Appendix 4 - Questions and suggestions for talking and listening to students

Key Considerations for school staff:
• How am I building and maintaining rapport? • Am I listening? • What is it like for this student at the moment? • Am I on the same page as this student? • Do I understand what his/ her concerns are? • Am I communicating that understanding to the student? • What more can I do to try to get on the same page?
Opening conversation:
• Introduce yourself if the young person is new to you. • How may I help you? • What are the most important things I can help you with? • I see/notice your body seems….. • I see/notice you are not playing in yard…. • I see/notice you are finding it hard to concentrate…. • Tell me what is worrying you…. • How can I help you?
Listening and showing empathy:
• Tell me about what is worrying you…. • I am hearing that you are worried about … • It is very normal to be sad, angry, upset, worried, frustrated…. • I hear what you are saying about…. • I fully understand why you are feeling like this… • In this situation, your reactions are normal and similar to others… • Maybe we can discuss some things we can do to help… • It is a difficult time, and I do understand it is very challenging. Let's discuss if there is anything you can do to make the situation better. • Would it be helpful to discuss things that you can do to help you manage? • The things we are doing to support you are… • I wonder if it is any help to you to know that these feelings are natural. I understand that this can feel overwhelming, so maybe we can talk about how to manage these feelings. The first step is to acknowledge the feelings, the next is what you can do to make sure that they don't take up too much time or space in your life. • It can help to have one or two times during each day that you can call your worry times, for example half an hour in the afternoon and a half an hour in the evening. If worrying thoughts occur during other times of the day and night, ask them to come back later, or say aloud that you will take care of them during your worry time. • I am concerned about you and would like to refer you to someone else who can offer you more help.
Reflective comments:
• From what you're saying, I can see how you would be … • It sounds as if you're saying …

• It seems that you are ...
Clarifying comments
• Tell me if I'm wrong, but it sounds as if you … • Am I right when I say that you …
Supportive comments:
• No wonder you feel … • It sounds really hard … I'm really sorry this is such a tough time for you. • It sounds as if you're being hard on yourself. • We can talk more tomorrow if you'd like.
Empowering comments & questions:
• What have you done in the past to help yourself feel better when things got difficult? • What do you think would help you to feel better? • I have an information sheet with some ideas about how to deal with difficult situations. Maybe there's an idea or two here that might be helpful for you. • People can be very different in what helps them feel better. When things get difficult for me, it helps if I ... Could something like that work for you?