

Worried about your older loved one's mental health? Here's what to say

If you've noticed your parent or loved one has been struggling with feelings of depression or anxiety, it's normal to want to help. Don't know where to start? That's also normal. Talking to someone about their mental health may feel awkward or intimidating. But it could be the push they need to seek help. You can use these conversation starters to get your loved one to open up, so you can help connect them with treatment.

Has your loved one been feeling down?

SAY THIS:

"I've noticed you've been feeling down lately. I care about you and want to make sure you're all right. Can we talk about what's been going on?"

Has your loved one been feeling lonely?

SAY THIS:

"I'd love to spend more time together. Would you be interested in joining a fitness class or a book club with me?"

Is your loved one hesitant to take mental health medication?

SAY THIS:

"I know it can feel scary to take a new medication. But many older adults find that mental health medicine helps them feel better. If your doctor recommends medication, it might be worth a try."

Is your loved one unwilling to open up at all?

SAY THIS:

"There's nothing to be ashamed of. Lots of people struggle with mental health issues. In fact, older adults are at increased risk of depression. But mental illness is treatable, just like many physical illnesses."

Are you worried about your loved one with dementia getting lost?

SAY THIS:

"I'm worried about you wandering and getting lost. Would you give me permission to share your diagnosis with some trusted people in the community? That way, they can help look out for you and keep you safe."