

How To Approach Your Child or Teen

Set the Scene

- Choose a comfortable place
- Choose a good time
- Pay attention to both verbal and nonverbal cues

What to Do

Encourage expression of feelings

Validate how they feel

Be open and nonjudgmental

Express gratitude

Remind that help is always available and
that they are not alone



What to Say

"Tell me more about how you're feeling."

"That sounds really painful/stressful/upsetting."

"It's okay to feel that way."

"I appreciate you trusting me to share how
you are feeling."

"Other teens sometimes feel this way, too. There
are people you can talk to help you."

What Not to Do

Invalidate/disregard their feelings

Minimize/underreact

Judge

Promise confidentiality



What Not to Say

"I'm sure it's not that bad."

"How could you feel that way? You have so
much going for you!"

"Suicide is selfish."

"I won't tell anyone what you share with me."
