



Youth Mental Health Assistance 101 For Youth By Youth



CHURROS

Action sentences are summarized in CHURROS. CHURROS provides a conversation guide for safe support people. The goal is to have conversations that:

- Build rapport & trust to help a young person speak openly
 - Listen to understand the situation fully
 - Encourage a young person to reach out to supports by offering hope that recovery to improved mental wellbeing is possible
 - Encourage a young person to reach out to supports by encouraging personal choice and responsibility for mental health
 - Demonstrate respect
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CHURROS

C – Contact

I've noticed..., How are you? How long...?

H – Hear Out

I see, It sounds like..., Is that right?

U – Understand

rephrase and repeat what the person has told you, ask if you are understanding correctly, don't be afraid to clarify

R – Reassurance

It's understandable, You're not alone, Supports can help

R – Reach appropriate professional help

What has helped? Could you reach out to...?

O – Other Supports

Other supports? Family, Friends, Community, Spiritual?

S – Self Help

What went well? How am I feeling about the discussion?

CHURROS Core Considerations

C – Core considerations:

- Where is a good place to make contact?
- When is a good time?
- How would you express your concerns? (What would you say and do?)

H – Core considerations:

- What attitudes do I want to convey?
- What verbal nonverbal skills help to express these attitudes?
- What should I avoid?

U – Core considerations:

- Am I fully understanding what the young person is telling me?
- Have I double checked so there isn't a misunderstanding?
- Are there any points I should avoid when clarifying?

CHURROS Core Considerations

R – Core considerations:

- What can I say to offer emotional support (reassurance)?
- That they are not alone
- That supports are available

R – Core considerations:

- How can I aid with help-seeking?
- What are the local options?
- Does the young person need professional help?

O – Core considerations:

- What other supports are available?
- What self-help strategies are there?
- How can I encourage the young person to use these self-help strategies?

Self-Help

The "S" action sentence in CHURROS provides an important reminder to reflect, take care of your own mental health and to reach out to supports if needed.

You may also need to deal with the feelings and reactions you set aside during the encounter.

It can be helpful to find someone to talk to about what has happened while respecting the privacy of the person you've helped.

Self-Help

C – How am I doing? What's changed?
How long have I been feeling this way?

H – Am I hearing my own signs? Am I ignoring or minimizing symptoms?
What about self-stigma?

U – Do I understand why I'm feeling this way? Do I need help understanding my feelings or just someone to talk to?

R – Am I aware of impacts? Do I know supports that could help?

R – What has helped in the past?
Would it help to reach out to...?

O – Can I think of others to reach out to?

Role of a Safe Support Person

Youth mental health assistance is the help offered for:

- Declining mental well-being
- Crisis situations

Youth mental health assistance is NOT:

- Diagnosing
- Counselling
- Using medical language

How you, as a safe support person, can help:

- Recognize changes (possible signs)
- Initiate a conversation
- Encourage a person to reach out to professional & other supports

What is the role of a safe support person?

- Notice changes & possible signs
- Help a person feel safe talking openly
- Discuss supports for recovery to improved well-being
- Assist in a crisis & offer support

Possible Challenges

Reluctance to talk:

- I want to help
- It seems like you may not be ready to talk
- I'd be glad to talk when you're ready

Reluctance to reach out to supports:

- Be realistic
- Respect the persons right not to seek help

Exception – risk of harm to themselves or others

Reacts with aggressive behavior:

- Speak slowly & confidently
 - Invite the person to sit down
 - Give space to move
 - Take a break
 - Use positive words (e.g. let's talk about this)
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VALIDATION

When having these difficult conversations with a young person making sure they know that what they are feeling is valid and give them that validation.

Giving validation and showing empathy will ensure a comfortable space for the young person to feel heard and understood.

Validating	Invalidating
“I can see how you would feel that way.”	“If you hadn’t done that it wouldn’t have happened.”
“That must be really hard.”	“Others have it worse than you.”
“I bet you’re frustrated.”	“You should feel lucky.”
“I’m here for you.”	“You are too sensitive.”

Respectful Communication

Core Skills:

- Be aware of stigmatizing language
- Use respectful alternatives
- Listen without judgement

How to Communicate Effectively:

- Be genuine
- Avoid slang
- Try different settings
- Don't make comparisons
- Provide positive feedback
- Help them find the language

When speaking with youth be careful not to use stigmatizing language

See chart for some examples

Please Note:

- Calling the police will increase fear
- Often people who react aggressively are victims of aggression

Pronouns & the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

When someone asks you to use their pronouns, they are asking for you to respect their identity and them as a person.

