

Connect first. Encourage the next step.

A conversation guide for supporting a student or athlete after a difficult day. Listen before trying to fix the problem.

01 Invite, do not interrogate

Try: “Would you like me to listen, help make a plan, or give you some space?” Respect a pause and return to the conversation later.

02 Recognize effort and feelings

Reflect what you heard without judgment: “That sounds disappointing.” Ask about a useful effort or lesson, not just grades or scores.

03 Agree on one next step

Ask: “What would make tomorrow a little more manageable?” Offer practical support and avoid adding pressure or comparing them with others.

YOUR PLAN

An opening phrase I can use:

What I heard, without assumptions:

One effort or strength to recognize:

The next step we agree on:

When I will check in again:

“You matter to me beyond your grades, scores, or results.”

For bullying, abuse, threats, or safety concerns, seek appropriate help. Do not promise secrecy or pressure a child to confront someone unsafe. Educational practice, not therapy or emergency support. Keep your completed worksheet private.