

Talking about **MENTAL HEALTH**

...a conversation starter tool.

Talking about mental health is important, but it isn't always easy.

The rise in living costs is putting significant pressure on households across the UK. Many people are worried that they will not have enough money to buy food and heat their homes, particularly over the winter period. The financial pressure is likely impacting on people's mental health as a result.

When times are tough, it's important that we look after our own and each other's wellbeing. Reaching out to someone could help them know that someone cares, that they are valued and help them find the support they need.

Sometimes these conversations may touch on sensitive and emotional topics, and it can be difficult to know the best way to approach the conversation.

The aim of this conversation starter tool is to help you to feel confident to engage in conversations with friends, family, neighbours or those you support in your community or workplace about mental health and wellbeing. And importantly know the most appropriate help and advice services to signpost to for professional support.

Below you can find suggested prompts, questions and useful information about the resources and tools available to support good mental health, wellbeing and financial worries.



Why not use the SIGNSS framework to note down some of your own ideas for how to start, maintain and close a conversation about mental health?

CONVERSATION STARTER TOOL



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Situation

Try using a situation to find common ground – a recent, current or future event that means something to you both.

- > “I know lots of people are finding things difficult at the moment and wondering when things will get easier, how are you doing?”
- > “All of these cost increases are so hard to keep up with. How are you feeling about the situation?”
- > “I’ve been thinking about how much I am looking forward to (a community event, faith gathering, social event), how about you?”

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Initiate

Initiating a caring conversation is an act of kindness, good for your own wellbeing as well as for someone else. A direct question, asked gently, gets to the point and is an honest way to begin.

- > “I wanted to check in and ask how you have been doing, how you have been managing with being at home/working/looking after your family?”
- > “You haven’t seemed like yourself recently, is there anything you want to talk about?”
- > “Are you free to meet (for a coffee, a walk, or a phone call) this week? It would be great to catch up.”

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Guide

Being a good listener shows someone that you are genuinely interested in how they are doing. Use open-ended questions to guide them into talking more, without judgement or negative reactions to what they have to say.

- > “You said you were having concerns about how quickly things are changing at the moment and what that might mean for you, how are you feeling about things right now?”
- > “You mentioned money worries, how has that been affecting you?”

N

Nudge

A nudge in the right direction can help people to search for their own resolution. Positive encouragement and practical suggestions can be a helpful prompt.

- > “Have you thought about what might help you to deal with your money worries?”
- > “Have you thought about the next steps you’d like to take? I am happy to support you in finding a solution.”

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Support & Signpost

It can be hard to know where to turn and what help is available. You can use this opportunity to point someone in the right direction for support.

- > “Thank you for sharing that with me. It’s been good to talk. There is much more help available for you if you would like to speak with someone. Here are a few options for you.”
- > “If this is your situation, this is the support that is available to you.”

SUPPORT & SIGNPOST

Where can I find help?



Reaching out to someone we trust is one of the most important things we can do to keep mentally well. Even if this is a partner, a relative, or a friend, it's important to acknowledge that it's not always easy for someone to talk about how they're feeling or share the concerns they may have. A gentle conversation can encourage this but it's helpful to know what support and advice services are available which can offer professional help, if needed.



Professional support and advice services

NHS Every Mind Matters empowers people to look after their mental health by directing them to free, practical tips and advice.

> Find out more here: www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters

Good Thinking is London's digital mental wellbeing service, promoting proactive self-care for the four most common mental health conditions: anxiety, low mood, sleeping difficulties and stress.

> Find out more here: www.good-thinking.uk

Talk to your GP. It can be daunting to speak to someone that you may not know well about your mental health, but most people find that speaking to their GP, and the help and support they receive from them, can make all the difference.

> Find a GP search tool www.nhs.uk/service-search/find-a-gp

Mind provide advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem.

> Call Mind Infoline 0300 123 3393 open Monday to Friday (except for bank holidays) 9am to 6pm, or visit www.mind.org.uk

Thrive LDN offer tools and resources to support Londoners' mental health, including resources on supporting emotional resilience, financial anxiety, bereavement, and also how to safely support others in the community.

> Find out more here: www.thriveLDN.co.uk

Samaritans provide free emotional support, advice and information to anyone who wants to talk, available 24 hours, every day.

> Call 116 123 or visit www.samaritans.org or email jo@samaritans.org

Shout is a free, confidential, anonymous text support service for anyone who is struggling to cope, available 24 hours, every day.

> Text the word 'SHOUT' to 85258 or visit www.giveusashout.org/get-help

NHS urgent mental health helplines are available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

> Find the relevant helpline for you here: www.nhs.uk/service-search/mental-health/find-an-urgent-mental-health-helpline

SUPPORT & SIGNPOST

Where can I find help?



Financial advice and practical help

Debt Free London offers free, impartial debt advice available in person or via phone, WhatsApp and video chat. Lines are open seven days a week, 8am to 8pm.

> Call free helpline 0800 808 5700 or visit www.debtfree.london

Step Change Debt Charity offers free, flexible debt advice online or via phone.

> Call free helpline 0800 138 1111 available Monday to Friday 8am to 8pm and Saturday 8am to 4pm. Online debt advice service available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year or visit www.stepchange.org

MoneyHelper provides free and impartial debt advice, money and pension guidance via phone, WhatsApp, and webchat, available Monday to Friday, 8am to 6pm.

> Visit www.moneyhelper.org.uk/en

Christians Against Poverty provide free professional debt help through local churches. Helpline available Monday to Thursday 9:30am to 5pm and Friday 9:30am to 3:30pm.

> Call free helpline 0800 328 0066 or visit www.capuk.org

Turn2us supports people in financial need gain access to welfare benefits, charitable grants and other financial help – online, by phone and face to face.

> Call free helpline 0808 802 2000, available Monday to Friday 9:00am to 5pm or use the free and confidential [Benefits Calculator](#).

Shelter provides advice and support services with housing issues and homelessness.

> Call free emergency helpline 0808 800 4444 available Monday to Friday, 8am to 8pm and weekends and bank holidays, 9am to 5pm or visit www.england.shelter.org.uk

The Trussell Trust supports a nationwide network of food banks and provides emergency food and support.

> Visit www.trusselltrust.org or call the free Help through Hardship line on 0808 208 2138 available Monday to Friday 9am-5pm

Citizens Advice offer free, confidential advice online, over the phone, and in person.

> Visit www.citizensadvice.org.uk