Talking to kids about mental health and suicide can help them feel safe and supported. How should parents address these tough topics? Experts recommend considering their child’s age. If a very young child asks about suicide, keep the answers simple. Let the child’s questions guide the conversation and try not to give them more information than they need. “With any scary topic, we are going to give short, true answers and see if the child asks follow-up questions,” said parenting expert Deborah Gilboa. For pre-teens, Gilboa suggests being more concrete and talking about the warning signs for suicide. Since high school students are more likely to know someone with mental health issues or struggle themselves, parents should talk about it openly and encourage help-seeking. Gilboa says parents of young adults should regularly check in with them about how they are doing, especially if they have lived experience of suicide.

**Spark Extra!** Learn more about preventing suicide among youth [2].

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Links within this resource