

R U OK? IN TRUCKS & SHEDS

Your conversation guide to asking
"are you OK?"



ruok.org.au

 **Healthy
Heads**
Trucks & Sheds

R U OK?[™]



RU OK?[™]
A conversation could change a life.

This conversation guide provides practical tips to learn when and how to ask “are you OK?”

For more information visit healthyheads.org.au/ruok

R U OK? and Healthy Heads in Truck & Sheds have teamed up to ensure people in the road transport, warehousing and logistics industries know when and how to meaningfully connect and genuinely ask, “are you OK?”

Life’s ups and downs happen to us all, but there are challenges unique to those working in the road transport, warehousing and logistics industries.

Tight deadlines, long hours, shift work and isolation are all contributing factors to feeling less connected.

One thing we can all do is drive conversations with our workmates who might be doing it tough, to help them feel connected and supported at work.

You don’t have to be an expert to ask the question. You just have to be there to listen and be genuinely willing to support someone through a difficult time.

Don’t wait until someone is visibly distressed or in crisis.

Drive conversations and ask “are you OK”?



How conversations can make a difference

Do you know how the people in your world are really going?

Life's ups and downs happen to all of us. So, stay connected and make asking "are you OK?" a part of your everyday. That way if someone you know is struggling with something big, something small, or maybe nothing at all – they'll know you care.

When we genuinely ask "are you OK?" and are prepared to talk to them about how they're feeling and what's going on in their life, we can help someone who might be struggling feel connected and supported, long before they're in crisis.



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Spot the signs that someone might be doing it tough

It may not always be obvious when someone is struggling, but these are some signs to look out for that indicate someone you know might need support.

If you've noticed
a change, no matter
how small, trust your
gut instinct and ask
"are you OK?"

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Do they sound:

- Angry or irritable
- Confused or irrational
- Lonely
- Numb or switched off
- Concerned they are a burden
- Concerned about the future



WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Are they:

- Unable to concentrate
- Dismissive or defensive
- Experiencing ongoing fatigue
- Making less effort in their appearance or personal hygiene
- Easily frustrated or have limited patience

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE?

Are they experiencing:

- Financial difficulties
- Relationship challenges
- Health issues or physical injuries
- Changes in life circumstances
- Extended periods away from family and friends



Preparing to have an R U OK? conversation

If you think someone you know might be struggling with life, then it's time to trust your gut instinct and ask 'are you OK?' The below steps will help you prepare for the conversation.



Ask yourself

- Are you in a good headspace?
 - Are you willing to genuinely listen?
 - Can you give as much time as needed?
 - Are you the best person to have the conversation? If not, is there someone else in their support network you can encourage to reach out to them?
- Remember you won't have all the answers (and that's OK)
 - Listening is one of the most important things you can do
 - If someone is talking about personal struggles it can be difficult and they might become emotional, defensive, embarrassed or upset
 - Have you researched what appropriate support is available for the person you're talking to?

Be prepared



Pick your moment

- Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and informal where they'll feel comfortable?
- You don't want to rush the conversation so make sure you both have enough time
- If they can't talk when you approach them, try to confirm another time to have a conversation
- Consider whether the person might prefer to be side-by-side with you e.g. walking together, rather than face-to-face



The 4 steps to driving an R U OK? conversation



1. Ask R U OK?



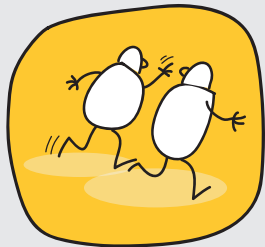
- Be relaxed
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How are you travelling?" or "What's been happening?"
- Mention what you have noticed that has concerned you, like "I've noticed that you seem more tired than usual, is there something worrying you?"
- Let them know you are asking because you are concerned about them



2. Listen

- Listen with an open mind and let them know you are there to listen, not judge
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation
- Take what they say seriously
- If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence
- If they become upset or angry, stay calm and don't take it personally
- It might take a couple of times of asking "are you OK?" before they feel comfortable opening up. You might also like to think about who else in their world might be appropriate to have a chat with them





3. Encourage action

If someone answers “No, I’m not OK”

- Encourage them to reach out and talk to family, a trusted friend, their doctor or a health professional, a support service, or an employee assistance program
- You might also like to consider taking action together as a way of showing support and encouraging them to take a next step

You can call the support services on page 19 for advice on what to do if someone is not OK.



4. Check in

- Remember to check in and see how the person is doing after a few days
- Ask how they’re coping with the situation or if they need support to manage it
- If they haven’t found help, keep encouraging them and remind them you’re always there if they need a chat
- Understand that it might take a long time before someone is ready to seek professional help
- Try to reinforce the benefits of talking to a doctor or other support services





How can I prepare for strong emotional reactions?

- Recognise their reaction might be in response to a range of circumstances, some of which you might not know about
- Allow the person to fully express their emotions
- Actively listening is one of the best things you can do for someone when they are distressed
- Deal with emotions first, you can discuss the issues more rationally once emotions have been addressed
- Manage your own emotions by staying calm and not taking things personally

By using these tips, you can help someone feel supported when they are confronted with life's challenges.



How do I deal with anger?

- If someone is visibly hostile you can respond with: "I can see that this has upset you. Why don't you start at the beginning and tell me what I need to know..."
- Allow them to identify all the factors they feel are contributing to their anger
- You might encourage them by saying... "I understand that this is a problem. What else is causing you concern?"
- Be patient and prepared to listen to them talk about everything that's added to their frustration
- If they feel they have been wronged or treated unfairly you are unlikely to persuade them otherwise in this conversation - it's more constructive to listen to all they have to say and provide resources or connect them with support services





It's none of my business

We all value our privacy and respect the privacy of others. You might be telling yourself 'it's none of my business' or 'they won't want to talk to me about it anyway'. It's understandable to be unsure or a little embarrassed but it's better to start a conversation than to ignore that feeling you have that something is not quite right. Having someone show they care can make all the difference for someone who is feeling overwhelmed or distressed.

Remember though even when you do make the first move, there's no guarantee they'll be ready to talk – but they'll know someone cares and next time you ask they might be ready.

What if they say 'I'm fine' but you're still concerned?

- Tell them you care about them and you're concerned about the changes in their behaviour
- Ask again, you could say "It's just you don't seem like yourself lately"
- Check in with them again soon
- Examples of how you could respond to denial include "It's OK that you don't want to talk about it but please call me when you're ready to chat" or "Is there someone else you'd rather talk to?"
- Reach out to someone else who is close to that person to see if they've noticed changes. Perhaps encourage them to also check in
- It's important to remember that it can take time for someone to open up to you. You might need to ask "are you OK?" a few times before they feel comfortable talking





Worried about their immediate safety?

If you believe their life is in immediate danger call 000 (Australia only). If you think someone is having thoughts of suicide, don't be afraid to ask them if they are – asking the question does not lead to suicide.



Useful contacts for someone who's not OK

If your life is in danger or you're concerned for your own or someone else's safety, please call 000.

If you're finding life tough or need some extra support, it can help to talk with someone you trust.

You and your loved ones can find support by contacting your local doctor or one of these support services below for advice on what to do next.

Lifeline (24/7)

13 11 14
lifeline.org.au
TEXT 0477 13 11 14

Beyond Blue (24/7)

1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service (24/7)

1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mensline (24/7)

1300 789 978
mensline.org.au

More contacts:

ruok.org.au/findhelp

Contact us

@ hello@ruok.org.au

f /ruokday

@ @ruokday

@ @ruokday



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