

Handout 3 – Reach-Out Sentence Starters and Practice Checklist

You do not need to tell the whole story in the first sentence.

Choose the communication mode that is most accessible: speaking, writing, email/form, symbol/communication aid, or asking someone to accompany you.

Part	Sentence starters
START – ask for contact/privacy	"Could I speak with you privately?" "Is there a time today when I can talk to you?" "I find this easier to write than say."
SAY – name the concern simply	"I have not been feeling well lately." "Something is making school difficult." "I am worried about a situation and do not know what to do."
ASK – name the support wanted	"Could you listen first?" "I need practical help with..." "Could you help me contact the right person?" "I want advice about the next step."
URGENCY – make timing clear	"This is not an emergency, but I need help this week." "This is getting worse and I need someone today." "I do not feel safe and need an adult now."
BACKUP – if the first response does not help	"I still need support. Who else can help?" "Could you help me contact ___?" "I do not think I explained how serious this feels."
CONFIDENTIALITY – ask what happens next	"Before I explain more, what can stay private?" "If you need to tell someone else, who would that be and why?"

Practice observer checklist

- ☐ The student asked for a private moment or used another safe contact mode.
- ☐ The concern was described clearly enough for a first step; no full disclosure was required.
- ☐ The requested support or next step was named.
- ☐ Urgency was communicated accurately.
- ☐ The responder listened, thanked the student and did not minimise or diagnose.
- ☐ The responder checked immediate safety where relevant.
- ☐ The responder explained confidentiality and the next step honestly.
- ☐ A backup was identified if the route was unavailable or unhelpful.