



# How can I ask for help?

Tips for when it's time to talk  
about your mental health, or  
if you want to help a friend

## Think about what you want to say

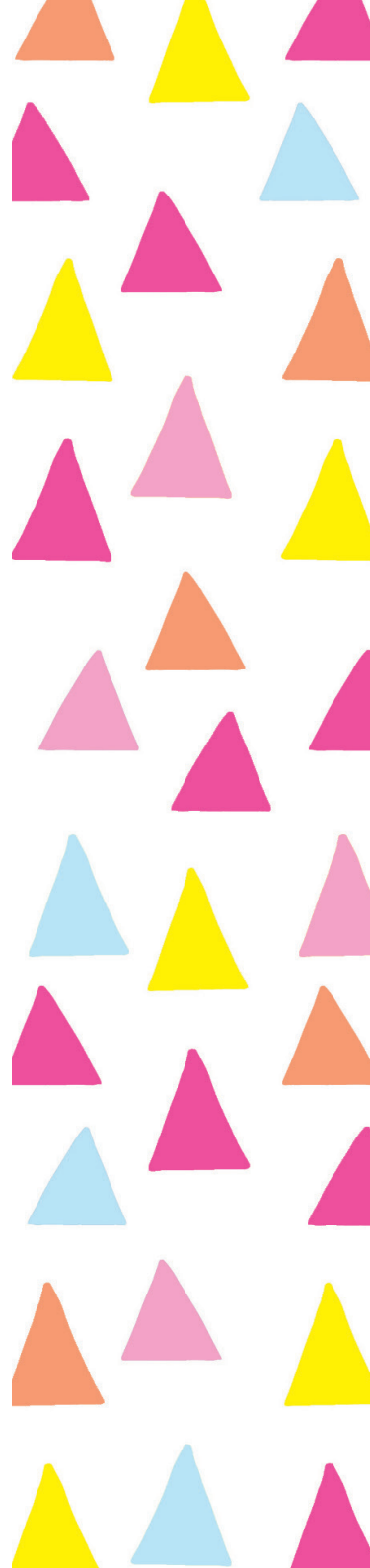
Whilst you may have made the brave decision to talk to someone, you still need to decide what you want to tell them. You might want to think about:

- Is there an underlying problem you need to talk about?
- How much are you happy to share?
- How do you feel each day?
- What are you finding hard to manage?
- What has prompted you to ask for help now?

## Think about what you want to happen next

It's very brave to ask for help and it usually means that on some level you're ready for things to change. Do you have any idea of what you might like to happen as a result of the conversation you're planning? This might include:

- Support telling parents or a friend
- First aid or medical help for injuries
- Support to help you talk through and overcome underlying issues
- Referral for specific treatment that you're already aware of
- You're not sure, you just can't carry on with how things are





## Practise saying what you need to say

You're probably really nervous about the thought of talking to someone about your difficulties. You may not have ever spoken to anyone about it before, so it's a good idea to practise. I know it sounds a bit strange but you'll feel much more confident talking to a parent or teacher if you've worked out what you want to say and tried saying it beforehand.

You can start by practising in the mirror. A good next step is to call an anonymous helpline like Childline and practise talking to someone you don't know – that can be easier than talking to someone you know and care about and can help you whilst you get ready to take the next step.

You can call Childline anytime on 0800 1111.

## Find out who's best to talk to

You might already know who you want to talk to, perhaps a parent or a teacher you get on especially well with. If you're not sure who to talk to then it's worth asking around to find out who is a good listener.

Have any of your friends talked to someone and had a really helpful or unhelpful response before? Doing a bit of detective work will help you find someone really supportive you can trust to share your difficulties with.

## Write a list or letter

It's worth writing a list of what you want to say to take with you so you don't forget anything if you get nervous. You could formulate your words into a letter, both to help you work out what to say and also as a back-up. That way if you find yourself unable to talk about your issues you could give the letter to the person you've chosen to talk to instead.

## Find a quiet time

Make sure you start the conversation at a time when the person you're talking to won't be interrupted and has time to listen to you properly. This is a really important conversation and they'll want to give it their full attention. If they can't talk now, it doesn't mean they don't care about you; ask them when would be a good time to talk and come back then.

## To help you they'll need to share your secret

If you talk to someone who you know through their professional role, one of the first things they'll do is to tell you that they can't keep this a secret. That's because they'll need to ensure you get the support you need to help you to get on top of things.

You can talk to them about who needs to know what – but try to remember it's a good thing that people understand what's going on so they can help you, though it might seem a bit scary at first.





## Take it slowly

Don't feel like you have to say everything all in one breath. Take it nice and slowly and don't be afraid to pause to think about what to say next.

## Don't over-analyse their reaction

It's perfectly normal to try and second guess what the person you're talking to is thinking. You might have all sorts of ideas about what is going through their mind, but don't try to second guess. They might be surprised, or a little upset to hear you've been so unhappy, but ultimately they will want to support you to overcome the difficulties you're facing.

## It's okay to cry

You might feel quite emotional, even if you don't expect to. The relief of finally telling someone what's going on can be a little bit overwhelming. Take some tissues with you and if you feel you need to cry, that's okay.

