



This holiday season, Each Mind Matters: California's Mental Health Movement encourages everyone to check in with loved ones on their mental health. Talking openly and honestly about mental health lets those we care about know that we support them. The following tips can be used to create meaningful conversation with someone experiencing a mental health challenge.

Say This	Not That
I've been worried about you. Can we talk about what you are experiencing?*	Cheer up; I'm sure it will pass.
<i>Comments such as "it will pass" can make a person feel worse. Instead let them know you are concerned.*</i>	
I am someone who cares and wants to listen. What do you want me to know about how you are feeling?*	Stop feeling sorry for yourself.
<i>It's important to learn to separate the disorder from the person you love. Comments like this blame the individual for their feelings.*</i>	
It seems like you are going through a difficult time. I want you to know you're not alone in this.*	There's always someone worse off than you are.
<i>Ensure that your loved ones feel supported. A negative comment like this can make the person feel as though their feelings are insignificant.*</i>	
I can't really understand what you are feeling, but I can offer my compassion and find you help.*	Believe me, I know how you feel. I was depressed once for several days.
<i>Avoid saying you know how they feel as it invalidates their experience.*</i>	
I'm concerned about your safety. Have you thought about harming yourself or others?*	You're not thinking about killing yourself are you (said in a joking manner)?*
<i>The possibility of suicide is a real concern, and asking about it will not give them the idea but there is a right and wrong way to do so. And making light of something as serious as suicide is never okay. Asking about suicide will not give them the idea, but there is a right way and wrong way to check in if you are concerned.*</i>	

* <http://www.mentalhealth.gov/talk/friends-family-members/index.html> ." For Friends and Family Members. Mentalhealth.gov, n.d. Web. 01 Dec. 2014.