

CONVERSATION TIPS

Stop the silence

If someone admits to having a mental illness, they are opening up to you in a big way. Ask questions, show concern, and keep the conversation going.

Be caring

We communicate much more with body language and tone than we do with words alone. Let warmth and care come through in the things you say.

Listen

Just being there can make a world of difference. In your conversations, focus on listening to your loved one.

Keep in contact

Just be there. Make sure your loved one knows you're only a text, phone call, or email away. Make time for them.

Don't ignore it

Don't be afraid to ask about your loved one's well-being if you think they might be hurting. Trust your instincts.

Offer help

Everyone is different. Your loved one may want very specific help or no help at all. Ask, and be open to their answer.

Keep the conversation moving

Feel free to talk about everyday things in your conversation, as long as your loved one knows you're completely open to talking more about how they're doing later.

Small things can make a big difference

Give your loved one small reminders to show that you care about them.

Be patient

Ups and downs happen. There will likely be some days your loved one wants to talk a lot and some they might not want to talk at all. Give them time.

Educate yourself

If you're feeling uncomfortable, try learning more about your loved one's condition. Knowing more about what they're going through can help make you a better support. Visit nami.org and click on the "Mental Illness" tab to learn more.



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