

# Disclosing mental health challenges to those around you

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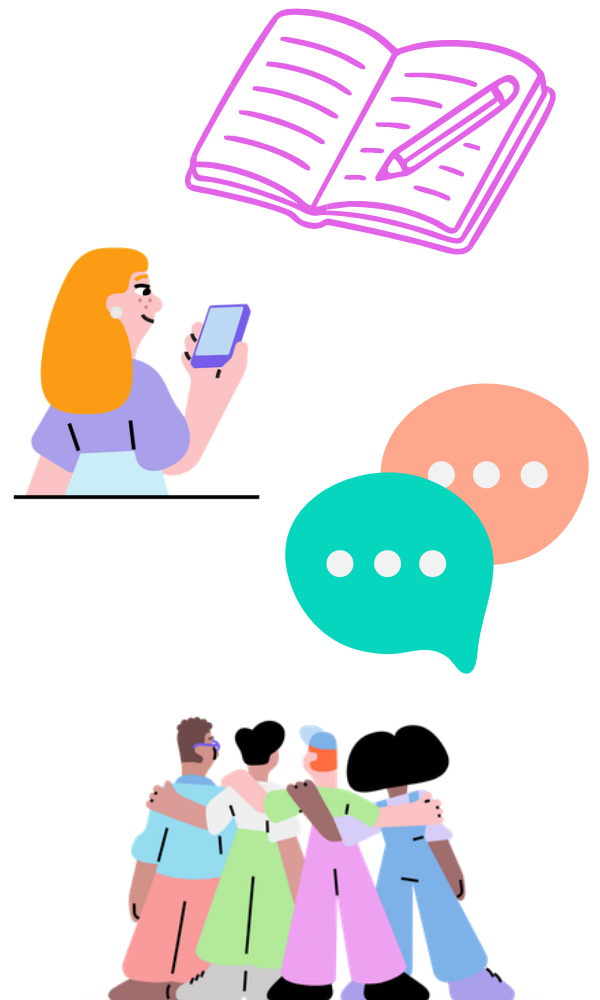
## Factors to consider when disclosing mental health challenges

A key consideration when deciding to disclose mental health challenges is identifying if a disclosure will be more helpful or harmful for you. Sharing your mental health challenges can help you broaden your support network but can also result in judgement when others do not understand your experiences. In some situations, you may need to disclose your experiences of mental health challenges to access support, such as when getting permission from parents to see a school counsellor if you are under a certain age.

## How you can start a conversation about disclosing mental health challenges

When you have decided to share your mental health challenges with someone, you can start by:

- Asking them if they have time to talk
- Texting or calling them about what you've been experiencing
- Writing a letter to them
- Sharing an online resource with them that can be used to help you explain what you're going through
- Inviting them to a session with a mental health specialist who can explain what you have been experiencing



## **What happens if my mental health challenges are involuntarily disclosed?**

In some situations, a mental health professional may need to disclose your mental health challenges to other people because of your age or concerns for your wellbeing. Generally, a mental health professional will let you know if this is happening, what they are disclosing, who they are speaking to and why they are making a disclosure. It is okay and completely normal to feel upset, or even betrayed, if someone shares your mental health challenges without you wanting them to. It can be helpful to remember that these disclosures are not personal or made to get you in trouble but rather are done with your best interests in mind, even if it doesn't feel like it.

## **How can disclosures differ with different people?**

What you choose to share and the way you talk about your mental health may differ depending on who you're speaking to. For example, when speaking with your family you may want to talk about how spending time together can help with your mood whereas in school it might be more useful for you to explain how your mental health impacts your studies and what type of support you would like to get.

I speak two languages at home and it is sometimes easier for me to communicate with my family in my second language. It means that my family members are likely to be more understanding about what I'm communicating. To learn more on this topic, keep an eye out for a post I'll be writing about disclosing and discussing mental health challenges as a young person from a Culturally and Linguistically Diverse background.