



GUIDE FOR PARENTS:

HOW TO PREPARE YOUR CHILD FOR WELLBEING SESSIONS

The
Henry Smith
Charity
founded in 1628



Young Carers
Bedford Borough

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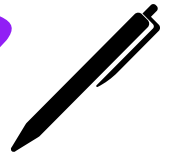
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**Disclaimer: This is a document is a guidance tool. Please always speak to the
Young Carer's Team for further advice).**

Why Parental Conversations Matter



Parents play a key role in creating a safe environment by discussing their concerns openly and empathetically before any formal assessment. Children are more receptive to wellbeing support when they feel safe and understood.

To learn more about Wellbeing Support, please explore the resources available on our website. If you have any questions or need further guidance, you are encouraged to reach out to the Young Carer Wellbeing Practitioner.

Benefits of Talking to Your Child



Benefits of Talking with Your Child:

- **Builds Trust:** Honest communication reassures your child that you are there for them.
- **Reduces Anxiety:** Prepares them for what to expect during the assessment and intervention stages.
- **Fosters Cooperation:** Encourages their active participation in the process.

Helping Your Child To Talk: <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/how-to-talk-to-your-child-about-mental-health/>

Is My Child Ready for Wellbeing Support?



Exploring Readiness

Ask open-ended questions to gauge their feelings:

- “How do you feel about the idea of talking to someone?”
- “What do you think they might ask you? Do you feel ready to share some of those things?”
- “What would make you feel more comfortable about trying this?”

Before proceeding, assess your child’s readiness through these key considerations:

Signs Your Child Might Be Ready

- They express a desire to talk:

“I think I want to talk to someone who understands this better.”

- They show curiosity:

“What would they ask me? How do they help?”

- They acknowledge challenges:

“I’ve been feeling upset, and I don’t know why.”

Signs Your Child Might Need More Preparation

- They seem confused about why they were referred:

“Why do I need to do this? Did I do something wrong?”

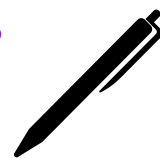
- They feel reluctant or resistant:

“I don’t want to talk to anyone.”

- They don’t understand your concerns:

“I don’t see why you’re worried.”

Is My Child Ready for Wellbeing Support?



Steps to Take if They're Not Ready

Validate their feelings:

- "I understand this feels like a big step, and it's okay to feel unsure."

Explain your concerns calmly:

- "We've noticed that you've been feeling [sad/stressed/angry] more often. We want to help you feel better."

Revisit the conversation later:

- "We don't have to decide today. Let's think about it and talk again soon."

Questions Your Child Might Ask and How to Respond

1. "Why do I have to do this?"

"You don't 'have to,' but we think it could really help. It's like asking a teacher for help when you don't understand something—they guide you to figure things out."

2. "Did I do something wrong?"

"Not at all. This isn't about doing something wrong. It's about making sure you feel happy and supported."

3. "What if I don't like the person I'm talking to?"

"That's okay. If you don't feel comfortable, we can talk about finding someone else. The most important thing is that you feel safe."

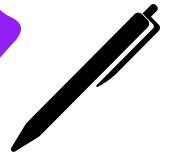
4. "Will you be there with me?"

"At first, we might join you to help get started, but you'll also have time on your own to share what's on your mind."

5. "What will they ask me?"

"They might ask things like how you've been feeling, what makes you happy or upset, and what you'd like to feel better about."

How to Approach The Conversation



- **Choose the Right Moment**

Find a quiet, comfortable time when your child is relaxed and open to talking.

- **Be Clear and Honest**

Use simple language appropriate to their age. Explain the purpose of the referral and assessment in a positive, supportive way.

Example: *"I've noticed you've seemed a bit worried lately. I have made a referral for you to get some support. They will support you to complete an assessment. The assessment is just a way to help us figure out how we can support you better."*

- **Listen Without Judgement**

Allow them to share their thoughts and feelings. Validate their emotions to make them feel heard.

Example: *"It's okay to feel nervous about this. Let's talk through anything that's on your mind."*

- **Involve Them in the Process**

Explain what will happen and ask for their input where possible. This empowers your child and reduces uncertainty.

Example: *"You'll meet someone who talks to kids and families. What questions do you think they might ask?"*

Practical Tools to Support You



- **Practice Scripts:** Rehearse how to explain the assessment calmly.
- **Visual Aids:** Use age-appropriate books or videos to help explain the process.
- **Resource Handouts:** Share written information your child can review.

