



# Understanding and Opening Conversations about Mental Health

Mental health is just as important as physical health – and yet, for many, it's still difficult to talk about. Whether it's fear of being judged, not knowing what to say, or worrying we'll say the wrong thing, mental health often remains the "quiet subject" in our everyday lives.

But talking about mental health – openly, respectfully, and compassionately – is one of the most powerful ways we can break the stigma and support ourselves and others.

## Why Talking Matters

We all have mental health. Some days we feel strong and positive; other days, we feel overwhelmed, low, or anxious. Talking about mental health helps:

- **Normalise the conversation** – making it okay to not be okay
- **Encourage early support** – reducing the risk of problems worsening
- **Strengthen relationships** – building empathy, trust, and understanding
- **Promote a healthier culture** – where people feel seen, heard, and supported

When we create space for open dialogue, we make it easier for others to speak up and seek help – and that can save lives.

## How to Start a Mental Health Conversation

You don't have to be a mental health professional to make a difference. Just being present, compassionate, and non-judgmental can go a long way.

Here are some tips for opening up conversations:

### 1. Choose the Right Moment

Pick a quiet, private setting where you won't be rushed or interrupted. A walk, coffee break, or even a casual check-in can be a good opportunity.

### 2. Be Genuine and Open-Ended

Try starting with:

*"I've noticed you've seemed a bit down lately – how are you really doing?"*

*"You've had a lot on your plate recently."*

*"Do you want to talk about it?"*

### 3. Listen Without Judgment

Sometimes, the best support is simply to listen. Avoid interrupting, giving quick advice, or minimising their feelings. Let them speak freely and thank them for opening up.

### 4. Ask How You Can Help

You don't need all the answers. Just asking "Is there anything I can do to support you?" can be incredibly reassuring.

### 5. Signpost to Support

Encouraging people to speak to someone, a GP, or to engage with a supportive charity, or to speak to their **tenant support helpline**.

## If You're Struggling – It's Okay to Speak Up

Opening up about your own mental health can feel daunting. But remember – you're not alone. Sharing how you're feeling with someone you trust can ease the burden and help you feel more supported.

You also have access to your **Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service**, which offers confidential counselling, advice, and guidance for any issue affecting your wellbeing.

## The Role of the TSWS

Your Tenant Support & Wellbeing Service (TSWS) is there to listen, support, and help you navigate life's ups and downs. Whether you're worried about your mental health, supporting a loved one, or just need someone to talk to – this service is here for you.

Services include, but not limited to:

- 24/7 telephone support, advice and guidance
- In the Moment Counselling support
- Support for anxiety, depression, stress, grief, trauma, and for improving mental wellbeing
- Online support, articles, helpsheets, and useful tips
- Practical information, including debt advice

All support is confidential, non-judgmental, and free to access.

## Let's Keep the Conversation Going

Mental health affects us all – and talking about it should be a natural part of our everyday lives. Whether you're reaching out for support or offering it to someone else, opening the conversation could be the first step toward better wellbeing.

You don't have to have all the answers. Just be there. Just listen. And remember – help is always available.



TSWS-CIC/BTN-MAY25 E&OE

# Life & Progress

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