



Finding the Words for Difficult Conversations

When asking others to share their feelings, many of us may feel uncomfortable, intrusive, or unequipped to give good advice

First, let's look at the warning signs that suggest someone might be struggling with thoughts of despair. An at-risk person may:

- Threaten to hurt themselves
- Say phrases like "I wish I'd never been born"
- Express a sense of hopelessness for the future
- Imply that they are a burden
- Become withdrawn from society

If you spot any of these signs in someone you know, it's vital to encourage them to open up

However, it's also important to know how to approach these conversations in a safe way





Here are some tips that will help you connect with your colleagues when they're in need of support

Right time. Right place: Choose a calm, quiet, and confidential space to start your conversation

Share resources: Gather information on support groups, online services, and helplines to connect the person you're concerned about to professional help

Keep an open mind: An empathic ear can make all the difference. Listen closely and try not to interrupt, dismiss, or judge

Encourage honesty: Ask open-ended questions to avoid "yes/no" answers, such as:

- How are you?
- How have you been feeling lately?
- Is anything bothering you at the moment?
- You don't seem like yourself – can I help?
- Would you like to chat about how you're feeling?

Let them know you're there – Simply knowing that someone is there can be a ray of hope in the darkest of times. Reassure them that they can reach out and offer to accompany them to doctor's appointments or support groups

Check in – After you've had that important conversation, keep the line of contact open. Checking in can be as simple as sending a quick text asking how they are and letting them know you're there for them

What not to do:

- Don't share or repost anything that discusses self-harm online
- Don't use judgmental language like "don't do anything stupid" or "get over it"
- Don't say "I know how you feel." Instead, say "tell me how you feel"



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Your Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) is here to help

Your EAP offers a range of resources and downloadable workbooks to help you approach difficult conversations in a safe and positive way

24/7 Telephone Helpline: Access a 24-hour telephone helpline for responsive, confidential, and totally independent advice should you or a colleague need mental health support



First and only EAPA
Accredited EAP

APPTS

Secondary Mental
Health Support

feefo

Feefo Score 5.0

★ **Trustpilot**

TrustScore 4.7



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