

# Hints and Tips

- 1** **Setting can be important** – Go for a walk or do an activity together. This can help you find a safe way to start talking without the focus being on them. A place they love to go/feel safe in or an activity they enjoy will help. Sometimes having something to do with your hands can take the pressure off. If possible, let them choose the activity to give them control.
- 2** **The car can sometimes be a good place** to start a conversation – one to one whilst driving can be the perfect time to start a conversation with a child or young person. It's a great neutral space and you are both facing forward so there is no direct eye contact.
- 3** **Limit distractions** – Plan a time/place to make sure you won't be disturbed. Giving your full attention shows them they are important and that you have time to talk. Limiting distractions like music, TV and games can also help.
- 4** **It can be as simple as asking them “how are you?”** – Start with some open questions about their life in general, i.e. what do they enjoy doing? What is their favourite subject/topic at school? What music do they enjoy listening to?
- 5** **Show them you are listening** to them, with open body posture, by being relaxed and with eye contact if appropriate. Even a nod of the head or a simple question about what they're saying can show them you're actively listening.
- 6** **Set up regular family check-ins** so you are all doing it together - this could be over dinner or using a tool like our Daily Check-in tool. If this becomes routine for them they'll start to see it as a normal family activity with no stigma or pressure attached.
- 7** **Role Modelling** – If a child or young person sees you, as an adult, able to talk about how you feel, even when scared or feeling down, this can help them see that everyone has these feelings. Talking about how you react and how you look after yourself when you're feeling these emotions can be a great opener.
- 8** **Self-care for you and them** – Looking after your own wellbeing can showcase to them how important it is and will help you get in the right frame of mind for talking about mental health. Helping them find the right kind of self-care is really important. There are lots of different activities and tools out there that can help.