



support for families

helping young people face uncertainty

Planning what happens in the future can be challenging for young people.

As your young person embarks on adulthood, they'll face new opportunities and challenges that can bring both excitement and uncertainty. They might be thinking about higher education, vocational training, or their first job, and feel worried about aligning their plans with yours and your family's expectations.

With the added stress of global issues, the future can feel overwhelming. But it's important to let them know that they don't have to endure these feelings alone and that now is a great time to reach out for help.

Having the support of family and friends can make a difference to a young person's life and their emotional wellbeing. For you, it means acknowledging when they're struggling emotionally, and what to do to support them.

This is where the headspace NIP it in the bud framework can help to resolve problems before they feel too overwhelming to manage. The NIP framework helps you to **Notice** changes in mood and behaviour, **Inquire** sensitively and competently and **Provide** information to help young people access the right support.



Notice

The first step is to notice changes in your young person's behaviour.

You may want to consider whether they're being affected by other things — like what's happening at school, interactions on social media, issues in the media etc.

If you have noticed changes in their behaviour, try to work out how long it might have gone on for. There might be other

symptoms of emerging mental wellbeing problems that they may need extra support for.

See how they behave when talking about or planning the future. Are they irritable or nervous, or do they actively avoid talking about the future?

Signs to look out for:

- Irritability or nervousness when talking about their future
- Active avoidance of the topic
- Difficulty making decisions about their future or finding a job
- Noticeable changes in behaviour e.g. feelings of anger, sadness, lack of focus
- No longer enjoying things that interest them
- Easily irritated and having problems with friends e.g. withdrawal, acting out.



Inquire

This is your opportunity to find out what's going on. By asking questions and listening, you see what other support or action you may need to take. It's important to ask what the young person needs, rather than assume. Remember, listening can be just as powerful as offering solutions.

There's no perfect way to start a conversation about mental health. Find a time and place where everyone involved is feeling safe to talk about it.

You're trying to understand their experience so you're in a better place to help. Some ways to try having this conversation might be:

- "Hey, I've noticed you seem to have a lot on your mind at the moment. Do you want to talk about it?"

- "How are your friends at the moment, how have things been going with them?"
- A way to start a conversation could even just as an invitation to do something together. Then, you can try asking about things once you're doing the activity. Asking straight up could be too intense.

How to help:

1. Actively listen, and be non-judgmental
2. Choose an appropriate place and time, with the right people there
3. Be aware of your body language and theirs
4. Acknowledge their experience
5. Reflect and clarify the details
6. Give them reassurance and be hopeful
7. Normalise their experience, don't minimise it
8. Validate and encourage them to seek help (see next step: Provide)



Provide

It's about having a two-way conversation with your young person to help them decide what they might need at that time, and you as a family member helping them plan the steps to access it. Remember to respond in a way that shows you're there for them.

There are services that can help. Your young person could benefit from talking to a mental health clinician, accessing headspace work & study support, reading online resources or joining a group chat to find other young people dealing with similar worries.

Based on what comes out of your conversation, you'll have a direction for what further support you may need.

Questions you could ask:

- "It sounds like things at school are really tough right now. How would you feel about us having a brainstorm on some things we could try to ease the stress?"
- "I'd like to find a way that I can be helpful for you. Would that be OK for you?"
- "I'm not feeling very confident about the best way to help at the moment. Would it be OK if we called a service to help us figure out the best way forward?"
- "I'm hearing that X is really difficult at the moment, and I'm really glad you've come to me. I don't know a lot about X, but I'd really like to learn so that we can work through this together — how do you feel about that?"



For more information on how to support your young person using the NIP in the bud framework, visit headspace.org.au/nipitinthebud

