



The following are common themes of hesitancy, ambivalence and reluctance that you may encounter when offering Let's Talk to parents. The responses below can be adapted for your own conversations with parents.

'I'm worried that if I talk about myself as a parent you will judge me and find me lacking in some areas'.

'I talk to a lot with others who have mental illness – and this is a common theme. Maybe it's the first time you've had these conversations in some detail...it can be very new to people and you may be worried, however we're here to work together. The purpose of Let's Talk is about getting a good outcome for your children. Perhaps I can check with you as we go along and we can chat about how you're feeling'.

Also ask: 'What would be a helpful conversation for you?'

'I'm reluctant to discuss my worries and concerns about my kids as you may think there are so many issues that it would be better if they were taken away from me'.

'This is a concern that many parents have, but it's not what we're here to discuss and not the intention of Let's Talk. It's about supporting you in your parenting role and supporting your children. Please be up front if you're concerned and we can talk about things. We're working together here and if there are any big concerns from my perspective be rest assured I'll try talking to you about them first.'

'I'm worried that the discussion will not go well for me – that's been my past experience when I have tried to talk about my kids with health professionals'.

'I want to be honest here. It hasn't been common practice for many services to raise the topic of your children in the past. Services have been behind in this way and previously workers haven't had a lot of practice in this, however we're here to make this a much more positive experience. If we work together, I believe it can be. Please remember during this process to keep me on track. If I'm not on top of what's best for you and your family, please be up front and let me know. Let's check with each other as we progress'.

Also ask:

- 'What do I need to understand in order to prevent repeating mistakes that others may have made?'
- 'What can we do together to make sure it's different this time?'

'I'm worried that if I raise this issue it will make it worse for my child and it's best that they don't know'.

'This is a worry that's often raised. Children need to make sense of what they think, feel and observe as without an explanation they will make sense of things themselves and create their own meaning. I wonder what your children understand about your illness. It's good to give children the opportunity to make sense of things in a way that enables them not to worry or feel responsible'.

'If I start this conversation, I won't know where to go with it. It will open up too many wounds'.

'I acknowledge that having a conversation like this can be challenging. It can make people fearful and worried. If you feel this way, it's okay to stop the conversation or ask for 'time out'. It would be great if you could be honest with me if things do become uncomfortable. It's okay to go slowly and gently, and try not to do too much, too quickly. Also, let's check in on things as we go and check on if we're travelling at the right pace'.

Also ask: Questions around how things have gone in the past and how you could approach it differently.