

**Language Matters**

✓ Use positive & respectful language:

<b>Instead of:</b>	<b>Try:</b>
She's bipolar	Person with bipolar disorder
Schizophrenic	Person with schizophrenia
The mentally ill	People with mental illness
Committed suicide	Died by suicide

✓ Avoid labels such as:

- |                     |            |
|---------------------|------------|
| x Challenged        | x Psycho   |
| x Crazy             | x Special  |
| x Demented          | x Sufferer |
| x Normal/Not normal | x Schizo   |

**Knowledge Matters**

✓ Challenge the mental illness MYTHS:

- × Mental illnesses aren't real illnesses.
- × Mental illness will never affect me.
- × Mental illness is an excuse for poor behaviour.
- × Bad parenting causes mental illnesses.
- × People with mental illness are dangerous.
- × People don't recover from mental illnesses.
- × People who experience mental illness are weak & can't handle stress.
- × Kids can't have a mental illness like depression.

Family Smart™ shares how young people want adults to talk to them about their mental health:

**"I hate feeling like this all the time."**  
*Desired response:* "It must be really hard. Can I do anything to make you feel better?"

**"Everyone else seems to be able to handle things. Why can't I?"**  
*Desired response:* "I'm sure you're doing your best. Sometimes people face challenges that make life tougher. Would you like to talk more about this with me or someone else?"

Family Smart™ shares ideas on how we can use language to build caring, connected relationships:

**"I can't deal with these feelings. I am so worried all of the time."**  
*Desired response:* "Maybe we can sit together and come up with ways to overcome some of the things that you are worried about."

**"Don't say hurtful or judgmental things. They make me feel worse about myself."**  
*Desired response:* "I'm sorry I hurt you or made you feel judged. I'm going to do my best to listen and not judge."

**MORE RESOURCES**

- [www.FamilySmart.ca](http://www.FamilySmart.ca)
- [www.CMHA.ca](http://www.CMHA.ca)
- <http://community.hmhc.ca/>

Information on mental health, community supports, programs and services in your area:



Addiction Services Help Line  
1-866-332-2322

Mental Health Help Line  
1-877-303-2642

