

TIPS FOR CHECKING IN WITH A COLLEAGUE ABOUT THEIR WELLBEING

Step One: Ask, "Are you Okay?"

- Be relaxed and genuine
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How you going?" or "What's been happening?"
- Mention specific things that have made you concerned for them, like "I've noticed that you seem really tired recently" or "You seem less chatty than usual. How are you going?"

Step Two: Listen without judgment

- Take what they say seriously.
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
- Encourage them to explain.
- Ask "How are you feeling about that?" or "How long have you felt that way?"
- Show that you've listened by checking that you've understood. You could say, for example, "It sounds like you're juggling a few things at the moment and you're feeling really stretched".
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally.

Step Three: Encourage action

- Help them think about one or two things that can be done to better manage the situation.
- Ask, "How would you like me to support you?"
- If you've found a particular strategy or health service useful, share it with them. You can say something like: "When I was going through a difficult time, I tried this... You might find it useful too."

Step Four: Follow up

- Say something like, "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going since we last chatted."
- Ask if they've found a way to manage the situation. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them. They might just need someone to listen to them for the moment.
- You could ask, "Do you think it would be useful if we looked into finding some professional or other support?"
- Understand that sometimes it can take a long time for someone to be ready to see a professional. We can't rush this or force someone to seek support. Instead, remain optimistic about the benefits of getting help and try not to judge them.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.

📞 0800 SELF HELP (0800 735 343)

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Examples of how you could respond to their 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?”
- Tell them you’re still concerned about changes in their behaviour and you care about them.
- Ask if you can enquire again next week if there’s no improvement.

Does someone need expert help?

- If someone says they’re thinking about suicide, it’s 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.
- Ask if they’ve begun to take steps to end their life. If they have, it’s very important that you don’t leave them alone and do not use guilt or threats.

How to tell if you or your family members needs help

Even if you are close to someone, it can sometimes be hard to tell how much emotional pain they are in and whether they need help; and it can be equally as hard recognising in it yourself. Often, it’s something small that can make you think something isn’t quite right – and more often than not, that hunch will be right. You might see it in yourself or in someone else, or someone could see it in you.

You might want to get extra support if they (or you):

- Don’t want to see their friends or no longer enjoy spending time with their friends and family.
- Stop doing things they used to love or don’t seem to be enjoying themselves.
- Can’t remember things, concentrate, or pay attention.
- Feel bad about themselves – guilty, worthless or ashamed.
- Have a big change in eating patterns or appetite.
- Have extreme mood swings.
- Feel hopeless or really sad, or cry a lot.
- Feel anxious, stressed, nervous or scared a lot and can’t seem to relax.
- Are not happy unless they’re using drugs or alcohol.
- Don’t take care of their appearance or personal hygiene.
- Have physical signs of injury or that they are hurting themselves.
- Have panic attacks – rapid heartbeat, unable to breathe, feeling dizzy and extremely scared or anxious all at once.

Useful websites

Mental Health Association (Australia) – www.mentalhealth.org.au

It’s Not OK – www.areyouok.org.nz

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