

Navigating difficult conversations

Positive conversation guide

How to have safe and proactive conversations surrounding violent extremism and your children.

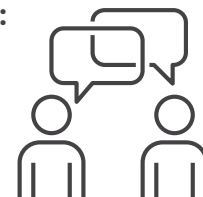


Only have these conversations when SAFE to do so. If the person you are talking to has a history of aggression, violence or mental health, that may be triggered by conversations on these topics - call Step Together or seek professional advice before taking action. **1800 875 204**

1

Prepare yourself and choose a safe space/time for the conversation:

- **Be calm and clarify the goal of the conversation:**
The aim is not to argue, blame or shame, but to open a door for help and engagement.
- **Choose the right time and place:**
A private, calm setting where they feel safe.
What time of day do they naturally want to talk?
- **Start with empathy:**
Show genuine concern for their well-being rather than focusing on ideology. For example: "I care about you and want to understand what's important to you."
- **Remember to be proactive and not in the heat of the moment.**



2

How to talk about challenging topics and avoid confrontation:

- **Avoid attacking beliefs - stay calm:** Be an active listener by being inquisitive. Have neutral body language and facial expressions. Criticising their beliefs may make them angry or defensive and withdraw from the conversation.
- **Ask open ended questions like:**
"What drew you to this group?"
"What do you feel you get from being part of it?"
- **Be curious and interested about what they tell you.**

3

Introduce the idea of support and dispel any fear/stigma about a referral program:

- **Frame the program as help and an alternative pathway - You are not in any trouble, and it is not punishment.**
It's their choice, and they are in control:
E.g. "There are people who understand what you're going through and can help you think about your future in a safe way."
"You don't have to commit to anything. Just a conversation to see if it feels right for you."
- **Explain that the program is voluntary**, confidential and non-judgmental.
- **Highlight that it's about supporting them**, not blaming them or wanting to change their views.
- **Suggest the low-pressure first meeting or casual chat.**
- **Reassure them that you'll be there to support them** or they can talk to the program on their own if they want to.

