



Talking to Your Tween or Teen About Mental Health

A Parents' Guide to Healthy, Honest Conversation



Why It Matters

Mental health is just as important as physical health— especially during the tween and teen years. Kids at this age face academic pressures, social dynamics, and emotional changes. Talking openly helps:

- Reduce stigma around mental health.
- Build trust and strengthen relationships.
- Encourage kids to seek help when needed.
- Promote resilience and emotional well-being.



How to Start the Conversation

You don't need to have all the answers—just start with compassion and curiosity.

- **Choose the right moment.** Car rides, walks, or quiet time can feel less intense than face-to-face talks.
- **Ask open-ended questions.** “How have you been feeling lately?” or “What’s been on your mind?”
- **Normalize emotions.** Let them know it’s okay to feel sad, anxious, or stressed.
- **Validate, don’t fix.** Reflect their feelings without immediately jumping to solutions.



Tips to Share with Your Tween or Teen

- **It's okay to not be okay.** Everyone struggles sometimes.
- **Talk it out.** Sharing feelings with a trusted friend or adult can really help.
- **Practice self-care.** Sleep, movement, healthy food, and downtime make a big difference.
- **Unplug when needed.** Social media breaks are healthy.

Where to Turn for Support

- 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline – Call or text 988, 24/7
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) - [nami.org](https://www.nami.org)
- Teen Line – Text TEEN to 839863 or call 800-852-8336
- Child Mind Institute - [childmind.org](https://www.childmind.org)
- Mental Health America – [mhanational.org](https://www.mhanational.org)
- BStrong Together - bstrongtogether.org
- Your child’s school counselor or pediatrician



You don't have to be perfect. Just be present.

bstrongtogether.org