



# Supporting children, families and schools

## How to listen so your child will talk

Parents often ask what they can say to get their children to talk. The secret isn't about what you say: it's about how you *listen*. The most important skill in talking with anyone is not lecturing, offering solutions, answering, or teaching. What children need from you is your full attention and empathy: that is what deep listening is.

## How can parents help?

Even children who don't say much want to connect with you, so try to accept it on their terms. The connection doesn't always look like a deep meaningful conversation: it can be a hug, a high five, or a long look in each other's eyes. Children may also feel more comfortable talking while walking down the street or washing the dishes. It is okay for them not to hold eye contact as this may be their way of staying regulated while talking about something that feels difficult for them. When your child expresses his feelings about something, he needs you to listen and acknowledge, rather than jump in with solutions. This means you may have to manage your own anxiety about the issue, which will allow him to find his own solutions to problems. Most importantly, pay full attention: put your phone down and be present. It will be a gift to both of you.

If you would like to meet for a confidential and non-judgmental talk about you or your child or any other worries, I am available on Wednesday 9-10 a.m. To book an appointment, you can call/text me on 07833 460683 or e-mail: [greta@schoolscounsellingpartnership.co.uk](mailto:greta@schoolscounsellingpartnership.co.uk)

With best wishes,

Greta

Therapeutic Lead in Schools



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