



PARENT/
CARER

TALKING IN THE 'I'

When we use 'I' statements it helps us say how we feel and what we want, without placing blame on the other person.

If we use statements starting with 'you', this can come across like we are accusing someone or putting them down. It might cause the other person to become defensive.

When in an argument try using the following structure so that you can clearly share your needs:

I FEEL....

WHEN....

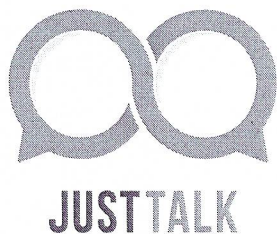
BECAUSE....

I WOULD LIKE/PREFER/WANT....

For example:

I felt angry when you didn't text me back all evening because I was worried about you. I would like you to let me know that you're ok and when you'll be home.





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VALIDATING FEELINGS

WHAT IS VALIDATION?

Validation is the act of acknowledging a person's thoughts and feelings and communicating to them that they are being heard and that their feelings are understandable given the situation.

WHY IS VALIDATION IMPORTANT?

Validation is important as it shows someone you are listening, understanding and being non-judgmental-which can help build a stronger relationship.

WAYS TO VALIDATE FEELINGS:

Pay Attention - One of the simplest ways to validate feelings is to give the person your undivided attention. Remove distractions and actively listen using attentive body language (eye contact, nodding etc).

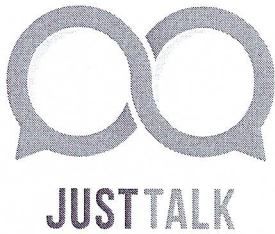
Reflecting - Reflecting back the persons' thoughts and feelings will help them to feel heard. It also prevents miscommunication because the person can correct any information, they feel you did not hear correctly. It might sound like "I'm hearing that this made you feel...".

Empathise – Recognise the person's feelings by putting yourself in their shoes e.g. "I understand why that would be difficult for you".

Offer reassurance – Using supportive language demonstrates that you believe their feelings are appropriate and understandable e.g. "I am here to support you".

Normalise - Communicate that what the other person is feeling makes sense based on their experience - "I understand why you would feel this way". Validating someone's feelings does not necessarily mean you agree with them, but it shows you are acknowledging their feelings.





SUPPORTING YOUR YOUNG PERSON WITH PEER CONFLICT

STEP 1 – CREATE TIME AND SPACE

Choose a good time to talk, when you won't be rushed and when there are few distractions (such as other family members or the TV).

Avoid talking to them at the height of their distress. It's important to be there for them, but it can be more helpful to talk about the causes of their emotions when things are feeling calmer. Suggest they take some time to relax or try one of the exercises on our worksheet **'Grounding & Breath Relaxation'** – you could try this together.

If they are not willing to talk to you try some of the strategies on our **'reconnecting with your young person'** worksheet.



STEP 2 – VALIDATE THEIR FEELINGS

Listen and allow them to talk through what has happened, without giving advice. Try to repeat back some of what they have shared so that they feel you are listening to them. Tell them it is normal to feel lots of different emotions when in conflict. Try to understand things from their point of view and acknowledge how their experience might be impacting them.

You could say "it's really understandable that you are feeling ..."

For more ideas, see the 'Validating Feelings' worksheet.

STEP 3 – ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS TO GET 'BENEATH THE SURFACE'

Ask open-ended questions that encourage them to share the situation and their feelings with you.

Open Question Examples:

"Tell me some more"

"And then?"

"How do you feel about that?"

"What do you think could help?"

STEP 4 – TALK ABOUT HOW TO COMMUNICATE WHEN IN CONFLICT

See the **'Talking in the I' worksheet**.

Let them know the professional and age-appropriate helplines, text lines and online chat services that are available. Young people can find it difficult to talk and might worry about upsetting their parents, so reassure them that it's ok to talk other people too.

STEP 5 – MODELLING RESOLUTION

Try to demonstrate healthy conflict resolution in your day-to-day family life. It is very normal for family disagreements and conflict to occur - modelling how conflict can be resolved through communication can help your child normalise, understand and learn from it. If this is something you struggle with see the **'Managing Conflict worksheet'**.

STEP 6 – FOLLOW UP

Make a plan to talk about it again at a good time for you both, or remember to bring it up again in a few days to check how things are and if the conflict has been resolved.

LIST OF WORKSHEETS:

Reconnecting with your teenager

Calming/Grounding

Validating Feelings

'Talking in the I'

Managing conflict





9 TIPS FOR MANAGING CONFLICT

PARENTS/
CARERS

1. USE YOUR WORDS

Choose words that will express how you feel, but not shame or blame the other person.

2. UNDERSTAND THE OTHER PERSON

If you don't understand the other person's opinion, a solution is harder to find.

3. UNDERSTAND DIFFERENCES IN PERSPECTIVE

Everyone has a different perspective and understanding the differences can help reach a middle ground.

4. CONSIDER THE IMPACT

Consider the impact of what you are saying, as the impact on the other person can often be different to what we intended.

