



HOW TO HAVE A CONVERSATION WITH YOUR LOVED ONES/FAMILY MEMBERS ABOUT ANXIETY/OCD/DEPRESSION

1. Find a time where you know that you will not be interrupted to speak to your family members/loved ones about your anxiety.
2. Explain to them what anxiety/ocd/depression is.
3. Tell them that each person experiences anxiety/ocd/depression differently and has different symptoms. The symptoms can be physiological, cognitive or behavioural, e.g. for anxiety.
 - Heart palpitations, pounding in the chest, chest pains, feeling like you are having a heart attack.
 - Sweating, you might only have sweaty palms or you could perspire a great deal when nervous.
 - Shortness of breath, feeling like you can't breath, or feeling like you are choking on something.
 - Nausea, diarrhoea or abdominal pains.
 - Becoming dizzy, feeling like you are going to faint, being light-headed.
 - Feeling disassociated from your surroundings, as if you are watching a movie but not a part of it.
 - Thinking you are going to die or that you have some terrible illness.
 - Feeling as if you are going crazy, thinking you are literally going to lose control of your mind.
4. Tell them how you experience anxiety/ocd/depression and how it makes you feel.
5. Explain the coping skills that you use for your anxiety/ocd/depression.
6. Think of ways that you would like your family members to help you with your anxiety/ocd/depression. Below are some ideas:
 - Listen to me without judging me or belittling me.
 - Acknowledge and validate my feelings even if you don't understand them.
 - Don't ask me to "Get over it" or "Grow up" or "Get a grip." If I could do that, I would have done it long ago. There is no switch to turn anxiety/ocd/depression off. Instead, let me know you are there if I need assistance.
 - Even though you may think you know what I need, please ask. Don't assume you are correct. I will tell you what will be helpful.
 - Ask them to take interest in your coping skills and help you with them when you are struggling.
 - Don't panic every time I panic. I need someone who is in control to help me feel in control.
 - Be encouraging without being pushy.
 - Help me remember my achievements. Sometimes I am overwhelmed by my anxiety and don't take the time to see the good in what I have done. Even when I take baby-steps in my recovery, applaud my success and encourage me to do the same.
 - Don't let me sit home, avoiding life and family. Offer to be by my side and give me encouragement, without treating me like a baby.
7. Congratulate yourself for having the courage to have this conversation.

