



# Wellbeing

## Humility

### Reaching out: talking to someone you're worried about

Sometimes it can seem really obvious when someone in our lives seems to be going through a hard time; if we know them really well, or know them day-to-day, a change in behaviour or energy levels can signify something's not right. But that doesn't always mean we know how to approach them or ask them how they are.

Here are some tips for talking to someone we're worried about.

#### 1. Don't expect them to share it all

Before we start a conversation with someone, we need to manage our expectations of how it will go. If the person we are talking to is going through something personal or aren't used to opening up then there's a good chance they'd rather not tell us very much – if anything. And that's fine, our job is to remember that they will share what they feel comfortable with, and we shouldn't push for more.

#### 2. Understand our limitations

It is important for us to be aware of our own limitations as this means we can provide a much more supportive, honest and helpful space to those in need. If the conversation delves into areas we don't understand, it's much better to admit and say, "I don't have much of a personal understanding about this, but I am here to listen, and I am here to help any way I can – if you want me to." It's perfectly ok to say that we might need to find out more or to signpost the person to specific help and support.

#### 3. Find an appropriate time and space

Much like any sensitive conversation, finding the appropriate space to have an honest and open dialogue is really important. Don't try to spring the conversation on someone but ask the person if they might be free in the next day or so to talk, and let them know that it is our intention to check in with them.

#### 4. Don't make assumptions

We should never assume to know how someone is feeling or what they are going through, nor label a diagnosis on them. Making assumptions can be harmful, and offering suggestions or solutions based on these can be hurtful to the person we care about.

**5. Don't make it about us** - If we've experienced something similar to the person we are worried about, it's really easy to try to normalise their emotions by telling them stories about what happened to us. This is not the time to do that. We can hint at understanding, but it's good to remind ourselves that we're here to listen and be a supportive ear – after all, everyone's experience is different. Try to judge how the conversation is going and be mindful not to accidentally take it over.

## Helpful things to say/ask

I noticed you don't seem yourself recently, and I wondered if you wanted to talk about anything that might be going on with you?

I know it might be hard to explain, but take your time, I'm here for you.

I might not be able to fully understand what you're going through, but I am here to listen.

If you don't want to talk, that's fine, but know I'm here if you would like to.

What do you find helps you to feel better?

Is there anything I can do to make things a bit easier at the moment?

Would it be ok if check in with each other more often? Maybe once a week?

I'm sorry, things can be really hard sometimes.

Thank you for being honest with me, I really appreciate you letting me in like this.

## Unhelpful things to say/ask

What's wrong?

I completely understand what you're going through, but you'll be ok.

We all have bad days.

Think positive and you'll be ok.

You've got so much going for you, other people would be so happy with what you've got!

Stop worrying about the future, it'll be ok.

Life is rubbish sometimes, we all deal with it.

Things could be so much worse, just try to get out more.