



TALK ABOUT YOUR FEELINGS

Why It's Important

Talking about your feelings can help you maintain good mental health and cope when you feel troubled. Talking about your feelings is **not** a sign of weakness; it's part of taking charge of your well-being and doing what you can to stay healthy. Talking can be a way to cope with a problem you've been carrying around in your head for a while. Feeling listened to can help you feel more supported. It also works both ways. If you open up, it can encourage others to do the same.

It's not always easy to describe how you're feeling. Don't worry about finding the perfect description - focus on expressing your feelings in a way that makes sense to you. What does it feel like inside your head? What does it make you feel like doing?

Talking about your feelings doesn't need to be a formal event where you sit your loved ones down for a big conversation about your well-being. Many people feel more comfortable when these conversations develop naturally - maybe when you're doing something together. If it feels awkward at first, give it time. Talking about your feelings will become more natural the more you do it.

Who You Can Talk To

You can talk to anyone who you are comfortable sharing with. This could be a friend, partner, colleague, or leader.

If you aren't comfortable talking to someone you know, consider using the helpline of your local company Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider. Sometimes it's easier to share with a stranger and that's okay!

How You Can Help Others

We know that people find it hard to open up and talk about their feelings. People will often say "I'm fine" even if they often are not. The following video highlights just how common this response really is:

<https://youtu.be/lJxXxqsv8Zc>

We encourage you to **ask twice**. Often, if we show a little more interest, people will open up and talk about their feelings. Asking a second time may help them realize that you are sincerely asking how they are feeling and not just asking as a passing greeting.

You don't have to be a mental health professional to help others. Here are some tips for how you can help:

- Compassion is key - listen to them with sympathy and understanding
- Give them your full attention - set aside some time to talk and really listen; remove potential distractions (such as silencing and putting away your phone)
- Maintain eye contact to show that you are listening (if you are able and if the person you are talking to is comfortable with this)
- Be aware of boundaries - let people open up about what they are comfortable sharing but do not push people to answer questions or talk if they are not comfortable
- If you are worried about someone and they are not comfortable opening up to you, let them know that is okay and that you are there for them if they want to talk another time; encourage them to talk to someone, whether it is a doctor or the EAP helpline