

Helpful things to say and do

Make sure you are in a non-threatening position

Sit alongside, rather than stand over the young person

Let the young person know at the beginning how much time you have available for them

Try to say as little as possible

particularly if the young person is still showing signs of distress and overload

What happened earlier was really important. I have made five minutes to listen if you want to talk

Acknowledge the young person's emotions non-judgementally

You might be worrying that I don't like you anymore

This might have felt scary

Listen and find ways to validate feelings and offer reassurance

I still care about you

I can see why that was so frustrating for you

Invite the person to continue their train of thought when you are listening to them

Please go on ...

I see ...

Okay...

Uh-huh...

Give the young person time to process what you are saying

You might need to wait longer than feels comfortable before they can process and respond

I want to make sure that you're OK

Open the conversation in a supportive, non-judgemental way

Are you hurting?

Use communication supports
that help the young person (eg Makaton, visuals)

Reflect what the young person is saying back to them

This keeps the conversation going, acknowledges the young person's feelings and helps them to develop emotional understanding and expression

I hear things are difficult for you right now

It sounds like you are feeling X. Is that right?

It's important to me that you're OK

Say positive things that reassure and show you care

You've managed X really well

End the conversation on a positive and reassuring note

What's your plan for the next couple of hours?

What you have said is important. I'll still be thinking about ways to help you

I'm glad we talked

