

# R U OK?™

A conversation could change a life.



The essential stuff to promote R U OK?

This toolkit will help you to inspire people in your team, workplace, school, club or community group to connect and have regular, meaningful conversations. You can use this toolkit any time of the year (not just in the lead up to R U OK?Day in September). In fact, the more you use it across the year, the more you'll help us create a more connected world.

Don't forget to also check out more tools and resources here:

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

## **So, how many people will you inspire?**

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HUNGRY JACKS

RUOK?<sup>TM</sup>

A conversation could change a life.  
Australia needs Conversation Mates. Will you join us?  
ruokday.com #ruokday



# Our story

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In 1996, much-loved Barry Larkin was far from ok. His suicide left family and friends in deep grief and with endless questions.

In 2009, Gavin Larkin chose to champion just one question to honour his father and to try and protect other families from the pain his endured.

Are you ok?

While collaborating with Janina Nearn on a documentary to raise awareness, the team quickly realised the documentary alone wouldn't be enough.

To genuinely change behaviour Australia-wide, a national campaign was needed. And from this realisation, and with Gavin and Janina's expertise and passion, R U OK? was born.

Gavin remained a passionate champion of the fact a conversation could change a life, even as cancer ended his in 2011.

His and Janina's legacy is ensuring all Australians realise a little question can make a big difference to those people struggling with life.

# Why get behind us?

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## Here are some stats to help you understand how important suicide prevention is:

About 8 people take their own lives every day in Australia

65,000 people attempt suicide each year

Suicide is the biggest killer of Australians under 44 years Men

account for around 75 per cent of all suicide deaths

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R U OK?'s role in tackling this heart-breaking issue is to help all Aussies play a role in stopping feelings of loneliness and isolation among family members, friends and workmates by staying connected and having regular, meaningful conversations. It's also our aim to help reduce the stigma around mental illness and suicide, as well as increase the likelihood that people will access professional support as soon as it's needed.

We're all about prevention and early intervention – rather than crisis support or postvention (that is, supporting people affected by a suicide death).

We base our approach on the work of United States academic, Dr Thomas Joiner.

After his father took his own life, Thomas has dedicated his research to try and answer that question "Why?" His theory tries to answer that complex question by describing three forces at play in someone at risk. The first force is the person thinks they're a burden on others; the second is that they can withstand a high degree of pain; and the third is they don't feel connected to others.

This third force is why R U OK? places such a big emphasis on the power of connection. By inspiring people to take the time to ask "Are you ok?" and listen, we can help people struggling with life feel connected long before they even think about suicide. It all comes down to regular, face-to-face, meaningful conversations about life.

More statistics can be found here: [www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument](http://www.abs.gov.au/ausstats/abs@.nsf/mf/3303.0?OpenDocument)



# Explaining R U OK?

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R U OK? is a cause that every Australian can get behind.

When explaining and promoting the purpose and the importance of asking “are you ok?”, we’d suggest the following key messages:



## To staff, students, teammates etc

- We can all make a difference to anyone who's struggling by having regular, meaningful conversations about life up's and down's
  - If your gut says something's up with someone you know, take the time to ask them how they're going
  - You don't have to be an expert to have a caring, meaningful conversation
  - Once you ask them "Are you ok?", listen without judgement, encourage action and make sure you check in with them again soon
  - You don't have to fix their problem or take away their pain, you just need to help them feel supported and show you really care by carefully listening to them
  - For more conversation tips, visit [ruok.org.au](https://www.ruok.org.au)
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## To managers, bosses, teachers etc

- We've the opportunity to actively and courageously embrace suicide prevention strategies
  - We've a responsibility to help our people feel safe and supported
  - As part of our commitment to each other's wellbeing, we're championing the national suicide prevention charity R U OK?
  - We want to give people the confidence to turn to each other to talk about life's ups and downs
  - Research shows that a strong sense of community and a strong sense of belonging are protective factors against suicide
  - Get involved by sharing conversations tips and hosting R U OK? events with people you know
  - For more conversation tips and event ideas, visit [ruok.org.au](https://www.ruok.org.au)
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## To other workplaces, school, teams

- As part of our commitment to each other's wellbeing, we're championing the national suicide prevention charity R U OK?
- We're looking out for each other by encouraging the importance of regular, meaningful conversations
- We want to give people the confidence to turn to each other to talk about life's ups and downs
- We want to be part of a national movement dedicated to helping create workplaces where workers feel connected and are protected from suicide
- Will you help us create a more connected world?
- For more information about R U OK?, visit [ruok.org.au](https://www.ruok.org.au)

# How to ask R U OK?

## 1. Ask R U OK?



Start a conversation using these 4 steps

## 4. Check in



## 2. Listen without judgement



## 3. Encourage action

## 1. Ask R U OK?

- Be relaxed.
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How you going?" or "What's been happening?" or "How you travelling?"
- 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?"

