



How to wrap things up

In this guide, we'll talk about how to end the conversation in a way that feels safe and secure, including how to ensure that we feel that our needs have been met, building a plan collaboratively and next steps.

Key learning points:

By the end of this guide you will have:

- Tips on how to get the conversation to a point to end well
- Techniques to help build a plan that works for both of us
- Insight into how to wrap things up well for both of us
- Hints and tips on how to end in a way where we both feel safe and secure

Acknowledgement and reassurance

Before you can think about bringing the conversation to a close, you must make sure that we feel that we have been listened to and that our needs have been met. Reaching out for help can be a scary experience for young people because of fears around what the consequences of being honest and open might be. Acknowledging, validating and reassuring makes tough conversations easier.

Having somebody in that moment who makes you feel genuinely cared for is really powerful. Validating our experiences, especially acknowledging challenges within the system, helps us to trust you and feel like we have done the right thing by speaking to you.

"In that moment when everything was chaotic, she took time to make me feel calm"
Kenya, Young Advisor

The way that we are made to feel during the conversation has big implications on how the ending of the conversation will go, and how we will feel afterwards.

Acknowledge that what we are going through is hard. Remember also that different people have different thresholds, and it's not about how you measure what we've been through, it's about our experiences and our ability to manage and cope.

How to end the conversation

Avoid using phrases such as:

"You'll feel better in the morning, just sleep it off."

"You don't need to do that, like you could just stop."

"Just get over it. It's not that big of a deal."

These kind of responses, no matter the intention behind them, can feel belittling. Instead, reassure us that you are here to listen and understand. Saying simple things like 'I'm glad you called tonight' can be really helpful and makes people feel valued even if the conversation was difficult.

Depending on how the conversation is going, you can also begin exploring what got us to this point. Talking it through step by step might help us and you understand, and actually allowing us space to talk through everything may help us come to our own solutions and conclusions in a positive and supported way. To help guide us say calming things like 'I'm listening, please carry on...'

Having somebody in that moment who makes you feel genuinely cared for is really powerful. Validating our experiences, especially acknowledging challenges within the system, helps us to trust you and feel like we have done the right thing by speaking to you.

Over the phone, saying simple things like 'I'm glad you called tonight' and 'I'm listening, please carry on...' can be really helpful when we can't see your body language, and makes us feel valued even if the conversation was difficult.

Remember also that we all have different ways of coping and managing what we are going through. Coping mechanisms may seem destructive - but they are still coping mechanisms that serve the individual at this point in their journey. Work with us to find out what would be most helpful and make the conversation about us

Acknowledging, validating and reassuring us along this journey helps us through these tough conversations. It helps us feel supported during a discussion which can be hard for both of us.

Reflection space

Are there any coping mechanisms you are not familiar with (from experience) or need to better understand?

Working Collaboratively

Working collaboratively with us is important throughout your conversation but most importantly when agreeing the 'next steps' and wrapping things up.

We heard from many young people that it is helpful to leave with some practical steps moving forwards. In this section we are going to talk about working together with us to figure that out.

Many young people reported that crisis workers were either quick to jump to calling emergency services, or they receive dismissive responses like 'just get over it'. Both of these are not ideal. This is why working with us is incredibly important in not only understanding our levels of risk, but learning how best to support us.

Offer as much choice as you can, within the constraints of your job role. Explain that you want to help, but that you want to work together to ensure that our needs are being adequately addressed. We will know ourselves better than you will. Don't talk for us or decide what happens to us without first consulting, offering choice and letting us be the decision maker. We've outlined some steps below that might help this process:

Ask

Ask "What are you going to do after this conversation?"

Ask if we've gone through basic self-care steps

Ask us what is helpful and allow for our individual needs. We might have some great ideas and insight and just need more guidance from you.

Actively Listen

Appreciate that we will probably know what works for us better than you will. Allow us to be an expert in our care and give us time to explain how we are feeling.

Active listening is not only empowering, but it also ensures you are providing support beneficial for the young person in front of you.

Remember, we feel extremely vulnerable when reaching out in a mental health crisis. Keep your language accessible and make sure we both understand each other. Avoid jargon or overly medical language, especially if we aren't using it.

