

# How to approach a mental health conversation with adults:

This is guidance and not a step by step approach. Conversations will happen organically given what the adult tells you.

- **Ask the trainee to bring along their stress bucket.** This can be useful to refer to. It also ensures they come to the meeting ready to discuss their current challenges.
- **Be direct**, for example: “we are here to discuss some of the challenges you are experiencing with your mental health. Today I would like to hear about what is going on for you... by the end of this meeting I hope we will have some useful ways forward to support you and for you to support yourself”. *It is important you use words that sit comfortably with you but that do not deviate from the main purpose.*
- Encourage the trainee to tell you what is happening. **Avoid interjecting.** Encourage more explanation by phrases such as... ‘is there anything else you would like to tell me?’
- It is useful to find out **how long** the trainee has been feeling this way.
- Find out if the trainee has felt this way before. Using a **0-10** scale to rate this can be helpful.
- As if there were any **previous strategies** used before that they could try again. Refer to the stress bucket for **stress relievers**. If there are none, discuss these at this point.
- Ask 0-10 how the trainee is feeling now. Encourage a discussion around what could make you **one more, two more** etc...
- Ask trainees which number **feels more manageable** eg: if they say they are a 2 now but a 5 is manageable this can help to see they are not that far away.
- Throughout...avoid trying to fix...be prepared to **sit in silence**. This is when the real thinking and processing is happening.