

“CAN WE TALK?”

Concerned about a friend, family member or coworker? Try these conversation starters to help you reach out and encourage them to seek care.



STARTING THE CONVERSATION

• REACH OUT •

Show that you care.

“Hey, I’d like to talk to you about something. It’s important.”

• SET A TIME •

Can’t talk now?

“Can we meet at [location] after work today?” or “How about I call you at [time]?”

• HAVE A BACKUP PLAN •

If your friend isn’t ready to talk, offer support and share resources.

“If you’re not ready to talk to me about it, that’s okay. Just remember that you’re not alone and here are some **24/7** resources for when you’re ready [provide contact information for the below resources].”

DURING THE CONVERSATION

• TUNE IN •

Ask open-ended questions. Listen and let your friend do most of the talking.

“I’m worried about you. What’s going on?”

• BE THERE •

Recognize their feelings and experiences. Express interest in the details. Remind them that you are there for them and won’t ever judge.

“I’m so glad you’re talking to me about this. I’m here to support you. How are you coping with this?”

• LISTEN FOR WARNING SIGNS •

If your friend mentions feeling trapped, wishing they were dead or displays other warning signs, ask them about suicide directly and without judgment.

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”

• OPEN THE DOOR FOR SEEKING HELP •

Emphasize that experiencing challenges and seeking help is normal. Share psychological health resources with them and encourage them to reach out to a professional. Offer to make the call with them.

“I’ve had tough times before, too. Talking to someone really helped. Have you reached out to a professional?”

AFTER THE CONVERSATION

• CHECK IN •

It takes more than just one conversation to help.

“I’ve been thinking about our chat and wanted to follow up. How are you feeling?”

• KEEP INCLUDING THEM •

Even if they decline invitations, continue to find ways to make them feel included.

Feeling connected is important during adversity.

“Let’s grab a cup of coffee and catch up?”

• FIND OUTSIDE SUPPORT •

If you need additional guidance to support your friend, it’s okay to reach out for help yourself. Connect with a trusted friend or mentor, or contact the Military Crisis Line for additional resources.

“I’m really worried about my friend and could use some guidance.”

WANT MORE RESOURCES?

Psychological Health Resource Center
Call/Chat with a health resource consultant 24/7 for assistance accessing care at 866-966-1020 or health.mil/PHRC.

Military Crisis Line
In the U.S., call 988 then press 1 or text 838255. For OCONUS calling options and online chat accessible from anywhere in the world, visit militarycrisisline.net.

Military OneSource
Military OneSource provides 24/7 support for service members and their families. Call 800-342-9647 anytime to connect to free resources, specialty consultations or confidential non-medical counseling.

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