

## **Congenital heart Disease transition question prompts for YP clinic – Mental Health**

**This prompt sheet is specifically for asking difficult questions around self-harm and suicide and not general questions around mental health.**

*Hello, my name is .....*

*I understand that you have been having some difficulties with your mental health/some difficult feelings, and I just want to see how I can best help you with this.*

*[Make sure you discuss confidentiality and how you may have to break this if there are concerns for risk to self or others before continuing]*

*Is that ok with you?*

Offer the child or young person the opportunity to be alone and not in the presence of their parents as they may not want parents to be present.

### **Q Depression and Anxiety**

*Do you ever struggle with low mood about your heart condition?*

*Advise some people struggle with this and there is support from a number of charities, The Somerville Foundation [www.tsf.org](http://www.tsf.org), Meet a teenatteenheart [www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/children-and-young-people/heart-conditions-in-youngpeople/meet-at-teen-heart](http://www.bhf.org.uk/heart-health/children-and-young-people/heart-conditions-in-youngpeople/meet-at-teen-heart)*

*Advise about availability of psychology support and referral criteria*

### **Q Tell me a little bit about how things have been for you.**

*It is important you gain some background about what difficulties the young person has been experiencing to begin conversation and gently easing your way in to asking more difficult questions as this will help the young person feel safe and build rapport and trust.*

*If the young person is expressing any concerns or red flags around risk it is important to ask the right questions to help minimise risk.*

### **Q Are you having thoughts about harming yourself or taking your own life?**

*It is important to understand if the young person is having thoughts about harming themselves and how often they may be having these thoughts and when they first started having these thoughts.*

*Are they fleeting? Do they come and go? Do they happen with any specific triggers? Are they all the time?*

### **Q Do you have a plan of what you may do to act on these thoughts?**

Do they have a plan? What methods of self-harm or suicide does the young person have thoughts of? do they have access to these methods or can these methods be available to them? If they have plans and intent to act on them it is important to seek help and guidance in keeping the young person safe.

Asking about a plan may involve:

Is there a specific date they have in mind? A specific location? What method they may use? Do they have access to risky items e.g cords, sharps, medications? Can these items be removed or monitored? E.g parents keeping medication locked away? Do they have any intent to act on these plans?

### **Q Have you acted on these thoughts before?**

If a young person has acted on thoughts before, they are more likely to act on them again.

Was it impulsive? Was it planned? Did they regret acting on their thoughts? How did they feel afterwards? Was there a particularly trigger? Did anything help or did they seek any support?

### **Q What things do you do when you have these thoughts to help keep you safe?**

Explore protective factors and coping skills. What is their reason for living, what makes them feel better and what coping skills do they have?

What kind of support do they have? What are their personal strengths? What's the family situation like? Are they open to any mental health support services? Will they engage with services? What things do they enjoy? Hobbies? Pets? Friends? Coping skills?

### **Q Are you currently receiving any help or support?**

Explore what help or support they are currently receiving or what support they have accessed in the past. Was this helpful? Is the young person able to keep themselves safe and access support if needed?

Do other services need to be involved to help keep this young person safe and give them on-going mental health support? Crisis team? CAMHS? School support? GP? Social care?

**REMEMBER:** Risk is shared and is never on an individual. When asking these questions, if there are any red flags or concerns or even if you're not too sure on something, always contact someone from your local mental health team for advice

and support. They may also be able to advise which service would be best suited to help manage and maintain the safety and well-being of a child or young person.

Always document any concerns you may have and share with the appropriate professionals/services and make the appropriate referrals if needed to ensure they young person can access the right support.

You can also signpost to other local services such as counselling, safety apps or school support or their GP.