

ASK A MATE

ASK A MATE DAY 2026

Fact sheet

BRINGING GOOD CHAT TO YOUNG GUYS

16 May 2026
askamate.com.au
[#AskAMateDay2026](https://twitter.com/AskAMateDay2026)

ASK A MATE

BRINGING GOOD CHAT TO YOUNG GUYS

Starting a conversation with a young guy does not always come naturally, especially when the topic feels personal, awkward or important. In practice, good conversations are often built through small moments, shared attention and a sense of ease.

This fact sheet brings together a few simple prompts for starting well, keeping the conversation going and making it easier for young guys to talk in their own time.

1. Change your approach

"Side-by-side" vs. "face-to-face": Avoid the "Old West" stare-down, which can feel confrontational. Instead, have conversations while doing something else: walking, driving, playing video games, or working on a project together.

Don't interrogate: Avoid starting with "How was school?" or "What did you do today?". Instead, offer a low-pressure, open-ended "invitation to chat" by sharing something about your day first.

Respect their space: If they say they are "fine" or "don't want to talk," respect it, but leave the door open by saying, "I'm here if you want to talk later".

Keep it brief: Teenage boys often have shorter attention spans and may tune out long lectures.

2. Topics that work

Their passions and hobbies: Ask about their specific interests (e.g., video games, sports, cars, technology) and ask for their expertise.

Media and entertainment: Discuss movies, TV shows, or Netflix series, especially those with complex narratives.

"What if" scenarios: Instead of asking how they feel about a situation, ask what they would do in a given scenario.

Shared humour: Use humour to break the ice, including light-hearted, playful teasing or sharing funny memes.

ASK A MATE

BRINGING GOOD CHAT TO YOUNG GUYS

3. Building trust and emotional connection

Validate, don't dismiss: Treat their interests and emotions as valid, even if they seem minor to you.

Practice "active listening": Focus on being interested rather than interesting, and ask follow-up questions.

Recognise "side-by-side" bonding: Understand that for many men, friendship and closeness are built through shared activity, not just verbal, emotional sharing.

Encourage vulnerability carefully: Share your own experiences and struggles to encourage them to reciprocate, but do not force them to open up.

4. When texting

Keep it light and short: Use texts to set up in-person, side-by-side activities, rather than deep, long-form conversation.

Use visuals: Send memes, gifs, or TikToks to connect and show you're thinking of them.

Good chat rarely comes from getting the words perfect the first time. What matters more is consistency, interest and creating a sense that the conversation can continue. You may also find it helpful to explore the Ask A Mate App and related fact sheets, including Meeting young guys where they're at and Questions young guys want to ask. If you are looking for more structured advice, resources like The Fathering Project may also be helpful. Visit thefatheringproject.org for more information.

If you have ideas to add, or want to share how you're using this in your school, club or community, email heymate@askamate.com.au