

# Tips for Having Supportive Conversations

As schools begin to gradually re-open, it is essential that you feel prepared and confident in having a supportive conversation. Use the guidance below to help you support a young person to open up and speak to you.

## 1. Opening a conversation



**Try to ask broad questions and allow the young person to open up.**

- ⊙ It's nice to have you back at school, I was hoping we could have a chat to make sure everything's going OK for you?
- ⊙ Can you help me understand how things were for you at home?
  - What did you like about being at home? / What did you not like?
  - Who else was at home?
  - What support did you have at home during the lockdown?

## 2. Exploring risks and issues



**Allow them to explain their feelings or experiences, without asking leading questions.**

- ⊙ Can you tell me more about X?
- ⊙ How long have you felt like this?
- ⊙ How have you been coping?
- ⊙ Is there anything I can do to support you?
- ⊙ What would you like to be different?

## 3. Outcome and closing



**Close the conversation with clarity, signpost to appropriate support and make referrals (if necessary).**

- ⊙ **Use affirmative statements**  
What you're going through is difficult, but with the right support and some time, things can change for you. I'm here to support you however I can.
- ⊙ **Signpost to support**  
If you need more support with how you feel, you can speak to the school counsellor.
- ⊙ **Explain what happens next**  
I will speak to Mr/Miss/Mrs X about this. They are in charge of safeguarding in our school and will know how to support you further.

Young people may make a disclosure about risk or potential abuse. In these instances, it is important you remember to make sure to follow your schools' procedures, whether that involves making a record of the conversation or making a referral to the appropriate person. If you think a child is at risk of immediate harm, **please contact the police by calling 999.**