## 2. Listen without judgement

- Take what they say seriously.
  - Don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
  - If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence.
  - 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, "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. Let them know you're asking because you care and acknowledge that times seem tough for them.
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## 3. Encourage action

- Help them think about one or two things that can be done to better manage the situation. It might be they take some time out for themselves or do something that's fun or relaxing.
- Ask "What can I do to help you get through this?" or "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."
- If necessary, encourage them to see a doctor or other professional. This is particularly important if they've been feeling really down for more than 2 weeks. You could say, "It might be useful to link in with someone who can support you. I'm happy to assist you to find right person to talk to."
- Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times, but understand that it may take a bit of time to find the right one. You can find all sorts of help here:

<https://www.ruok.org.au/findhelp>

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## 4. Check in

- Pop a reminder in your diary to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, check in with them sooner.
- 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 better 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.

What other resources  
can I use?

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## R U OK? Afield

Workers who fly in and out, often go without. With family and friends left back at home, a conversation with someone out in the field can make all the difference. These tools are to help inspire conversations between these workers.

Visit: <https://www.ruok.org.au/365-day-resources>

## R U OK? at School

For kids, learning to talk about how they feel is a precious life lesson, so where better to start than in the classroom? These resources will help secondary students everywhere start a conversation.

Visit: <https://www.ruok.org.au/365-day-resources>

## R U OK? at Uni

For uni students, standing at the juncture between study and working life, the questions can be overwhelming, which is why asking one particular question is so very important. Use these tips to get uni mates chatting about the stuff that matters. Visit: <https://www.ruok.org.au/365-day-resources>

## R U OK? at Work

Life's struggles don't clock off when we clock on at work. Looking after colleagues who might be doing it tough profits everyone. So, help workmates chat about things that might be pulling them down.

Visit: <https://www.ruok.org.au/365-day-resources>

## Videos

Hearing other people's stories can be one of the best ways to convince people that conversations really do make a difference. Make sure you check out

[youtube.com/ruokday](https://www.youtube.com/ruokday) for our videos

# ???

## Event ideas



The aim of organising an R U OK? event is to build up a sense of camaraderie and rapport between the people involved, so that they get to know one another a bit better. Some of the best conversations are the ones which take place between people who trust and know one another. Here are some ideas to get you started but feel free to add your own twist!

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- Host an R U OK? sausage sizzle, a breakfast, or a morning /afternoon tea and invite everyone to come
- Arrange for a Mr Whippy ice-cream van to visit your worksite, school etc
- Speed mating – similar to speed dating. Teams can practise asking questions of each other (including “Are you ok?”) that they pull out of a hat such as, “What’s your happiest childhood memory?” or “What is the best advice you ever received and who gave it to you?” or “What’s a trip that changed your life?”
- Task everyone with submitting old photos of themselves (e.g. as babies; school kids, doing their favourite thing), which are displayed on a wall where others must guess which photo depicts which person
- Get roving “R U OK? Reporters” to interview people to create mini videos. Questions could include: What’s the best conversation you ever had? Who’s the person you know you can turn to in a tough situation? What are the ingredients for a caring and supportive conversation? What place do you like to head to for a chat with a mate?
- Encourage everyone to wear yellow or orange
- Create “Conversation Corners” by flagging certain areas with yellow and black speech bubbles or helium balloons and set out tables and chairs in groups of two
- Host a lunchtime music concert and invite someone to share their thoughts on the conversations that can make a difference
- If you’re the boss, what about giving staff a few minutes off to call their grandparents or family interstate or overseas?
- Share your photos with [hello@ruok.org.au](mailto:hello@ruok.org.au)

# Promoting your R U OK? event

## PRE-EVENT EMAIL

**Subject line:** Be part of a movement changing our world

**Copy:** Dear <First name>

On <insert date>, <insert organisation name> will be hosting an event all about inspiring that simple but important question “are you ok?”

That’s because we support not-for-profit organisation R U OK?, whose vision is a world where we’re all connected and are protected from suicide.

Conversations that are geared towards helping people feel loved, supported and connected do make a difference. When family and friends show tolerance and understanding, it can make it easier for people to speak up, access help if needed, and access it early.

Join us for our R U OK? event!

Where:

Date:

Time:

RSVP:

We hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

<insert name>



## FOLLOW UP EMAIL

**Subject line:** Will you join us for our fab R U OK? event?

**Copy:** Dear <First name>

Is <insert date> in your diary?

It should be!

Because we'd like you to join us for some great conversations and a good time, all to support R U OK?

Get behind this national charity dedicated to inspiring all of us to have regular, meaningful conversations to support anyone struggling with life.

