

Top Tips for Talking to your Child about 'Tricky' Things...

Life can be tough, for you and your child. You might be struggling yourself and/or you might be worried that your child is struggling too. Talking is a good step to tackling the tricky things! Here are some top tips to get the conversation started while your child is not at school...

Create a space to talk: Avoid having the 'big chat'. Take some time to do something together you will both enjoy (going for a walk, craft, play with a ball, go for a drive, share music, make a den, picnic, cook together). Make sure no one else is around so you will be interrupted or distracted, and your child knows they have your full attention. This will create a relaxed time to talk.

Start the talk: Some children might find it hard to talk at first so you might need to start. Try the following:

- How have you been feeling lately? Have you felt like this before?
- If you could change one thing, what would it be? Why? What difference could this make?
- What do you like the most about yourself? Why? 'The thing I most like about you is... because...'

Older children may prefer to communicate by text initially.

Keep talking: Give examples of what you have noticed: 'When you said you hated me, you looked really angry. What is making you so cross?', or 'When you can't get to sleep, is there anything in your mind making you worry?' Children often have good ideas about solving their own problems. Ask them, 'What do you think would help?'

Tactical talk: Try not to look surprised by anything your child shares. Show them you are listening by saying 'OK' or nodding. Don't interrupt your child or try to talk for them. They may need time to express themselves. We all get it wrong sometimes, if you do get angry or say something you regret, make sure you say sorry! They will learn from you that it's OK to make mistakes and that it doesn't make you a bad person.

Two-way talking: Share your own feelings with your child. You don't have to be perfect to be a parent! It is important to be a parent, so if your child says something that causes concern, make sure you follow this up.

The Norfolk Just One Number can offer you and your child support. Call Just One Number on 0300 300 0123 or text Parentline on 07520 631590. Opening hours are 8am-6pm Monday-Friday (excluding Bank Holidays) and 9am-1 pm on Saturday.

Ending the talk: Make sure your child knows you love them and are proud of them. Give them a hug and praise them for what they have shared and for listening in the conversation.

