About R U OK?

“In the time it takes to have a cup of coffee, you can have a conversation that could change a life”
- Gavin Larkin (1968 – 2011)

- R U OK? was founded in 2009 by the late Gavin Larkin
- R U OK?’s vision is a world where we’re all connected and are protected from suicide
- Their mission is to inspire and empower everyone to connect with the people around them and support anyone struggling with life
You can make a difference

- You don’t have to be an expert to ask somebody “Are you OK?”
- It’s something that we can all do to make a difference
- By inspiring people to take the time to ask “Are you OK?” and listen, we can help people struggling with life feel connected and supported
- It all comes down to regular, face-to-face, meaningful conversations about life. And asking “Are you OK?” is a great place to start
This year, R U OK? are calling on Australia to: Trust the Signs, Trust your Gut and Ask R U OK?

• R U OK? are calling on Australians to trust the signs that someone might be struggling with life

• What are they saying? What are they doing? What’s going on in their life?

• When you notice a change, no matter how small, we want you to trust your gut and start an R U OK? conversation

• Get involved. Learn the signs, download the practical toolkit and share the message in your community
Why should we ‘Trust the Signs’

Knowing the signs increases conversation confidence

R U OK?’s 2019 national omnibus survey revealed:

• 63% of Australians are not confident they know the signs that someone might be struggling with life.

• Of those surveyed, 41% hadn’t asked someone if they were OK because they weren’t sure they knew the signs.

• However, there is hope, with almost 1 in 2 (49%) believing they’d be more confident starting a conversation if they knew the signs.
The signs it’s time to ask R U OK?

1. Verbal indicators
2. Non-verbal indicators
3. Life events that could cause increased pressure or stress
What are the signs?
WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Do they seem:

- Confused or irrational
- Moody
- Unable to switch off
- Concerned they’re a burden
- Lonely or lacking self-esteem
- Concerned they’re trapped or in pain
Are they:

- Experiencing mood swings
- Becoming withdrawn
- Changing their online behaviour
- Losing interest in what they used to love
- Unable to concentrate
- Less interested in their appearance or personal hygiene
- Behaving recklessly
- Changes in sleep patterns
Are they experiencing:

- Relationship issues
- Major health issues
- Work pressure or constant stress
- Financial difficulty
- Loss of someone or something they care about
How to ask R U OK?
Preparing for the conversation

How to decide whether you’re ready to start a meaningful conversation.
Be ready

- Are you in a good headspace?
- Are you ready to listen?
- Can you give as much time as is needed?
Be prepared

- When you ask how someone’s going, the answer could be: “No, I’m not”
- Remember you won’t have all the answers (which is OK)
- Listening to them talk about their personal struggles can be difficult and they might get emotional, embarrassed or upset
- Sometimes they won’t be ready to talk or they might not want to talk to you
Pick your moment

- Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and comfortable for both of you?
- What time will be good for them to chat? Ideally try blocking out an hour in your diary so you have enough time for a meaningful conversation.
- If they can’t talk when you approach them, ask for a better time to have a chat.
Simple steps that could change a life

Use R U OK?’s 4 conversation steps to show them they’re supported and help them find strategies to better manage their situation.
1. Ask R U OK?

- Be relaxed
- Help them open up by asking questions like “How you going?” or “What’s been happening?” or “I’ve noticed you haven’t been yourself lately. How are you travelling?”
- Make an observation. Mention the specific that have made you concerned for them, like “I’ve noticed that you seem really tired lately” or “You seem less chatty than usual. How you going?”
2. Listen

- Take what they say seriously
- Don’t interrupt or try to rush the conversation
- If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence
- Encourage them to explain what’s going on and how they’re feeling
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don’t take it personally
- Let them know you’re asking because you’re concerned
3. Encourage action

- Ask them: “Where do you think we can go from here?”
- Ask: “What would be a good first step we can take?”
- Ask: “What do you need from me? How can I help?”
- Good options for action might include talking to family, a trusted friend, their doctor or an appropriate professional
- You can find services and supports at www.ruok.org.au/findhelp
4. Check in

- Remember to check back in and see how they’re going in a few days’ time
- Ask how they’re going and if they’ve found a better way to manage their situation
- If they haven’t done anything don’t judge them. They might just need someone to listen for the moment
- Understand that sometimes it can take a long time for someone to be ready to see a professional
- Try to reinforce the benefits of seeking professional help and trying different avenues
Any time you notice a change, no matter how small:

• Trust the Signs
• Trust your Gut
• Ask R U OK?
Learn the signs and how to ask at ruok.org.au