

# LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

*Just like adults, kids and teens can have mental health conditions. And just like adults, their conditions are often brushed aside or shrouded in stigma. CHOC Children's is here to help you start the conversation about pediatric mental illness. By talking about it, you can increase awareness of the services that are needed and help children heal.*

## 6 CONVERSATION STARTERS

### 1 "Did you know ... ?"

Provide the facts. Statistics about mental health are surprising, especially when it comes to kids and teens.

- One in five young people in California will have a diagnosable mental health condition.
- Suicide is the second leading cause of death in young people ages 10-24.
- There are no inpatient psychiatric beds for children under 12 in Orange County.

### 2 "Mental illness can be treated."

When you hear misperceptions about mental illness around you, try to change them. Like other medical conditions, there is treatment, and it is effective. In children and teens, early intervention is especially important in helping them reach their highest potential. Studies have also shown that early treatment for mental illness saves substantial money over a child's lifetime.

### 3 "Let me tell you about my experience."

Chances are that you or someone you know has a mental health disorder. Nothing gets the conversation started like a personal story. Help someone understand what it's like to have a mental disorder, or to care for someone who does.

### 4 "Are you doing okay?"

Watch for symptoms in those around you. If you suspect they might have a mental health condition, don't be afraid to ask and to offer help. Studies show that talking about mental health can save lives.

### 5 "I want to learn more about mental illness."

Just ask questions. Even if you don't know how to explain mental illness, break the silence anyway. You'll likely be surprised to find that there are experts on the topic around you.

### 6 "What does our community need?"

If you're community-minded or seeking a way to give back, the area of pediatric mental health is an opportunity to make a true difference. Let people know you care about children's mental health. Talk to your faith leader, school or community group about the need for more services for children. Or, join CHOC in the effort to expand mental health services for kids and teens in Orange County.



[choc.org/mentalhealth](https://choc.org/mentalhealth)