

What young people want their parents and carers to know

"My mum isn't a mental health clinician, but she loves me - and that's enough."

Young person

→ **Approach us with love, respect and compassion rather than fear or judgement.**

Keep an open mind.

Social media isn't all bad, and in some ways it can provide me with some refuge.

Sit down and listen.

Take time to understand.

Validate my feelings.

Don't minimise what I'm going through, even if I'm being emotional.

Don't force me to share before I'm ready.

Don't panic!

It is much easier to share difficult things when I can feel that you are calm.

Build trust.

If I trust you, I'm much more likely to reach out to you for help. Please do not secretly follow my activity online - if you have questions, ask me directly.

Remind me of my strengths.

Encourage me to draw on them to help get through tough times.

→ **You don't need to have all the answers or to fix my problems.**

When I'm struggling, having you simply listen to me without judgment can be so nice.

→ **If you're worried that I may be suicidal, ask me directly and non-judgmentally.**

You might say, "Sometimes when people feel this way, they might think about suicide. Are you having thoughts of suicide?"

→ **Help me to understand the risks and benefits of social media.**

→ **Understand that removing my access to social media is removing an important part of my life.**

→ **Point me towards helpful resources and let me know where to get professional help.**

If or when I need it - this might include online mental health services (such as [ehheadspace](#)). Letting me know about safe spaces (such as LGBTIQ+ affirmative community groups), or linking me in with a mental health professional or a general practitioner.

→ **If you're unsure how you can help, ask me!**

You might simply say, "Is there anything I can do to help you right now?"

→ **Consider your own use of social media.**

We all struggle with the amount of time we spend on our phone. Instead of focusing only on my screen time, it helps if you can shift the conversation from, "You should do this" to "This has been really helpful for me, what do you think might help you?"