



# Intervention Language and Being the Trusted Adult

Take into account that this conversation could elicit a personal disclosure and should be scheduled during a protected time and location. Also understand that it is vital to the teacher/student relationship that the student is informed if there are plans to share the disclosure with someone else, who that person is and why it is important to do so (i.e. a parent or school support staff).

Keep in mind that it is normal to feel a little anxiety and discomfort when approaching a student you are concerned about. Just remember the goal is not to take on the student's problem or to have all of the right answers. Instead, focus on approaching the student with honest inquiry, concern and compassion—and connecting the student to the right kind of help.

**I notice.** State the changes you have noticed – use the mental health checklist, this will help with defensiveness.

**I care.** This is all about countering the negative thoughts.

**How can I help?** This is the action step. Give kids choices, but be firm that action will be taken. Affirm that help is available, effective and that they deserve to feel better.

### Tips on Being the Trusted Adult

- **Ask Questions and Listen** – Kids want your attention, not your advice.
- **Be Prepared for the Truth** - Remain calm, it's okay to be uncomfortable.
- **Validate the Student's Feelings** – Kids say all the time the most hurtful thing is when their feelings are minimized or not taken seriously.
- **Listen to Your Gut** – It's the best tool you already have. If you are speaking with the student, it is because you care and they know it.
- **Remember your Training** - Follow school protocols to keep everyone safe.
- **Take Action** - If a student needs to speak with someone, walk them down to a counselor or social worker. Check with your school building about who the best person is to help students.

Always wrap up with an action plan that both you and the student develop together. Make sure the student knows there is help available at school (if there is) and in the community and give the student information on how to contact these resources.

**REMINDER:** *As adults working with children we should always keep in mind our responsibility as mandated reporters. If a child discloses plans to hurt themselves, someone else or if someone is hurting them—a report to the appropriate authorities in your area is required by law.*

If you need to speak with someone immediately, please text LISTEN to 741-741 or call 1-800-273-8255.  
If this is an emergency, please call 911.