

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR ADULTS

Start with Presence, Not Pressure

Create a safe, nonjudgmental space. Be calm, quiet and undistracted. You don't need perfect words—you just need to show you care.

Examples to open the conversation:

- “You haven’t seemed like yourself lately. I wanted to check in.”
- “I’ve noticed you’ve been pulling away from things you used to enjoy. Want to talk about it?”
- “I care about you. If you’re going through something, I want to help.”

What Not to Say

- “You’re just being dramatic.”
- “You don’t really mean that.”
- “But your life is fine—you have nothing to be upset about.”
- “Why would you think something like that?”

These statements shut down communication and increase shame. Instead, validate what they share—even if you don’t fully understand it.

Ask Directly and Kindly

It’s a myth that talking about suicide will put the idea in someone’s head. Asking directly opens a door.

Examples of what to say:

- “Are you thinking about hurting yourself?”
- “Have you been feeling like you don’t want to be here anymore?”
- “Are you thinking about suicide?”

If the answer is “yes”

- Say: “Thank you for telling me. I’m here with you, and we’re going to get help together.”
- Avoid overreacting, interrogating or minimizing their feelings.

If the answer is no, but you’re still concerned

- Say: “I’m still really glad we talked. I want you to know you can always come to me.”
- Stay present, keep checking in, and watch for further signs.