

TALKING ABOUT HARD TOPICS: GUIDE TO PREPARING TO SHARE

When we have to have a conversation about hard topics, it's important to plan ahead so you aren't caught off guard which can set us back. Use the following sheet to plan through what it would be like to share your experiences with someone you want to disclose information to.

PLANNING THE CONVERSATION

1. Who do you want to share with?

2. What specific information do you want to share?

3. Use the back of this page or additional sheets to write out a script or an outline of a script of what you might share. If you're not sure where to start, use the document at mhanational.org/talking-adolescents-and-teens-time-talk as a guide.

MANAGING EXPECTATIONS

1. What do you think will happen when you share? What is the best response you could receive?

2. What is the worst thing that could happen? What would they say to you or how would they react that would make you feel much worse?

3. What do you need from this person to feel better? It is important that the below answer is focused on specific, clear, or concrete actions that will help you feel better. (Example: I need you to listen, I need you to call me once a week, I need you to help me talk to mom and dad.) Add this answer to your script in #3 in the first section of this page.

4. What are you going to do if the person you're sharing with does not respond in the best way?
(Example: talk to your friend, write in your journal, take a walk.)

HAVING THE CONVERSATION

To have the conversation it's best to **use the script** you developed from question #3 in "planning the conversation" and make sure you remember to **ask for what you need** (from question #3 from "managing expectations"). Use your responses from "managing expectations" to prepare for potential challenges or issues that could arise during the conversation. Remember that #4 from "managing expectations" is an action you can take regardless of the outcome of the conversation.



[illegible]