



THREE HURTS

CONVERSATION GUIDE FOR PARENTS

There are three areas of hurt we need to be aware of when working with or parenting a kid: **HURTING THEMSELVES**, **HURTING OTHERS**, and **BEING HURT**. If a kid talks to you about the hurt in their life, it's because they trust you and they need an adult who is for them. You probably aren't trained or equipped to be a professional counselor. Leave the heavy lifting for those who have more training in these areas. Often times, the best thing to do is to be a consistent presence in the kid's life that assures them they're not alone. Think of this as a dialogue and not a "one and done" conversation. This will help the conversation be more fluid and relaxed instead of forced and "preachy" to the kid. Your conversation is the first of many if there's a bigger issue, so remember this when you enter into the conversation. We want to help you get the dialogue started by giving you some words to say and not to say.

WHAT TO SAY

WHEN A STUDENT IS HURTING THEMSELVES.

- "You're not alone in this. We're going to walk through it together."
- "You're not broken. And this situation is not hopeless."
- "Thank you for trusting me. I think it would be a really good idea to talk to (_____) about how you're feeling."
- "I love you."

Note: Give them a deadline for talking to their counselor/ministry leader. Offer to do it with them. If the deadline comes and goes, let them know you will talk to this person. If they want to talk to this person alone, offer methods that make it more comfortable—like writing a letter or an email. Ask them to text you once they've talked to this person.

WHEN A STUDENT IS HURTING OTHERS.

- "Thank you for trusting me. Telling someone and admitting this is happening is the first step in growth."
- "I know you, and I know you are more than this. This doesn't change how I see you."
- "There is always a why behind what we do. I'd love to understand why you did this because that's just as important as what you did. If you don't know why you did it, you won't be able to deal with the real motivator/root issue and you'll find yourself hurting others again."
- "I think it would be a really good idea to talk to (_____) about how you're feeling."
- "I will always love you, no matter what."

(Note: Again, give them a deadline for talking to the person you suggested. Offer to do it with them. If the deadline comes and goes, let them know you will talk to the person.)

WHEN A STUDENT IS BEING HURT.

- "You're not alone in this. We're going to walk through it together."
- "You're not broken. And this situation isn't hopeless."
- "Thank you for trusting me. Because I care about you, this is something I have to share with _____. But I want you to know I'll be with you every step of the way. Even though I have to involve some other adults, nothing you've shared with me will become public knowledge."
- "I love you too much not to help you."

WHAT NOT TO SAY

- Words that communicate you're freaking out. (Try and remain calm.)

- Words that shame. (Shame raises a barrier between you and the student confiding in you. Work to bridge the gap by offering your presence and a safe place.)

- Words that condemn. (Never see the kid as the sum of their behavior or the behavior that has been done to them. Try and see them as a person who has done something wrong, or has had something wrong done to them—they themselves aren't the wrong thing. Help them see, "I did something bad" not, "I am bad.")

Make sure to involve professional counselors, as needed, as well as your ministry leader and parents, if you're not the parent.
