



CHILDREN'S MENTAL HEALTH WEEK 3RD - 9TH FEBRUARY 2020

This year "Time to Talk" day falls within Children's Mental Health Week, so what better time to talk to the children or young people in your life, about their Mental Health and wellbeing.

Children's Mental Health is increasingly discussed in the media, particularly the concerns around the "postcode lottery" approach to accessing services. By spotting signs early and holding supportive conversations you can make a big difference to the children and young people in your life!

1 CHOOSE A SAFE SPACE

Think about where and when might be the most comfortable place and time to start the conversation. This might not be in the house or car for example, as it can feel very restrictive. The team at Bedazzle are big advocates for walking and talking and getting out into nature. Make sure you have ample time for the conversation - no one wants to feel rushed. If they are sat down, sit next to them so they feel supported.



2 TALKING TIPS

Keep your body language open and be non confrontational. Take what they say seriously as things which may seem trivial to you can be frightening or worrying for others. Avoid making comments that could be perceived as judgemental or dismissive - phrases like "pull yourself together" or "cheer up". Many young people won't talk for fear of stigma and this will only heighten the anxiety around this. Try and keep the chat positive and supportive and listen without interrupting.



3 USEFUL QUESTIONS TO ASK

How are you feeling at the moment?
How long have you felt like this?
What support do you think you might need?
How can I help you?
Depending on their age, you might be able to help them identify triggers that caused them to feel this way. Avoid 'why' questions. Encourage them to connect their thoughts and feelings and accept its okay not to always be okay.



4 MAKE A PLAN

Most young people will be sceptical about seeking professional help, but if you think it may be necessary reassure them recovery is possible and probable. Encourage them to do more of those things that bring joy and fewer of those things that bring pain or sadness. There are lots of websites and apps with some excellent information and resources but be sure to check them out for yourselves first.



Ultimately young people need to feel accepted and understood. They will prosper in an environment where they feel loved for who they are and that mistakes are part of their learning process. Try to remain calm and collected, even if your young person is very distressed or shares difficult experiences with you.

