



# MENTAL HEALTH CONVERSATIONS WITH YOUNG PEOPLE: Tip Sheet for Parents, Guardians and Caregivers

## General Advice

- ❖ Minimize or eliminate distractions.
- ❖ Actively listen.
- ❖ Ask open-ended questions to learn more.
- ❖ Check-in to see how they're feeling.
- ❖ Thank them for talking to you about it.
- ❖ If appropriate, make a plan to follow up.
- ❖ Follow through with any commitments you make in this conversation.

## Mental Health

- ❖ Everyone has mental health.
- ❖ Mental health exists on a continuum from strong mental health to mental illness and everything in between.
- ❖ Our mental health is influenced by what is going on in our lives so it will change and feel different over time.
- ❖ Sometimes we feel strong in our mental health and sometimes we feel like we are struggling.
- ❖ If we start struggling in ways that feel intense, last a long time and have a big impact, it is a good idea to reach out for help.

## Self-Harm and Suicide

- ❖ Sometimes when our mental health starts to get low or things get hard, we can start to have thoughts about hurting ourselves or possibly not wanting to be here anymore.
- ❖ It is really important for young people to tell a trusted adult if they or a friend is ever feeling this way. Let your children know that the adults in their lives want to help and will know what to do.
- ❖ Help your child brainstorm a list of at least five adults they feel they could talk to if they or a friend ever feel this way.

## Resilience, Relationships and Kindness

- ❖ Here is a link to a two-minute video about what it means to be resilient - [A Lesson On Resilience](#).
- ❖ Healthy, nurturing relationships are the biggest component of resilience. Consider the key relationships for each member of your family - each other, friends, peers, neighbours, your parish and beyond - and look for opportunities to strengthen the ones that feel most important.
- ❖ Kindness, among other things, is needed to build and maintain healthy relationships in all settings. Consider a family kindness challenge to help promote these skills.

If it feels like you or someone in your family needs a little extra help right now, please check out our list of community resources at this link: [Community Resources for All Families of PVNC](#).



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