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# Generic Tips for Mental Health Difficulties

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| classroom_tip | Classroom-based tips (focus on instructional methods) |

1. **Foster a Supportive Classroom.** Checking in regularly with students will help to reassure them that someone *does* care, and that they are not alone in their battle with mental health issues. Check-ins can take place after school, during lunch or over email — in whatever medium the student is most responsive. The important thing is to develop a relationship, to express unconditional support, to avoid generali**s**ations and singling out the student for criticism, to be specific in providing feedback, and to keep the tone positive.
2. **Emphasise Curiosity, Engaged Learning and Problem Solving.** [Shifting the instructional focus away from test-based learning](http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/11/how-can-students-be-successful-in-a-high-stakes-world/) is a bigger job than a single teacher can tackle on his or her own. However, to whatever extent possible, it is important to allow [more time for curious, creative and engaged learning](http://blogs.kqed.org/mindshift/2013/11/how-can-students-be-successful-in-a-high-stakes-world/), whether through independent projects, self-chosen paper topics, or encouraging students to pick up extracurricular activities purely for reasons of interest and passion. [Teaching general problem-solving strategies](https://www.bced.gov.bc.ca/specialed/docs/depression_resource.pdf) can also be effective.
3. **Consistent Classroom Culture.** A well-structured classroom with clear expectations, smooth transitions and a calm environment is helpful for most children. Offer and create a supportive environment where it is okay to make mistakes, to express emotions positively and to ask for help when needed.
4. **Frame Rules Positively**. Ensuring that rules are phrased in a positive way can help reinforce a constructive and healthy mind-set.