



How Parents Can Talk To Their Kids About **Mental Health**

1. Spend regular time with your child with no screens.

Create a regular rhythm of spending dedicated time with each of your kids. *Examples- breakfast every other week, dates once a month.* Come up with some fun questions ahead of time that you can ask but sprinkle in questions like "How are you really doing?" ...and mean it.

2. Learn their love language and adapt to it.

Words of affirmation, meaningful touch, being served, gifts, quality time - find out what opens your child's heart and come along side them to get them talking.

3. Actively listen.

As your child shares how they feel listen to them so you can repeat back what you're hearing. Ask them- "*is that what you're saying?*"

4. Don't wait for an emergency to have conversations with your kids about difficult subjects. Capitalize on trust moments.

It's easier to talk about hard things when the mood is less stressful. It also creates a bridge of trust. Don't be afraid to ask, "*Do you ever feel depressed? Do you ever feel overwhelmed? What worries you the most? Do any of your friends ever talk about suicide? Do you ever think about it?*"

5. If you notice isolating behavior over a couple days, intervene.

Ask the question, "*I love you too much not to ask- is something going on? You're not yourself.*"

6. Tell your child you love them as often as you can.

Pray for them and show them love by letting them know you're praying for the hard things they've shared with you. Check in with them often.

7. Don't parent alone - do it in community.

Other parents are going through issues with their children too. Don't let shame or fear keep you in isolation as a parent. Likewise, utilize organizations like the church and mental health partners like Crosswinds to best understand best practices in serving your families needs.

TEXT **494949** ANYTIME YOU NEED **GUIDANCE,**
SUPPORT OR PRAYER AS A PARENT.
