



Seeing who's struggling isn't always obvious.

Chances are that 1 in 3 of your staff needs to talk.
One simple question from a coworker could change their life.
Help staff ask each other "R U OK?"

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R U OK?™

Information for managers and team leaders

One thing we can all do to help someone going through a tough time is to talk about it. Having regular chats with coworkers can help anyone who's struggling to feel supported and more resilient when confronted with life's challenges.

Why believe us? Because some of the smartest people in the world have gone to great lengths to show that a sense of belonging is one of the best protective factors against suicide.

As a manager and team leader, we need your help to start these open, supportive conversations between staff. It's best not to wait until someone has hit rock bottom before checking in with them. We need to be checking in with each other on a regular basis, and making sure that our coworkers know they're not alone and don't need to put on a brave front.

Here are some suggested talking points that you can draw on in tool box talks or any team meeting.

Why coworkers should support R U OK?

- It's estimated that 15 percent of the world's population will experience mental health problems each year.
- But on top of this, we all know that work has its own challenges – especially when stuff is happening at home.
- One thing we can all do to help each other is to talk about life's ups and downs; to talk about the stuff that's worrying us.
- None of us can fix a coworker's problem, but we can take the time to show them that we're concerned and want to understand what's going on.
- Spending time with coworkers and making time to ask them how they're doing is proven to boost our resilience and ability to cope with adversity.

How do I know if someone isn't OK?

- Sometimes it's obvious that someone is not doing so well. You can just tell that they aren't themselves, or they're clearly upset, stressed, or very distracted.
- Other times, it might not be so obvious that someone's struggling, but your gut says that something's not quite right. We need you to trust your instinct and check in with them.
- There's a chance you might be wrong – but it's never going to be a bad thing to show someone you're concerned for them.
- On the other hand, if you're right, it could really make a big difference to their day and how they're coping.

How do I start the conversation?

- Before you even ask "Are you OK?", make sure you've got the time and energy to have a proper chat. You don't want to be rushed.
- Also remind yourself that you don't have to fix someone's problems if they do happen to say "no."
- Your job is to listen; not judge.
- If you're OK with that, you're ready to start.

Step 1: Ask R U OK?

- Find a private or relaxed place and ask them how they're doing.
- Help them open up by asking questions like, "What's been happening?" or "How's it been going?"
- If they say they're fine but your gut says they're not, mention specific things that have made you concerned for them. You could say, "I've noticed that you seem really tired lately" or "You seem less chatty than usual. How are you doing?"

Step 2: Listen; don't judge

- If a coworker says they're not OK, take what they say seriously.
- Don't rush the conversation or jump to conclusions.
- Give them some time to think and don't rush in with solutions.
- Respect what they say and what they're experiencing.
- Encourage them to explain by asking, "How are you feeling about that?" or "How long have you felt that way?"

Step 3: Explore next steps

- Once they've opened up, encourage them to take action – to do something that might make the load a bit lighter.
- You could ask what you can do to help.
- You could also help them to think about what has helped them in the past – or encourage them to make some time to do the things they enjoy.
- If they say they've been struggling for more than 2 weeks, then it's a good idea to suggest seeing a professional, such as a doctor or psychologist, or contacting the EAP.

Step 4: Make time to check in

- Agree to meet up again with them soon to see how they're doing.
- You could also encourage them to think of someone else they can chat with at home or outside of work.

What else can I do to encourage these conversations?

- Keep the message front of mind: Once a quarter, plan to share some of the suggestions in this flyer. Also, make sure you put up new posters every quarter as it keeps the message fresh.
- Reach everyone: Be sure to schedule enough meetings so everyone hears the message.
- Keep creating opportunities for coworkers to get to know each other: Whether it's a luncheon, trivia night, or a drink after work, it's really important to build a sense of companionship between coworkers.
- Share real, inspiring stories: One of the best ways to convince people of the importance of conversations is to share examples of how a conversation made a difference. Encourage a staff member to share or head to the R U OK? YouTube channel for lots of great (short) videos: www.youtube.com/ruokday
- Promote the experts: The truth is, some conversations are too big for coworkers to handle alone. Remind staff that they can always call on experts for additional support, and promote the Employee Assistance Program. Lots of support services can also be found here: benefits.cat.com > EAP.

ALWAYS AVAILABLE. ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL.

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