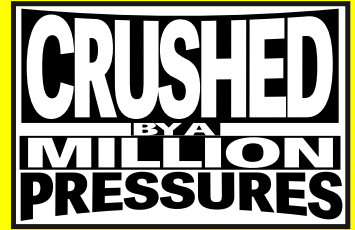


# HOW TO TALK TO OLDER GENERATIONS ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH



## 8 STEPS TO: UNDERSTAND SHARE CHANGE MINDS

### 1. ASK THEM WHAT THEY THINK

This shows you care about their opinion and sets a tone of mutual respect.

**"WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THE WAY PEOPLE TALK ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH THESE DAYS COMPARED TO WHEN YOU WERE MY AGE?"**

### 2. LISTEN WITHOUT JUDGMENT

Try to appreciate their perspective without interrupting them- if they mention something incorrect or a misconception, just take note for now.

**"I CAN SEE WHY YOU THINK MENTAL HEALTH ISN'T REALLY A THING. CAN YOU TELL ME MORE ABOUT WHY YOU FEEL THAT WAY?"**

### 3. SHARE PERSONAL STORIES

Ask them about a time they found life hard.

**"CAN YOU REMEMBER A TIME WHEN YOU WERE GOING THROUGH SOMETHING TOUGH? WHO HELPED YOU? HOW DID THEIR SUPPORT MAKE YOU FEEL?"**

Share your experience too.

**"I'VE BEEN FEELING REALLY ANXIOUS LATELY AND TALKING TO A FRIEND HELPED A LOT. HAVE YOU EVER FELT SOMETHING SIMILAR?"**

Opening up about your experiences can make the conversation more relatable. It's about creating a space where you can both be vulnerable.

### 4. FIND COMMON GROUND

Show them that their feelings matter by relating them back to your own or to wider issues. This will help them see that everyone can struggle with their mental health. Try to use more neutral words like 'stress' or 'happiness', as they may have preconceptions about words like 'mental health' or 'mental illness'.

**"IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU WENT THROUGH A TOUGH TIME WHEN YOU WERE YOUNGER. I SOMETIMES GET STRESSED ABOUT MONEY AND WORK TOO. HOW DID YOU MANAGE YOUR STRESS BACK THEN?"**

### 5. TALK THROUGH MISCONCEPTIONS AND CONTRADICTIONS

This may be difficult to do. But discussing these kindly can help deepen the conversation.

**"IT SEEMS LIKE YOU AGREE MENTAL HEALTH IS IMPORTANT, BUT ALSO THINK PEOPLE SHOULD JUST 'GET OVER IT.' CAN WE EXPLORE THAT A BIT MORE?"**

If you feel comfortable to, explain how views like this could stop people from getting support.

### 7. REVISIT THE TOPIC LATER

Changing minds takes time. Be patient and keep revisiting the conversation.

**"STIGMA AROUND MENTAL HEALTH CAN STOP PEOPLE GETTING HELP. HAVING AN OPEN MINDSET CAN HELP TO BREAK THESE BARRIERS AND IMPROVE EVERYONE'S MENTAL HEALTH."**

### 6. ACCEPT DIFFERENCES IN UNDERSTANDING

It's okay to have different perspectives. Try to accept that you might not always see eye to eye on everything. Focus instead on the common ground you have and the small shifts they've made in understanding.

**"I KNOW WE MIGHT NOT ALWAYS AGREE. I JUST NEED YOU TO LISTEN AND TRY YOUR BEST TO ACCEPT HOW I FEEL AND WHAT I THINK. THANKS FOR TAKING THE TIME TO DO THAT."**

### 8. SHARE HELPFUL RESOURCES

This could be organisations, books, or online resources you like. Finding resources that reflect their cultural background can help. Here are some places you could start.

- ★ [What I wish older generations knew about mental health and young people](#)
- ★ [What opening up about my mental health taught me as a young Muslim man](#)
- ★ [Talking about mental health in the Black British community](#)
- ★ [Supporting a young person when they come out](#)
- ★ [How to really listen to your child](#)



## A SPACE FOR YOU TO PREPARE

Write down two or three things you want them to understand:

## WHAT ARE YOUR BIGGEST CONCERNS ABOUT THE CONVERSATION? HOW LIKELY ARE THEY TO HAPPEN?

My concern:

How likely is it to happen?

1 2 3 4 5

My concern:

How likely is it to happen?

1 2 3 4 5

**YOU MIGHT WANT TO PRACTISE THE CONVERSATION WITH SOMEONE YOU TRUST BEFOREHAND**