



what it is...

This is a tool about youth, informed by youth. It provides insight into what youth both experience and need to create caring, connected relationships that will support their mental health.

how to use it...

Use this tool to enhance your understanding of what it sounds like, looks like and feels like to be a youth who is struggling with their mental health. Consider this information when you connect with youth. It will make a positive impact on their mental health.

why it's important...

It's important because a connected relationship with a caring adult is a vital protective factor that will make a positive difference to a young person's mental health. Youth need caring adults to invest in them and see them as an asset.

- “Know that I don’t like feeling this way.”
- “Be honest with me. I can tell when you are having a bad day, so don’t pretend everything is okay. Instead, show me how to deal with a bad day. Model it for me.”
- “Don’t drop everything to take care of me. Normalize my life.”
- Take care of yourself so you have the energy to be there when I need you.”
- “I need you to be a safe place, a place where you don’t judge and criticize me.”
- “I am behaving the way I am for a reason. Look for the purpose to my behaviour and help me find healthier ways.”
- “Don’t dance around a topic – ask me directly.”
- “Understand it’s not “a phase”.
- “Don’t ‘Google’ what’s wrong with me. Help me find real answers.”
- “Check in with me. Ask what I want, but don’t pry and try to get details.”
- “I may resent you when you try to get me help or ask questions. Get comfortable with anger.”
- “I don’t like you when you fight with me. But I still need you.”
- “Be real. I can see through insincerity a mile away.”
- “This is my life. Let me make mistakes, learn from them and find my own solutions. Teach me how to deal with the consequences.”
- “Know this is going to take time. I may not trust you. I don’t know what’s going on. I want answers too... help me find them together.”
- “I am looking for you to understand and believe what I say is happening for me.”
- “Validate my experiences. Validate my challenges as well as my strengths, e.g “I know it was really hard for you to get out of bed today, even harder to go to school. It must have taken a lot of strength to do that.”