

CONVERSATION STARTERS FOR YOUTH

Talking about mental health helps reduce stigma, build empathy, and connect youth with support. Creating safe spaces for these conversations can foster resilience, trust, and early intervention. They also serve as protective factors against underage substance use.

General Check-In

- How have you been feeling lately?
- What's been on your mind these days?
- If your feelings were a weather forecast, what would today look like?

Daily Stress and Coping

- What's been the most stressful part of your week?
- How do you usually deal with tough days?
- What helps you calm down when you're overwhelmed?

School and Social Pressure

- How are things going with friends or at school?
- Have you felt pressure to act a certain way around others lately?
- What's something you wish people better understood about you?

Support and Seeking Help

- Have you ever talked to someone about your mental health? What was that like?
- Do you know where you could go if you need mental health support?
- What kind of support would help you feel more understood right now?

Empathy and Listening

- What's something you wish someone had asked you when you were struggling?
- Is there anything you'd like to share that you don't usually get to talk about?

Tips for Meaningful Conversations:

- Be present
- Validate feelings
- Respect privacy
- Encourage appropriate professional support

Sources: 1. <https://mhanational.org/resources/talking-to-adolescents-and-teens-starting-the-conversation> | 2. <https://jedfoundation.org/prepare-to-talk-to-teens-about-mental-health-tips/> | 3. <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>