

Top tips for having good conversations around coronavirus

Over the coming weeks, many of us will be having conversations with friends, family and neighbours who may be vulnerable, unwell, self-isolating, or feeling anxious. It can be difficult to know how to have those conversations, and what to say. This guide suggests some questions you can ask to help people talk about how they're really feeling, and what they might need help or support with.

- 1. Video calling can be a great way of reducing the sense of isolation people may be feeling.** There's lots of different apps you can use for video calling like Whatsapp, Facebook, Facetime, Skype and Zoom. If you're not sure how to set one up, ask someone for help.
- 2. If video calls aren't an option, telephone calls are a great alternative.** Hearing someone's voice can be much more beneficial than just texting. You'll probably find you have better conversations too.
- 3. Some suggestions of good questions you can ask** to encourage people to open up and talk about things that may be affecting them particularly at the moment:
 - *Tell me what your days are looking like / What is your daily routine?*
 - *How do you feel? (encourage people that it's ok if they're feeling rubbish, if they're bored, anxious etc)*
 - *Follow up that question with "What's the worst part of this for you?" and "What's the best part of this for you?"*
 - *What can you be thankful for? What can you celebrate?*
 - *What does your relationship with God look like at the moment?*
 - *Check in on physical needs – Do have everything you need in terms of groceries and medicine? Is there anything else?*
 - *If family dynamics might be relevant, you could ask "How are you coping as a family?"*
- 4. Listening to people is key – and that means *really* listening.** Active listening is a state of mind and requires change of focus to the other person. Avoid the temptation to immediately jump in with advice and solutions. Give people space to express themselves, and give them your undivided attention.