Here are all the details:

Where:

Date:

Time:

RSVP:

We hope to see you there!

Best wishes,

<insert name>



# Promoting your R U OK? event

## EMAIL FOR DAY OF YOUR EVENT

**Subject line:** Today's the day to start a conversation

**Copy:** Dear <First name>

Today is finally here!

Can't wait to see you at <insert location> at <insert time>.

We challenge you to chat to someone you don't know very well.

Make today the day you get to know a workmate/school friend/teammate a bit better.

Why?

Because we want to be part of a community that looks out for one another and knows when someone might need a bit of extra support.

See you soon!

Best wishes,

<insert name>



## EMAIL FOR AFTER THE EVENT

**Subject line:** Thanks for getting behind R U OK?

**Copy:** Dear <First name>

A massive thank you for being part of our R U OK? event.

We hope that you got to chat to people you wouldn't normally talk to and were inspired to ask "are you ok?" more often of mates who need some extra support.

If you ever need some tips talking to someone who might be struggling, check out these tips: <https://www.ruok.org.au/ask-a-mate>

You can also access national helplines here: <https://www.ruok.org.au/findhelp>

Thank you again for the support.

And remember: A conversation could change a life.

Best wishes,

<insert name>



Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

ruokday reposted  
 Mater Dei Wagga @MaterDeiWagga · 21h  
 Ten of our Year 10 students are attending the Youth Mental Health Forum today #ruokday #beyondblue #headspace\_aus



ruokday @ruokday · May 27  
 Giving is a thousand times better than getting. Ronni Kahn #OzHarvest #hopeasumm2015

ruokday @ruokday · May 26  
 A conversation tip: Patience can go along way to a helping a friend.

ruokday @ruokday · May 25  
 A great mate can help someone come out of their shell and talk about what's troubling them.

**RUOK?** R U OK Day  
 May 11 · 🌐

"There's always going to be brighter days, it's just getting through that particular time. Just talk about it, don't hold your emotions in," Community Ambassador Will Austin.

Like · Comment · Share

👍 467 people like this.

Most Relevant ▾

🔄 90 shares

**Glenn Womersley** Problem is no one actually cares if you are a female you have support if you are a guy just man up I've got no one to talk to hang out with I go to the movies alone dinner alone having no family or friends that actually want to hang out makes it hard to wanna live sometimes talking about it over the net doesnt help

Like · Reply · May 12 at 1:02pm

**R U OK Day** Hi Glenn Womersley The internet is no replacement for face-to-face catch ups - we agree! We're so sorry to hear that you you don't have many people to hang out with. Have you thought of joining a sports group? Or a hobby group that fascinates you? Or even volunteer at a local charity? These are great ways to meet people....

Like · 🍌 1 · May 12 at 4:18pm

**Michael Venables** You have no idea what it's like to live in the shoes of a person with depression. R U OK are just letters and people thinking they are helping. Sunny day friends.

Like · Reply · May 11 at 9:42pm

**R U OK Day** Hi Michael, having regular meaningful conversations with your loved ones, family & friends about how you're feeling may be helpful. If you need further help or someone to talk to, there are a number of helplines that can help. Lifeline offer a 24/7 tel... See More

Like · 🍌 2 · May 12 at 12:01am

👉 View more replies

**Gary Farlow** get on board guys and gals one of the great crusades

Like · Reply · 🍌 1 · May 12 at 6:27am

**Megan Luttrell** Importantly find someone who will listen.

Like · Reply · May 11 at 6:59pm

Write a comment... 

Press Enter to post.



ruokday

TWEETS 2,674 FOLLOWING 394 FOLLOWERS 16.6K FAVORITES 454

Follow

Tweets Tweets & replies Photos & videos

New to Twitter?

Sign up now to get your own

# SOCIAL MEDIA CONTENT

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You can use the suggestions below for Facebook or Twitter. Add your own image with people dressed in yellow or orange and help spread a message of hope! If you write your own posts or tweets, we'd love you to add @ruokday or #ruokday to the message.

- We're taking time to ask #ruok. Regular & meaningful conversations can change lives @ruokday
- We believe that a conversation can make a difference to someone struggling with life @ruokday
- Know someone struggling with life? Ask them #ruok & let them know help is available @ruokday
- You don't have to fix a mate's problems on @ruokday. Just listen, don't judge & help them work out the next step
- Get in touch with a friend you haven't seen recently. Don't let life get in the way of friendships that count #ruokday
- Be someone a mate can count on by taking the time to listen to their worries @ruokday







**RUOK?**  
THE UPSIDE

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THE UPSIDE

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THE UPSIDE

**RUOK?**  
THE UPSIDE

**RUOK?**<sup>TM</sup>

A conversation could change a life.

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For more info and tips  
**[ruok.org.au](http://ruok.org.au)**