

R U OK Day Coach Sheet

Quick Summary

1. Always better to ask than not
2. We will all experience or be affected by a mental health problem at some stage in our life
3. When asking, use open ended I statements that represent your view or feelings of what you have noticed about the person
4. USA – Understand, Support Act
5. Every day is R U OK Day
6. If you are OK, what are you doing to keep it that way?

Why R U OK?

Objective of the initiative: shift thinking from it won't be me to it could be me, or my partner, or my kids or best mate.

What is R U OK Day?

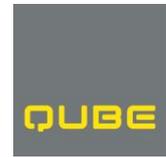
National day of action to remind all of us to ask the question: Are you OK?

Why? Asking if a person is ok:

- Could save a life. When we ask the question, it provides a space for a person in crisis to reach out
- Holds the mirror up and lets the person know that you have noticed a difference (if there has been one), and lets them know they aren't hiding it as well as well as they might be (if they are)
- Let's the person know that you care (when done with authenticity and empathy)
- Let's a person know they aren't alone (despite what their brain is telling them)

Why do we need it?

- 8 people commit suicide each day in Australia (approx. 6 are men).
- For every 1 death from suicide another 30 attempts occur
- 1 in 5 of us will have a mental health problem in our lifetime
- 14% of Aussies suffer depression and there are more visits to GPs for stress than any other thing
- R U OK stats show that of all the people that were asked "R U OK?" half of those people weren't and needed support and 50% of those who were asked, wanted to be asked.
- Last but not least the vicarious trauma for partners or those supporting individuals with a mental health problem is also a real thing.



How to Start the Conversation?

The idea and concept of R U OK Day is a fantastic one. 3 out of 4 Aussies are aware of R U OK Day, and 2 in 3 now believe the campaign has made people more willing to ask their friends about their troubles. Yet in Australia, if we were to ask a colleague or a mate “Are they OK” what would they say? If they were to ask me, I’d say “Yeah, all good.”

So how do we cut through?

Who do we ask? Anyone and everyone BUT ask yourself, am I the BEST person to ask. If not, who is?

When should we ask? When your gut tells you to. Trust our instincts. More specifically, it’s when we see a change in a person from their daily norms when it comes to their actions, their thoughts and dialogue or daily behaviours along with changes in sleep, weight, fatigue or connectedness.

How do we ask? Start with heart and use “I” statements. “I have noticed...”, “I’m worried...”, “I think...” because when we use I statements its then about our perspective and our view (what we have seen) and not about their perceived failures. In other words, we hold up the mirror to what made us want to ask the question in the first place.

Then we need to listen, without judgement and without putting our own view or perspective into the mix.

Remember: *this about their views and their feelings. We all look at the world through our own lens.*

Tip: Use the USA approach

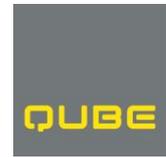
- **Understand:** how the person is feeling and how they are affected
- **Support:** discuss ways in which you can support them and where they can get more support
- **Act/agree on a plan of action:** discuss when you will follow up on them, what their next steps are and what they will do if things get worse.

Where is support?

- Your GP
- Family and loved ones
- EAP
- Lifeline
- Men’s health line
- Religious leaders

Remember:

- *If you are going to ask, you may need to pause your day and take time to support and act. That’s not a reason to not ask, it’s just something to consider when planning to ask.*
- *It is OK to say when you are out of your depth. Use this as a reason to call for help with the person. E.g. “I’m so glad you shared this with me, it must have taken a huge amount of effort to do so. It’s really important to me that you find the support you need, and there’s a bunch of options. My concern is that I don’t have the skills or knowledge to help you the way in which you need it. What I can do is help connect you and support you through that.”*



How Do We Answer?

With honesty and openness. The concept only works if we open up when times are tough. Conversations are a two-way thing.

But what if you're not comfortable discussing your problems with someone that has asked, and you're not OK? Tell someone that you do trust, even if they haven't asked. Or go to your EAP, GP, Men's Health Line etc.

Some ways to answer when you're not OK:

- Im not really OK but there's not really anything you can do about it but thanks for asking anyway.
- Im not OK but I don't think im up to talking about it right now. Thank you for asking.
- Im not OK and im really struggling but I've got no idea what to do about it.
- I am not OK and I think there is something you can do to help me please.
- I am not OK but I have been working with someone to help me get through it. Thank you for asking.

Remember: *It's OK to feel blue, or sad, or angry, or helpless or hopeless or alone. It's a natural response to an event, or a change in our brain and the way it's wired or the balance of hormones in our mind. It's not OK to feel that way, to suffer and **NOT** ask for help.*

After R U OK Day

R U OK day is every day. If we see changes or have concerns it's always better to ask than not.

If you aren't OK, or realise you aren't OK, ask for help. At least share how you are feeling.

If you are OK? What are you doing to keep it that way? Are you exercising, eating well (plants and fibre), practicing mindfulness, building healthy connections, engaging in nature? All of these things have been shown to immunise against mental health concerns. It also means that when troubling times do present, we have the skills to roll with it.

Places for Support



Employee Assistance Provider: confidential, free, for support in any area (financial, relationships, stress, anxiety, depression or just to support you when supporting others).

Contact: <https://www.accesseap.com.au/> OR 1800 81 87 28



Lifeline: National charity providing all Australians experiencing a personal crisis with access to 24-hour crisis support and suicide prevention services.

Phone: 13 11 14



Suicide Call Back Service: 24/7 free counselling for suicide prevention & mental health via telephone, online and video for anyone affected by suicidal thoughts.

Phone: 1300 659 467



Men's Helpline: Telephone and online counselling service for men with family and relationship concerns.

Phone: 1300 789 978



R U OK

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