them a text message to let them know you have something important to say.

Be honest

Sometimes we find ourselves in difficult situations. It is best to tell the truth. Don't make excuses for a mistake you made but do talk about what actually happened and how you feel. Your adult might be able to help problem solve.

"I made a mistake..."



Stay Calm

Some conversations are difficult. Take a few deep breaths and try your best to stay calm.

Be Mature

This is an opportunity to show your close adult that you are growing up.

Treat them the way you want to be treated:

- Be respectful so they treat you with trust and respect
- Listen when they talk so they also listen to you
- Try to understand their perspective so they try to understand yours.



Does this mean they will agree with me? Do I have to agree with them?

Nope. Talking to a trusted adult doesn't mean they will agree with everything you say, just like you won't agree with everything they say. But it is important to talk with a close adult so you stay safe, so they understand your opinion or what you've been through, and so you get the help you need.

How do I know who to talk to?

Perhaps you have someone you can talk to about problems – great! But sometimes we're not sure who to talk to. Do you have a parent, grandparent, relative, teacher, coach, family friend, doctor or counsellor? The best person for you to talk to about big problems should be an adult who:

- ♥ Can listen
- ♥ You can trust
- ♥ Can help you

If you can't find the right person to listen, Kids Helpline is available all day every day:

call

1800 55 1800

email

counsellor@kidshelpline.com.au

webchat

www.kidshelpline.com.au