## Let them help you

Even if you've gone looking for help, it can be hard to accept it – but try. Have faith in the person you've confided in to help you to take the first steps to make things better. They won't be able to fix everything all in one go, but they can work with you to start to make things change.

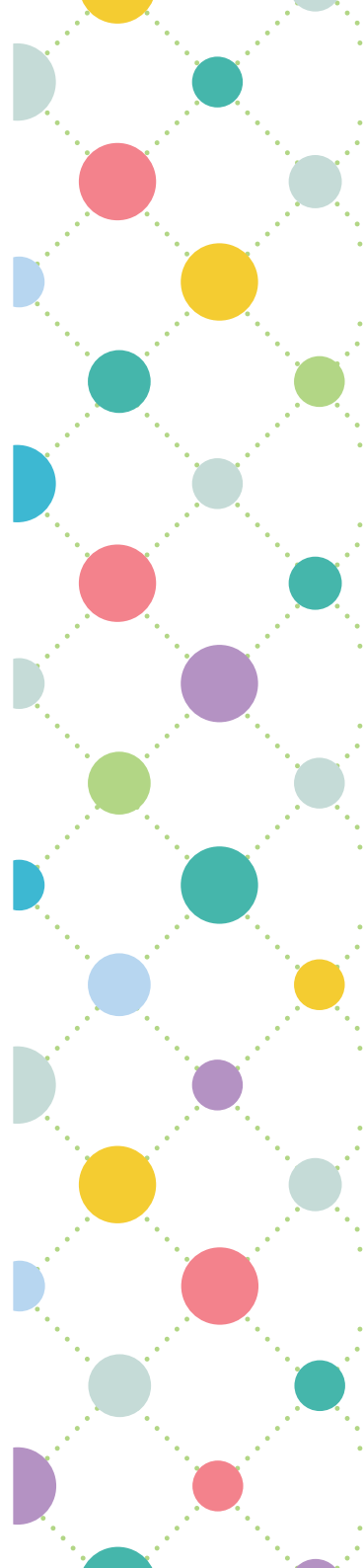
*“From the moment I took that brave step I felt very much less alone.”*

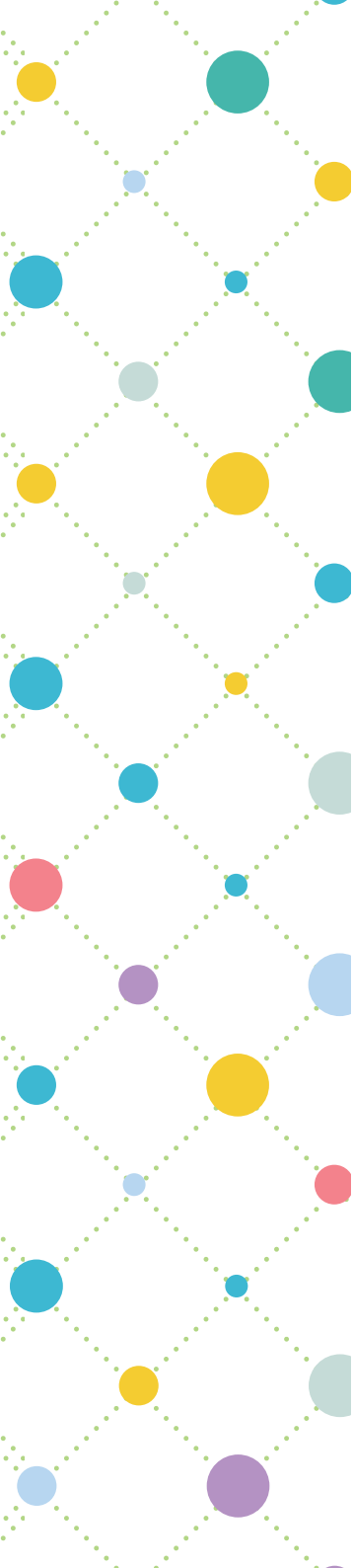
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*“I thought it was weak to ask for help, but I realised eventually that it was the ultimate sign of strength.”*

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*“You’re not alone.  
Reach out... let yourself  
be loved.”*





## Sources of advice

[childline.org.uk](https://www.childline.org.uk) | 0800 1111 (free 24hr)  
confidential listening

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org) | 116 123 (free 24 hr)  
confidential listening

[studentsagainstdepression.org](https://www.studentsagainstdepression.org)  
resources to move away from depression

[youngminds.org.uk](https://www.youngminds.org.uk)  
mental health info and guidance

[youthaccess.org.uk](https://www.youthaccess.org.uk)  
young people's info, advice and counselling

[themix.org.uk](https://www.themix.org.uk)  
essential support for under 25s

To order hard copies of this leaflet, please email  
admin@cwmt.org or call 01635 869754  
[www.cwmt.org.uk](http://www.cwmt.org.uk)

**The Charlie Waller Memorial Trust**  
32 High Street, Thatcham, RG19 3JD Charity No. 1109984

*Raising awareness fighting depression*



**The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service**