

Language Impacts People

Help your family learn how to use language to build caring, connected relationships. When positive, helpful words, tone and body language are used it can enhance mental health.

Family Smart Practice Tool shares tips on how to build communication and language skills:

- **Be prepared** by thinking about what and how you are going to say something.
- **Suspend judgement** and do not assume you know what is going on or has happened.
- **Trust** is earned and it takes time to build it.
- **Empowerment** is given by providing an opportunity to share what is important.

More great tips from the Family Smart Practice Tool on how to build communication and language skills:

- **Alignment** happens when we work together to identify a common goal and create a plan to achieve it.
- **Check In** regularly to connect better and change directions if needed.
- **Assume good intentions** and that each person wants things to go well.
- **Empathy and listening** helps us to see each other's perspective and to increase understanding.
- **Be kind** to yourself and to others.

Learn how to tackle stigma and show sensitivity through the words you choose.

- Use positive and respectful language
- Don't use labels or judgement
- Use person-first language to focus on the individual rather than the illness, disability, condition or behaviour.
- Avoid stereotyping or oversimplifying similarities.

Words to combat stigma :

Stigmatizing

They were an addict.
Committed suicide.
They are crazy.

Respectful

They are in recovery.
Died by suicide.
They're living with a mental illness.

Together with your children, learn the importance of using the right words when talking about mental health. Mental Health Literacy offers a helpful resource for families to learn about mental health and to use the terms and components correctly.

Components:

- No distress, problem or disorder
- Mental distress
- Mental health problem
- Mental disorder/illness

Understanding the differences is crucial to getting the right kind of help if needed, to avoid seeking treatment when it is not needed and to be clear about the language we use to express how we feel.

MORE RESOURCES

[Resources - FamilySmart](#)
[Language Matters](#)
[Mental Health Literacy](#)

Information on mental health, community supports, programs and services in your area:



Addiction Services Help Line
1-866-332-2322

Mental Health Help Line
1-877-303-2642

