



Supporting Minds at Fullbrook - Talking to Your Child About Mental Health without Judgment

Welcome to 'Wellbeing Wednesday: Supporting Young Minds at Fullbrook' focused on supporting our children's mental health and wellbeing.

In last week's Wellbeing Wednesday newsletter, we outlined the signs and symptoms families could look for that may indicate your child could be struggling with their mental health. Supporting your child's mental health is just as important as looking after their physical wellbeing. This week's instalment focuses on how we might approach a conversation with young people about their wellbeing. As parents and care givers, finding the right words can feel hard — but creating a space where your child feels heard and understood can make a real difference.

According to guidance from Young Minds, "when your child can share what they're going through and feel understood, their difficult feelings become a little easier to manage." Encouraging open dialogue doesn't mean having all the answers - it begins with listening. Try to pick a calm, relaxed time to talk. Starting conversations during everyday activities is a great way to start, like walking together, cooking, or even playing a game, which can take the pressure off and make talking feel more natural.

When your child does open up, focus on listening rather than immediately solving the problem. Young Minds advises letting them speak at their own pace and resisting the urge to jump in with quick fixes. "It can be tempting to jump in with lots of 'why' or 'how' questions," the charity notes, "but that can discourage them from talking." Sometimes, just giving your child a platform to talk openly actually enables them to think about how to healthily approach the problem themselves - which is a great life skill in itself! The very act of simply voicing a concern can feel incredibly therapeutic.

Lastly: Stay calm and show you care. The NHS 'Every Mind Matters' campaign stresses the importance of taking what your child says seriously and showing interest in their inner world: "Pay attention to how your child is feeling or behaving" and help them work through emotional ups and downs. A calm, non-judgmental reaction reassures them that you can handle what they're sharing. Remember - what might feel trivial to us as adults, can feel humongous to a teenager. Always acknowledge that their feelings about a situation (however big or small) are valid and, though you may not be able to solve everything, you're there to 'ride the wave' with them. Phrases like "just get over it" or "you're overthinking" can make young people feel misunderstood. Instead, reflect their feelings back with empathy — for example, "It sounds like that's been really tough for you." Young Minds emphasises validating their experience, not dismissing it. Keep the conversation going: One chat won't solve everything — and that's okay. Both the NHS and Young Minds encourage ongoing conversations. The charity reminds parents that even if parts of the first conversation don't go perfectly, "you can always come back to a conversation and do it over."

Finally, if you're ever unsure about how to help, as always you can contact your child's Tutor, Head of Year or, for more serious concerns the DSL team at Fullbrook. Organisations like Young Minds also offer support and advice for parents. You can contact their free parents' helpline to talk through your concerns and get practical tips tailored to your situation. Next week, we will be focusing on sleep and how to introduce practical bedtime habits for your child to help contribute towards a healthy wellbeing.

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