When someone refers to another person using the wrong pronouns, especially on purpose, that can lead to that person feeling disrespected and invalidated.

As a basic rule of thumb, if you are unsure of someone's pronouns just ask!

Common Pronouns:

she/her/hers, he/him/his,
they/them/theirs

Pronouns & the 2SLGBTQIA+ Community

Non-Binary:

Non-Binary means identifying as a gender that is not entirely male or female. It may be both, neither, partially one, or anything else not entirely male or female. Non-Binary can also be an umbrella term for any genders outside the gender binary.

Two-Spirit:

Two-Spirit is an umbrella term that bridges Indigenous and Western understanding of gender and sexuality. Prior to European Contact, Many North American Indigenous Cultures viewed gender and sexuality as fluid.

Problem vs Crisis vs Emergency

Problem	Crisis	Emergency
Major change	Talking about suicide	Acting on suicidal thoughts
Change interferes with ability to cope	Severe impairment by substances	Potential for immediate harm to themselves or others
Change doesn't go away	Self-harm that doesn't require immediate medical attention	Self-harm that requires immediate medical attention

If someone is in crisis, plan to connect them with supports.

If it's an emergency, connect them with supports right away.

Possible Signs of Declining Mental Health

Physical	Behaviour Performance
Tired	Loss of motivation
Not sleeping well	Isolation
Not taking care of self	Not doing well at work, school or other activities

Possible Signs of Declining Mental Health

Mood	Thinking Attitude
Nervousness	Changes in humour
Sadness	Negative thoughts
Anger	Difficulty concentrating
Frustration	Suicidal thoughts

Addictive Behaviours
Increased substance use
Excessive isolation
Self-harm

Stigmatizing VS Respectful

Stigmatizing	Respectful
He's a schizophrenic	He lives with schizophrenia
Substance abuse	Substance use problem
They suffer from depression	They live with/are experiencing depression
Committed suicide	Died by suicide
Failed/Unsuccessful suicide attempt	Attempted suicide
They used to be an addict	They are in recovery
It drives me crazy	It bothers/ annoys/ frustrates me
Insane person	Person living with a mental illness/mental health problem
Junkie	Person who uses substances

Safety Plans

How can I help?

- Assess the situation - Is it a Crisis, Problem or Emergency?
- Create a safety plan if one is not already made

What is a safety plan?

- Agreement between person struggling & their safe support person
- Goal is to keep the person safe

Safety plan in a crisis:

- Focus on what they could do
- Find out what has helped in the past
- Be realistic with timelines
- Include contact information

Safety Plans

Safety plan in an emergency:

- Ask permission to contact supports
- Contact health center, crisis line (first responders as a last resort)

Ask for advice

May need to breach confidentiality for safety

- Stay with the person until:

Help is received

Crisis resolves/You're

confident that the person is safe

Note: It's usually easier to create a safety plan before the problem reaches a crisis or emergency

Safety Plan

Goals/things worth living for

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

My support network can help me by...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

I,
will use this plan to get the help I need to keep myself safe when I'm struggling

Some distractions that work for me...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Some safe people I can contact...

- | | | | |
|---------|-------|-------|-------|
| 1. Name | ..... | Phone | ..... |
| 2. Name | ..... | Phone | ..... |
| 3. Name | ..... | Phone | ..... |
| 4. Name | ..... | Phone | ..... |
| 5. Name | ..... | Phone | ..... |

Some safe places I can go...

- | | | | |
|----------|-------|---------|-------|
| 1. Place | ..... | Address | ..... |
| 2. Place | ..... | Address | ..... |
| 3. Place | ..... | Address | ..... |
| 4. Place | ..... | Address | ..... |
| 5. Place | ..... | Address | ..... |

Some coping mechanisms that work for me...

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.

Remember Your Life Is Valuable

Others have told me how valuable my life is, but they want to make sure that I know how valuable my life is. Since it can be hard to focus and think clearly when I'm having these dark thoughts, I agree to put this safety plan in places where I can easily use it. Such as my wallet, bag or by the phone. In an emergency I can call **911** and tell the operator that I am in suicidal danger or go to the nearest emergency room. If I feel that I cannot get to the hospital safely, I can call **911** and request transportation to the hospital.

For you to sign:

For your safe support person to sign:



MB Mental Health
& Wellness
Resource Finder

Reach out!



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