

Little tips

for helping someone open up when something's up

If someone is going through a difficult time, just being there to listen can help.

You don't have to be an expert, what matters is that you care. Reaching out to someone can let them know they're valued, and can help them get the support they need.

1 Signs someone might be struggling

- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy.
- Finding everyday things overwhelming.
- Not replying to messages, or being distant.
- Avoiding people or seeming quiet.
- Appearing restless or agitated.
- Easily tearful.
- Drinking or using drugs to cope with feelings.

2 How to open up a conversation

- Choose a good time, and somewhere without distractions.
- Use open questions that need more than a yes or no answer. Like, 'How are things? I've noticed you don't seem quite yourself'.
- Listen well and respond with things like: 'How's that making you feel?'
- Avoid giving your view of what's wrong, or what they should do.

3 How to be a good listener

- Focus on the other person, make eye contact and put away your phone.
- Pauses are fine, try not to jump in to fill a silence.
- Repeat back what they say, to check you've understood.
- Resist putting your own interpretation on it.
- Don't give up. Sometimes it can take a few tries to help someone open up.

4 How to help someone get more help

- 'Would you like to get some help?'
- 'Have you talked to your GP?'
- 'Would you like me to come with you?'
- 'You can call Samaritans for free, day or night, on 116 123'.
- 'If it helps, you can talk to me any time'.
- If you think it's an emergency or someone has tried to harm themselves – call 999.

If supporting someone is affecting you, Samaritans are here to listen.

Call free day or night on

116 123

To find out more about supporting someone you're worried about, visit

[samaritans.org](https://www.samaritans.org)