Yellow Bench

Examples of hopeful language



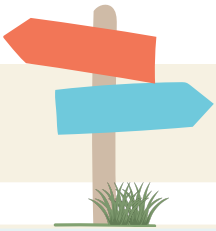
Responding with hope and understanding

Instead of...	Consider saying...
"You'll be fine."	"It sounds like things are really difficult right now. How can I support you?"
"Just stay positive."	"It's okay to have difficult days. You don't have to go through this alone."
"You need to get over it."	"Take things one step at a time. Recovery looks different for everyone."
"Why can't you just..."	"What might make this feel more manageable for you right now?"
"You seem worse."	"I've noticed things have been feeling difficult lately. How are you going?"



Recognising strengths

Instead of...	Consider saying...
"You can't cope."	"You're dealing with a lot right now and doing the best you can."
"You're not helping yourself."	"What support or resources might be helpful at the moment?"
"You always struggle with this."	"You've managed difficult situations before. What helped you then?"
"You need to be stronger."	"It takes courage to keep going through challenges like these."



Supporting choice and control

Instead of...	Consider saying...
"This is what you need to do."	"What feels right for you?"
"You should..."	"Would it be helpful to explore some options together?"
"I know what's best."	"You know yourself best. How can I support your decisions?"
"You have to get help."	"Would you like to talk about what support might be available?"
"This is what you need to do."	"What feels right for you?"



Reducing stigma

Instead of...	Consider saying...
"They are mentally ill."	"They are experiencing mental health challenges."
"They are attention-seeking."	"They may be looking for support, understanding, or connection."
"What's wrong with them?"	"What might they be experiencing?"
"They're difficult."	"They may be responding to stress, distress, or past experiences."
"They're their diagnosis."	"They're a person with strengths, goals, and experiences beyond any diagnosis."

Everyday messages that promote hope

Sometimes hopeful language can be very simple:	
"I believe in you."	"Things may not always feel this way."
"You are not alone."	"Your experiences are valid."
"Thank you for sharing that with me."	"You have strengths that can help you through this."
"I'm glad you told me."	"We'll take this one step at a time."
"There is support available."	"Recovery is possible, even when things feel difficult."

Using hopeful language in everyday conversations

Anyone who cares about or supports another person can use hopeful language in everyday conversations.

This may involve:

- Listening without judgement.
- Acknowledging a person's strengths and resilience.
- Encouraging choice and self-determination.
- Recognising progress, no matter how small.
- Speaking in ways that promote dignity and respect.
- Avoiding labels, assumptions, or language that blames the person.
- Holding hope, especially when the person is finding it difficult to see hope themselves.

You do not need to have all the answers or know exactly what to say. Often, the most powerful message a person can hear is that they are not alone, that their experiences matter, and that support, recovery, and a meaningful future remain possible.