

Last week, after the evening episode of 'I'm a celebrity, get me out of here', Ant and Dec announced the next phase of ITV's 'Britain Get Talking' campaign, a mental wellness initiative to help Britain stay connected, which is supported by Young Minds and Mind - two charities that I often mention in my safeguarding items.

They launched their Christmas advert that evening. If you haven't seen it already, you can watch it here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3RA85Ecpy4>

In the advert, the patient make-up artist is working with a series of celebrities listening to them tell her about their lives. At the end, the television presenter Maya Jama comes in to have her makeup done and reciprocates the 'how are you' and encourages the make-up artist to talk about herself. The advert ends with 'After the last couple of years, we all need an ear. So give yours this Christmas.'

According to the Britain Get Talking campaign:

- 45% of people struggle to open up about their problems because they are worried they will be judged.
- 1 in 5 people think it is hard to talk about how they are really feeling at Christmas because they are expected to be happy.
- 1 in 4 people say their family talks more about food than emotions at Christmas.

Here are 5 simple tips from the experts to take you from being a good listener to being a great one:

1. Pay attention – keep distractions to a minimum, making sure you put your phone away so you can focus fully on what they're saying.
2. Show you're listening – ensure they have enough space and time to talk but show them you're interested by asking questions and offering advice when it is asked for.
3. Keep an open mind – even if you have a strong opinion, try to avoid judgment or criticisms and avoid interrupting to disagree with them or persuade them of your point of view.
4. Empathise – showing that you can relate to their problem can help people feel less alone.
5. Follow up – text or call them a few days afterwards. It will show them you care and appreciate the importance of what you spoke about.

So remember this campaign this Christmas, **'After the last couple of years, we all need an ear. So give yours this Christmas.'**