

# Effective Ways to Check In With Your Mates and Provide Support



Reading time:  
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Watching a friend, family member or colleague suffer is tough. Learn how to start the conversation around mental health when the person affected isn't a patient.

## Start a conversation

Have you noticed someone around you acting a little differently? Maybe they seem withdrawn or frequently agitated. Perhaps they can't concentrate, or seem on edge. We all struggle sometimes and may need a little support from our mates.

By starting a conversation with a friend, workmate or family member you just might provide them with the opportunity they need to open up. You don't need to fix their problem or share your clinical expertise, just be a good mate and listen.

Follow these simple steps from R U Ok<sup>1</sup> that could change a life:



1. **Ask** – be relaxed, friendly and concerned in your approach “How are you going?” or “What’s been happening lately?”
2. **Listen** – with patience and show that you care what they have to say. Avoid interrupting their conversation or judging their experience.
3. **Encourage action** – ask if there’s a way you can support them, or ask what they can do for themselves right now to help.
4. **Check in** – follow up with them in a week or so to see how they’re going and if they’ve found a better way to manage the situation. It could be as simple as “I’ve been thinking of you and want to know how you are since we last chatted?”

[ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)

If you are worried about yourself or someone close to you, contact Lifeline on 13 11 14.

# Coping with Challenges

Stress, challenges and setbacks are part of life. While you can't avoid them, you can develop different ways of coping and maintaining a sense of control in your life.

Adversity can come in a series of small changes or a major traumatic event. However it comes, it can be hard to deal with. Building resilience can give you the confidence to get through tough situations. Everyone is different, and finding something that works for you is important.

Try some of these coping strategies from ReachOut<sup>2</sup>:

- **Turn to someone you trust** – sharing your thoughts with another person can really help to get something off your chest, work through a problem or simply feel like you're being heard
- **Learn to forgive** – letting go of anger, hurt or regret, towards others or yourself, can lead to greater feelings of compassion and hope
- **Build your optimism** – optimism is a mental attitude. It's about thinking positively about the future, even when things go wrong. It can be hard to do, but with practice you're likely to get better at it
- **Reduce your load** – sometimes you have to accept that you can't do everything, and that is ok. Know when to ask for help
- **Take time out to relax** – relaxation through deep breathing, walking, or meditating is a great way to refocus your thoughts, particularly when things seem overwhelming.

<sup>1</sup>RUOK? 2017, How to ask, viewed 5 May 2017, <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

<sup>2</sup>Reach Out.com, Building better coping skills, viewed 5 May 2017, <http://au.reachout.com/building-better-coping-skills>

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