5. LISTEN TO THE OTHER PERSON

Listen to what they have to say. Ask them questions to clarify their points and don't interrupt them until they have finished their thought.

6. TAKE SOME TIME OUT

Taking time out is healthy for both sides to help give perspective, think of how to resolve the problem and return in a better frame of mind.

7. WORK TOGETHER AGAINST THE PROBLEM

Remember that in an argument, you should try and work together against the problem, not work against each other.

8. FIND THE COMPROMISE

Be willing to give some options to find a solution that everyone is happy with.

9. LEAVE IT IN THE PAST

Once a solution is agreed, don't revisit the same argument.

SO, YOU'VE ASKED YOUR CHILD HOW THEY ARE, AND THEY TELL YOU THEY'RE NOT OK — WHAT NOW?

We know from our annual Hertfordshire Young People Health and Wellbeing Survey, that 3 in 5 young people would want to take to a parent or carer if they were struggling with their mental health.

Talking about how we are feeling is important, but sometimes we can be nervous of asking questions because we are worried that we could say the wrong thing or make things worse. This is a step-by-step guide to give you the confidence to know how to respond if your child tells you they're struggling.

1. ASK OPEN QUESTIONS LIKE:

“What's been going on lately?”

“You don't seem your usual self, how are you doing/feeling?”



2. LISTEN

We underestimate the power of simply listening to someone else when they're going through a rough time. You don't need to be an expert in mental health to be a good listener. Here are some tips:

- If you don't have time to talk at that moment, arrange a time when you do. It's better to do this than to leave your child feeling rushed.
- Listen actively. Pay attention, be present and allow your child time to speak.
- Be curious and ask questions. This can really help you to try to understand things from their perspective.

3. DON'T TRY TO FIX THE PROBLEM

Often our first instinct is to want to fix a person's problems. It hurts to see someone we love in pain, and we can feel awkward or helpless not knowing how to help. But you don't have to have all (or any) of the answers.

Instead of jumping into “fix it” mode right away, accept the conversation may be uncomfortable and allow them to speak about their difficulties and experiences.

4. ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK MIGHT HELP THEM

They may not be able to think of anything, and that's ok. Some problems or feelings are very difficult.

5. LET THEM KNOW ABOUT SELF-HELP TOOLS AND SUPPORT INFORMATION

There are lots of things that research has shown can help to boost our wellbeing and/or cope with challenging times.

The Just Talk Herts website (justtalkherts.org) has a host of mental health and wellbeing resources, including:

- Five Ways to Wellbeing E-learning, to learn about self-help techniques to boost wellbeing
- Sleep tips and tricks
- Just Talk journal
- You can also follow Just Talk on Instagram, Twitter and Facebook at @JustTalkHerts – we share advice on how to look after your mental health and signpost onto further resources which can help.

Other useful sites:

- Anna Freud Centre - Self Care, Anxiety, Depression, Coping Strategies | On My Mind | Anna Freud Centre
- www.healthforkids.co.uk and www.healthforteens.co.uk

There is also lots of support available, either through your child's school or through other agencies across Hertfordshire. A few are listed here, but you can find details of more on www.justtalkherts.org:

- Services for Young People offer a range of emotional wellbeing support as well as programmes and activities over the summer.
- Herts Mind Network offer messaging and telephone support- <https://www.hertsmindnetwork.org/services-for-young-people/>
- Chat Health text messaging support for secondary school aged young people 07480 635 050
- Kooth online support for 10-25 year olds: <https://www.kooth.com/>

6. IF YOU'RE REALLY WORRIED ABOUT YOUR CHILD,

you can talk to someone about your concerns – your GP, your child's school/ the school nursing service, or for more specialist support and mental health services, there is the SPA (single point of access): HPFT's freephone 24/7 helpline: 0800 6444 101

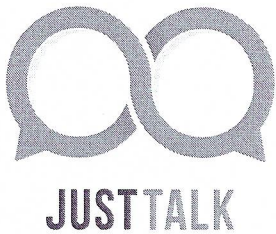
7. CHECK IN AGAIN.

Once your conversation has ended, follow up at a later point to see how they're doing.

8. REMEMBER TO LOOK AFTER YOUR OWN WELLBEING.

It is never possible to support someone else if our own wellbeing is suffering. If you need some support or want to access a range of free e-learning courses, you could try the new online platform Togetherall. This is free to access and suitable for anyone aged 16+.





RECONNECTING WITH YOUR TEENAGER

PARENTS/
CARERS

CHOOSE a calm time and show that you're available. Show you are interested and ask questions about their likes.

STRUCTURE, healthy eating, outdoor activities and good sleep all contribute. Sometimes a walk can b

EXPECT rejection and try again later. It may be easier said than done but don't be put off.

WHATEVER your teen is facing, this doesn't mean you have failed. Remind each other that with love and support things can get better.

TAKE CARE of yourself. Parenting is HARD! Take some time for yourself and don't be afraid to seek support.

