



how

**to
speak
about
mental health
with care?**

why is it important to talk about mental health?

we all move through life with different feelings, thoughts and rhythms. some days are calm. others feel intense or unclear and sometimes, we're not even sure what's going on inside us.

that's what mental health is - not something separate or rare, but a part of everyday life. and since it's already part of our lives, it deserves space in our conversations too.

talking about mental health with care can open space for understanding, honesty and support.

what does it mean to speak with care?

when we speak about our own or someone else's mental health, the words we use matter. they can either build connection, or create distance.

here's how we can choose words that show respect and care:

- **recognize the person, not the label,**
- ✗ instead of "a mentally ill person",
- ✓ say "someone with experience of mental health challenges"

- **acknowledge that mental health is layered,**

- ✗ instead of “they want to be cured”,

- ✓ say “they’re looking for the kind of support they need now”

- **encourage openness, not shame**

- ✗ instead of “they’re complaining or confessing”,

- ✓ say “they’re sharing their story, their emotions”

these small shifts help create safer spaces for real conversations.

looking at mental health in a broader way

not all mental health needs are answered by doctors.

support can come from many places - psychologists, social workers, peers, community organizations.

because mental health is not just a medical issue. it’s also social, cultural, emotional.

so when we talk about what people need or advocate for better services, we should include voices from across fields and we shouldn’t overlook peer support - when someone with lived experience helps someone else going through something similar. that kind of support can be powerful and deeply human.

care isn't always clinical. therapy can help but sometimes care looks different. it can look like:

 creating something

 hearing someone say "i've felt that too"

 walking with a friend in silence

 taking space from people for a while

...etc.

when to speak up

language matters.

even when it doesn't seem aimed at anyone.

so when we hear words that hurt, or dismiss mental health struggles, it's okay and important to respond. gently. with care.

we can offer better words.

we can invite more respectful language.

that's one way we break down stigma.

it's not always easy, but it's worth it.

when we change our words, we change the space around us too.

no one has to be strong all the time

people are often blamed for their struggles, as if they're not trying hard enough or not doing enough.

but **that's unfair. and it ignores the bigger picture:**

- ⚠ community-based, rights-centered mental health services are often missing,
- ⚠ available support focuses only on treatment and even that's often limited or inaccessible,
- ⚠ there aren't enough trained professionals, and many areas of care are missing altogether,
- ⚠ social and gender pressures silence people,
- ⚠ mental health is still surrounded by shame,
- ⚠ ...

2 questions to start reflecting on

- 🌀 what do we wish people would say to us when we're opening up about something difficult or personal?
- 🌀 what can we do to help people around us feel safer sharing how they're really feeling?

