

BLENDYED YOUTH MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Exercise 2.1 Practice Conversation: Steven



MENTAL
HEALTH
FIRST AID
Australia

INFORMATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER:

Choose a role (e.g. parent, band teacher, school teacher, coach etc). Read the scenario below.

SCENARIO:

Steven is 15 years old and is an active hiker. He is also an avid musician who plays in the school band. A few months ago, Steven confided in you that he has started to worry about the possibility of things going wrong for him in the future, and has been feeling nervous and on edge. This leads him to avoid doing things that he normally enjoys, like going hiking with his family.

Steven is also finding band practice increasingly intense; he is spending a lot of time rehearsing, afraid that he might make a mistake in front of his friends. Steven is starting to feel lonely and is sad about the fun things he is missing out on because of how anxious he feels.

You have noticed that Steven requires a lot of reassurance to do things he would ordinarily do independently, like organising the family camping equipment. You are concerned that he might be struggling with problems with anxiety and depression. You plan to approach him after school one day to have a Mental Health First Aid conversation.



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INFORMATION FOR MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AIDER:

START OF THE PRACTICE CONVERSATION

You approach Steven after school to start the conversation.

You will start the conversation.

Try and cover the 5 ALGEE actions – these are listed below if you need a reminder.

A pproach, assess and assist with any crisis
L isten and communicate non-judgementally
G ive support and information
E ncourage appropriate professional help
E ncourage other supports

Some things you could say

- You start the conversation by saying something like 'Hi Steven, I was wondering if we could talk?'
- Ask Steven how he is. For example, "Steven, you mentioned a few months you that you were feeling nervous and on edge and had started worrying about things going wrong in the future. How are you feeling now?"
- Use "I" statements if possible. For example, "I have noticed that you also appear to be sad. Is that how you are feeling?"
- Listen and validate Steven as he tells you more about how he is feeling.
- Offer to support him. You might want to provide information about mood disorders or explore self-help strategies that could assist, like exercise or relaxation.
- Explore with Steven who else in his support circle could be of support to him and consider what help-seeking options might be helpful.

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INFORMATION FOR STEVEN:

The Mental Health First Aider that approaches you can be either your parent, band/school teacher, or coach.

SCENARIO:

You are a 15-year-old named Steven. You used to really enjoy going hiking with your family and being involved with band practice at school. Lately you're feeling increasingly on edge and worried about things going wrong.

When you prepare to go on a hiking trip with your family, you become so concerned that there will be a problem with the equipment that you no longer want to go. Band practice is also no longer fun. You're practising lots but only because you're worried about making a mistake in front of your friends. Missing out on things you used to enjoy doing is making you feel sad and lonely.

You're feeling defeated about how much the worry and fear is getting in the way of things. You have confided before in your parent/teacher/sports coach. After school one day they approach you to and have a conversation about how you have been feeling.



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INFORMATION FOR STEVEN:

START OF THE PRACTICE CONVERSATION

Your parent, band teacher, school teacher, or coach will approach you after school to have a conversation.

They will start the conversation.

The Mental Health First Aider will try to cover the 5 ALGEE actions with you during the conversation.

A pproach, assess and assist with any crisis
L isten and communicate non-judgementally
G ive support and information
E ncourage appropriate professional help
E ncourage other supports

Some things you could say

- When they ask you how you are you might say something like “Okay I guess, I am still feeling nervous about a lot of things”.
- When the Mental Health First Aider asks you more about how your mood is, you could say “On top of feeling worried, I am starting to feel sad and lonely because of all the things I am missing out on, like going hiking”.
- Share how things are different for you now with changes to your routine, not going on hikes, and, avoiding situations that you might be feeling nervous about.
- Consider how some of the information that is shared with you by the Mental Health First Aider could be useful to you.
- Identify people in your support circle that could support you and reflect on how you feel about accessing professional supports.