Offer

Don't talk for us or decide what happens to us without first consulting, offering choice and letting us be the decision maker.

How to end the conversation

Offer as much choice as you can to adequately address our needs within the constraints of your job role. Sometimes we can't control what will happen, but being involved in how it happens can make a huge difference to us.

Make offerings that are more specific to the individual to avoid your advice coming across as dismissive like - take a bath, go for a walk, have a cup of tea. Try saying 'does this work for you, or do we need to find another option?'

When providing a plan, follow the procedure set out in your job role, but remember to collaborate, offer choices, and include the young person in decision making.

Reflection space

What factors might hinder collaborative working with a young person in crisis and what can you do to address them?

Ending the conversation

Now that we have worked out a plan moving forward that works for both of us, it's time to end the conversation. Check in with us to make sure that we are satisfied with the session and that we feel we have been listened to and cared for. We might have more to share, so make sure that you continue to listen to us and give us time to speak.

Don't focus too much on how we'll feel tomorrow, or next week. The plan you've made may encompass the rest of the week, but during the session stay focused on the present moment and the issues affecting us while we are with you.

We really appreciate a follow up, or being checked up on, so if that is a possibility try to provide this. If you won't be able to do this, offer alternative organisations that may be able to help us, and then put us in direct contact with these services. An introduction can help make it easier for our future interactions with them. If you know who we will be seeing next, you could introduce us.

Remember to follow through on any expectations you have set for the young person. Will you call back? Will there be another appointment? Could you schedule a time to talk next week? Whatever you have told the young person you will do, you must follow through and take accountability.

We might be really relying on the expectations you have set, and if we are let down this may affect our trust in services and likelihood to return when in need. For this reason it's incredibly important to not make promises unless you know for sure you can keep them.

How to end the conversation

We understand that if we are being passed along to external agencies you may not be able to guarantee a time frame. Make sure you've communicated that that is out of your control, but you will do your best to make sure the things that are under your control, happen.

Before you go, make sure that we are both clear on what will happen moving forward, and that we have steps we can take if we feel this way again.

Acknowledge that this has been potentially hard on us, and we may feel very alone after this interaction. Remind us that we can access the service again when we are in need.

While this process can be extremely hard on us, we know that it can be difficult for you to have these conversations and that you are working extremely hard in sometimes challenging conditions. Remember to take care of yourself too! You matter as well! Look after yourself and remember to give yourself the same compassion you offer us.

Reflection space

What are the self-care activities that help you wind down after having a challenging conversation? How well do they work and are there other things that would help? Who can you talk to if you feel like you need support?

Conclusion

When wrapping things up, it is a good opportunity to acknowledge, validate and reassure us, which might make our future interactions with crisis workers and other health professionals easier. Our interactions in these moments have lasting effects, and positive interactions will stay with us.

Remember to apply the 'Ask, Actively listen and Offer' structure of our collaborative working tools when agreeing the 'next steps'. The next steps you take will depend on your job role, but our practical tips will help you develop next steps to make us feel safe after being in crisis. If you have to signpost or refer out to external agencies, try to arrange an introduction because you will probably know the service better than us.

Also remember to take some time to look after yourself as well. We know that you are busy and work hard to do the best you can, so make sure that you are showing yourself the same compassion as you show others.

You can view the video guide for this document for free at www.crisistools.org.uk

This learning guide was produced with support from NHS England



About Crisis Tools

Unique, co-produced learning guides to increase knowledge and confidence for anyone supporting young people in a mental health crisis.

Crisis Tools is relevant to anyone who may find themselves supporting a young person in crisis including parents, carers and professionals. The Crisis Tools website features a resource sharing hub and bite-sized learning guides aimed at improving your knowledge and understanding of young people's experiences when getting help in crisis. Co-designed and delivered by young people with lived experience, these unique learning guides will cover key themes including attitudes, communication, practical strategies and complexities when delivering care remotely.

Crisis Tools is complementary to, but not a replacement for clinical training. This unique program is designed to amplify the voices of young people.

www.crisistools.org.uk