

Thursday 15 September

# How to ask R U OK?

To view video role plays: [www.ruokday.com.au](http://www.ruokday.com.au)

<b>1. Break the ice</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start a general conversation somewhere private.</li> <li>Build trust through good eye contact, open and relaxed body language.</li> <li>Ask open-ended questions to discuss concerns based on their behaviour.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"What's been happening? How are you going?"</li> <li>"I've been concerned recently that... (e.g. you are becoming isolated from work mates... seem to be quite stressed and behind in your work.)"</li> <li>"It is so unlike you and I'm wondering are you ok? Is there anything that is contributing?"</li> </ul>
<b>2. Listen without judgement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Guide the conversation with caring questions.</li> <li>The more they talk the better. A problem shared is a problem halved.</li> <li>Don't rush to solve problems for them. It is better to have a full understanding of the issues.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Listen to the person without judging them as lazy or weak. They are trying to cope as best they can.</li> <li>Don't give advice like "cheer up" or "pull yourself together" or "you'll be right mate".</li> <li>It is important to let them know that it is good they are discussing it.</li> </ul>
<b>3. Encourage action</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Summarise the issues and ask them what they plan to do.</li> <li>Encourage them to take one step, such as see their doctor.</li> <li>It is essential to follow up. Nothing changes until someone acts.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"Have you thought about what you can do about your situation?"</li> <li>"Have you considered making an appointment with your GP?"</li> <li>"Would you like me to make a GP appointment?"</li> </ul>
<b>4. Follow up</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>People who are really struggling often find it difficult to take action. Therefore, it is very important to follow up on how they are going.</li> <li>Put a note in your diary to call them in one week. If they are desperate, follow up with them sooner.</li> <li>Ask if they have managed to take that first step and see someone.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>"How are things going? Did you speak with your GP?"</li> <li>"What did they suggest? What did you think of that?"</li> <li>"You've had a busy time, would you like me to make the appointment?"</li> </ul>
<b>Dealing with denial?</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>If they deny the problem, do not criticise them. Acknowledge they are not ready to talk.</li> <li>Say you are still concerned about changes in their behaviour.</li> <li>Ask if you can enquire again next week if there is no improvement.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Avoid a confrontation with the person unless it is necessary to prevent them hurting themselves or others.</li> <li>It's ok to ask them if they are thinking about suicide.</li> <li>If a person admits to thinking about suicide, remain calm and assess whether they need immediate professional help.</li> </ul>

## What if you think the person is considering suicide?

If you are worried that someone you know is doing it tough or is thinking about suicide, it is important that you give that person an opportunity to talk about it. Find a quiet and private space to ask them how they are feeling and whether they have had any thoughts about suicide. Speak in a calm, confident and non-judgemental manner to help them feel supported and reassured.

If someone says they are thinking about suicide, it is important you take it seriously. Tell them that you care about them and you want to help. Don't become agitated, angry or upset. Explain that thoughts of suicide are common and don't have to be acted upon.

It is also essential that you determine whether they have formulated a plan to take their life. Ask if they have decided how they will kill themselves or if they have begun to take steps to end their life. If they have, it is critical that you do NOT leave them alone and do NOT use guilt or threats to prevent suicide. Get immediate professional help or call emergency help lines – such as Lifeline on **13 11 14** or Suicide Call Back Service on **1300 659 467** – for advice and support.

People who are thinking about suicide may signal their suicidal intentions to others. In other cases, there may be no warning. It is therefore critical that you regularly engage with family, friends and colleagues and provide them with the attention and time to ask them how they are going.

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## How to ask R U OK? Support Guide

### Guiding principles

- Your aim should be to get the person who is struggling to agree to seek help.
- If it is a crisis situation, ensure they make immediate contact with professional help.
- The greater their distress, the more encouraging you should be. If necessary, make an appointment for them and offer to go with them.

<b>National Crisis Lines</b>	<b>Lifeline</b> – 24/7 telephone counselling service	<a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a> 13 11 14
	<b>Suicide Call Back Service</b> – 24/7 telephone counselling for people at risk of suicide, carers and bereaved	<a href="http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au">www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au</a> 1300 659 467
	<b>MensLine Australia</b> – 24/7 support for men dealing with relationship and family issues	<a href="http://www.menslineaus.org.au">www.menslineaus.org.au</a> 1300 78 99 78
	<b>Kids Helpline</b> – 24/7 telephone and online counselling for young people 5–25 years	<a href="http://www.kidshelp.com.au">www.kidshelp.com.au</a> 1800 55 1800
	<b>Reach Out!</b> – Online crisis and mental health information for young people	<a href="http://ReachOut.com">ReachOut.com</a>
<b>Professionals</b>	Your local doctor (GP)	
	Contact the <b>Employee Assistance Program</b> to speak to a counsellor connected with your employer	Details may be listed on Intranet but contact HR if unsure.
	Find a GP with an interest in mental health issues through <b>beyondblue</b>	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a> 1300 224 636
	Find a psychologist by postcode through the <b>Australian Psychological Society</b>	<a href="http://www.psychology.org.au">www.psychology.org.au</a> 1800 333 497
	<b>headspace</b> – Mental health services and online counselling for young people 12–25 years	<a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a> <a href="http://www.eheadspace.org.au">www.eheadspace.org.au</a>
	<b>Telephone Interpreter Service</b> – If English is not your first language please call the Telephone Interpreter Service for assistance contacting a helpline	131 450
<b>Helplines and Information</b>	<b>SANE Australia Helpline</b> – Mental health information, weekdays 9am–5pm	<a href="http://www.sane.org">www.sane.org</a> 1800 187 263
	<b>beyondblue Info Line</b> – Information about depression, anxiety and related disorders	<a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a> 1300 224 636
	<b>Black Dog Institute</b> – Information about depression and bipolar disorder	<a href="http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au">www.blackdoginstitute.org.au</a> (02) 9382 4523
	<b>National Sexual Assault, Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Line</b> – 24/7 confidential telephone counselling	1800 737 732

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