

Finding a Trusted Adult

Reaching out about mental health can be or feel overwhelming, embarrassing or just hard. Choosing someone to confide in is an important step to getting the help you need.

Who can be a trusted adult?

- Parent, stepparent, guardian or older sibling
- Older relative (cousin, aunt or uncle) or grandparent
- Parent or guardian of a close friend or neighbor
- Teacher or coach
- Faith leader
- Counselor
- Peer support worker

If you're not sure who to go to, try asking a friend who they talk to about their mental health.



What is a trusted adult like?*

- Respectful
 - They don't make you feel inferior and don't push your comfort levels.
- Non-judgmental
 - They don't judge you based on your appearance, values or decisions, even if they don't agree with them.
- Trustworthy
 - They keep vulnerable information secret and ask permission before telling anyone. They also know when it's not ok to keep a secret; times when someone may be a danger to themselves or someone else and professional help is needed.
- Accountable
 - They admit when they're wrong and try to make things right when they make a mistake.
- Helpful
 - They know when to offer solutions and when to just listen.
- Thoughtful
 - They are attentive and mindful listeners. They act and react with love, kindness and patience.

*Source: YouthSMART, <https://www.youthsmart.ca/how-to-identify-trusted-adults/>

How to start a conversation

Once you've picked out someone you trust to talk to, decide when and where you want to have a conversation. Choose what will make you most comfortable.

Make a plan

- Plan what you want to say.
- Find a private space to talk.
- Explain as clearly as you can how you're feeling.
- Share how they can best support you. Discuss possible next steps.
- Keep the conversation going.
- Tip: If you're not sure if you can confide in your trusted adult, test them on something small.
 - Example: "I'm thinking about dying my hair purple. What do you think?"

If they are not supportive

Adults were your age once, and most of them want to help however they can. Some adults might be scared or confused or might not be very good listeners. If your conversation starts to go in a way you don't like, give the adult some time. If you aren't receiving the support you're looking for, it might be that this adult isn't the right fit, and you need to reach out to another adult.

- Talk to someone else in your family/network.
- KEEP TRYING!
 - It can be hard to find someone you feel comfortable confiding in. Many people care deeply about you. Be brave and keep asking for help!

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- Explain the effort you've put in.
- Let them know there are resources/affordable options.
- Talk to someone else in your family/network.
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