



## Jumpstarting conversations

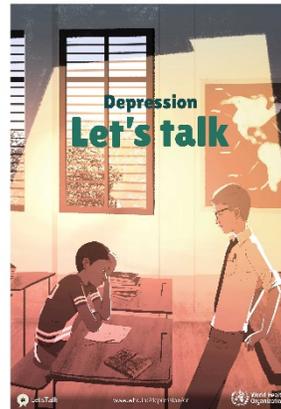
Talking about mental health is often the first step towards building awareness and reducing stigma, taking concrete action, and starting one's recovery journey. As such, these important conversations provide a natural jumping-off point for this issue of our newsletter. From a global campaign to get people talking about depression, to tips to help parents and caregivers have more meaningful discussions about mental health with their teens, we're taking a closer look at different ways to connect and use our voices in support of this important issue.

## FEATURE

### Beyond the one-word reply: Getting teens talking about mental health

It's an all-too-common scenario: A teenager for whom you're caring seems more sullen, withdrawn and irritable than usual, and you're concerned about their mental health. When you try to engage them in conversation about it, they respond with one-word answers, grunts, blank stares or fidgeting, or they ignore you altogether and play on their smartphone instead. You know the stakes are high, since mental health problems are present in 90% of people who die by suicide, which is the leading cause globally of non-accidental death among young people aged 15 to 29. What do you do?

### WHO: Depression in focus



The World Health Organization recently put mental health in focus by choosing depression as its theme for World Health Day 2017 in April.

Depression has become the leading cause of disability worldwide: WHO estimates that more than 300 million people now live with depression, an 18% increase between 2005 and 2015.

The organization's year-long campaign "Depression: let's talk" aims to reduce the stigma associated with this mental illness.

"For someone living with depression, talking to a person they trust is often the first step towards treatment and recovery," says Dr. Shekhar Saxena, WHO's Director of the Department of Mental Health and Substance Abuse.

WHO notes that while every US\$1 invested in scaling up treatment for depression and anxiety leads to a US\$4 return in better health and ability to work, fewer than 50% of those affected by depression globally receive effective treatments.



Parents and caregivers play a vital role in supporting teens' mental well-being, yet many young people are reluctant to go to their parents if facing mental health issues. In a poll with youth contacting Canadian hotline service Kids Help Phone, half said they would turn to a friend if they were dealing with mental health problems, with mom a distant second at 30%. One in five said they would not share their pain with anyone.

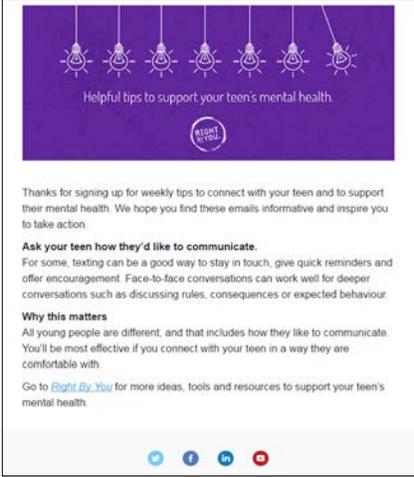
Establishing regular, meaningful dialogue requires effort. Here are a few tips to help you get started, taken from the "Ask the Right Questions – The Basics" resource at [www.rightbyyou.ca](http://www.rightbyyou.ca):

### 1. Show unconditional love

Whatever happens in life and in your relationship with your teen, it is critical that they know you love and care about them unconditionally.

### 2. It's a two-way conversation

It's important your teen doesn't feel like they're being interrogated or they don't have your trust. You'll get the most out of the conversation if you also share your own ideas, thoughts and experiences. Make sure



Helpful tips to support your teen's mental health.

Thanks for signing up for weekly tips to connect with your teen and to support their mental health. We hope you find these emails informative and inspire you to take action.

**Ask your teen how they'd like to communicate.**  
For some, texting can be a good way to stay in touch, give quick reminders and offer encouragement. Face-to-face conversations can work well for deeper conversations such as discussing rules, consequences or expected behaviour.

**Why this matters**  
All young people are different, and that includes how they like to communicate. You'll be most effective if you connect with your teen in a way they are comfortable with.

Go to [Right By You](http://RightByYou) for more ideas, tools and resources to support your teen's mental health.

Want more ideas to help you connect more deeply with your teen and support their mental health? Sign up at [rightbyyou.ca/en/get-weekly-tips](http://rightbyyou.ca/en/get-weekly-tips) and receive weekly tips by email over a 12-week period.

to avoid dominating the conversation, lecturing or providing unsolicited advice.

### 3. Park your emotions at the door

It can be challenging but it's important not to let your emotions get the better of you and that the conversation be non-confrontational. Becoming angry or overreacting can upset your teen, or worse, silence any hope of future dialogue. Instead stay calm, listen and ask open-ended questions.

### 4. What's your goal?

What is the one thing you want to communicate or learn from your teen? Focus

on the information you want to relay to (or receive from) your teen.

### 5. Stay firmly planted

Make sure you're not perceived by your teen as needing their attention or co-operation. If this happens, it puts you as the parent or caregiver in a vulnerable position, as your teen does not need to give you what you're looking for. If, for instance, your teen is screaming or being disrespectful, choose instead to walk away and not engage. Let them know you won't engage with them until they are more civil.



## GLOBAL SPOTLIGHT: Rotarian action frees Filipino man locked in cage due to mental illness



*Credit: Doug Vincent's Facebook page*

While support for mental health is improving, we hear of so many stories that show there is still a lot of work to be done.

Rotarian Doug Vincent shared a shocking video from his visit to the rural Philippines of a young man named Joel who lives with mental illness. For his own protection and that of others in the

area, Joel was chained up and locked in a bamboo cage for three years because the local villagers could not deal with his mental disorder and his family had no money to get him help. The mayor of the area's municipality noted that there were likely other people were confined in this manner nearby or chained to trees.

Thanks to the actions of Doug and his Rotary colleagues, however, Joel was able to be freed and transported to a mental health facility in Cebu for treatment. It's a powerful illustration of the change we are able to accomplish if we work together to take action.

See Joel's story unfold here:

[www.facebook.com/doug.vincent.58/media\\_set?set=a.969018953156435.1073741868.100001450181909&type=3](https://www.facebook.com/doug.vincent.58/media_set?set=a.969018953156435.1073741868.100001450181909&type=3)

***We want to highlight stories about mental health in YOUR community for our new Global Spotlight column! If you have an interesting story you'd like to share, drop us a line at [www.ragonmentalhealth.org/SingleEmail/ContactUs](http://www.ragonmentalhealth.org/SingleEmail/ContactUs)***

## Join our team!



We're looking for two (2) new officers and members-at-large! If you are interested in joining us and plan to attend Rotary's International Convention in Atlanta this June, please stop by booth 2922 and drop off your CV prior to noon on Monday and we'll have a conversation! We also welcome you to attend our Annual General Meeting on Monday, June 12 from 2:30 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in Room A406. We look forward to seeing you!