Practice Scripts



When introducing the idea of wellbeing support, it's essential to use language that is age-appropriate, clear, and reassuring. Below are some example tailored scripts:

- **What is Wellbeing Support?**

"Wellbeing support is when we talk to someone who helps kids understand their feelings and how to feel better when things are tough. It's like having a coach for your emotions!"

- **Why is it Beneficial?**

"Talking to someone outside of our family can sometimes make it easier to understand our thoughts and feelings."

"The person you'll talk to has helped many other kids and families before. They're really good at listening and helping with things like stress, sadness, or confusion."

"It's like learning new ways to handle challenges so you can feel more like yourself again."

Practice Scripts



- **Respecting Autonomy and Choice**

"This is your journey, and you'll have a big say in how it goes. If something doesn't feel right, you can always tell us or the person you're talking to."

"We won't force you to talk about anything you're not ready for. You can take it at your own pace."

"Do you think this is something you'd like to try? If not, we can talk about it some more and see what feels comfortable for you."

Practical tips for Parents



- **Normalise the Experience:** Share examples of how everyone needs help sometimes.

"Even grown-ups talk to people when they feel stuck. It's nothing to be ashamed of."

- **Keep the Conversation Open:** Let your child know they can always ask questions or share concerns later.

"If you think of something later that you're wondering about, just let me know."

- **Prepare Together:** Offer to plan for the session with them.

"We can write down anything you want to talk about or questions you have for the person."

Is My Child Ready - Checklist?



✓ Signs Your Child Might Be Ready

- ☐ They express a desire to talk
- ☐ They want to talk to someone who understands this better
- ☐ They show curiosity about therapy/counselling/wellbeing support
- ☐ Ask questions e.g. What would they ask me? How do they help?
- ☐ They acknowledge emotional challenges
- ☐ Making statements like: *I have been feeling upset, and I don't know why. Sometimes I feel anxious, but I don't know what to do.*
- ☐ They ask for support in other ways
- ☐ Asking: Can you help me figure out why I feel like this?
- ☐ They open up about feelings more easily
- ☐ They recognise that talking might help
- ☐ Acknowledging that maybe talking could make things a little easier

⚠ Signs Your Child Might Need More Preparation

- ☐ They seem confused about the referral
- ☐ Asking questions: Why do I need to do this? Did I do something wrong? Do I have to do this? Are you sending me because I messed up? What if I say the wrong thing? What if they don't like me?
- ☐ They express reluctance or resistance
- ☐ Making statements like: *I don't want to talk to anyone. I don't see why you're worried*
- ☐ They don't understand your concerns
- ☐ They avoid conversations about their feelings
- ☐ Changes subject or shuts down when feelings or getting help is discussed
- ☐ They view therapy/talking to a mental health practitioner as a punishment or consequence
- ☐ They express fear or anxiety about therapy and/or wellbeing support

****NOTE: This list is not definitive. This is guide, and should not be used to exclude your child from receiving support. Always seek guidance from mental health professionals.**

Additional Support



- **Visual Aids:** Use age-appropriate books or videos to demystify the process.
- **Resource Handouts:** Share written information your child can review/reflect on.
- **Professional Guidance:** Contact the Carer's in Bedfordshire for advice on how to prepare your child.
- **Online Resources:** Explore websites and forums dedicated to child wellbeing and parenting strategies.

Mental Health Resources: <https://charliewaller.org/mental-health-resources>

Supporting a young person experiencing mental health difficulties:

[https://www.parentingmentalhealth.org/?](https://www.parentingmentalhealth.org/?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=20668288026&gclid=EAIaIQobChMIy9Wew7ayjgMVFphQBh0GdTcrEAAYASAAEgLyd_D_BwE)

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Supporting a child's mental health: <https://www.nhs.uk/every-mind-matters/supporting-others/childrens-mental-health/>

Various resources on supporting your child:

<https://www.youngminds.org.uk/parent/>

Younger Children

What is Mental Health and Why it's important to take care of it?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tY8NY6CMDFA>

Older Children

What is Mental Health?:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yG0Zj37K5bA>



Young Carers
Bedford Borough

**We are an experienced charity
that supports Young Carers
across Bedford Borough.**



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