



# Your guide to asking R U OK?



Ask

**R U OK?**<sup>™</sup>  
inTrucks&Sheds

No qualifications needed

## You don't need to be an expert to have an R U OK? conversation with a mate or colleague.

Life's ups and downs happen to us all, but there are challenges unique to those working in the road transport, warehousing and logistics industries.

Tight deadlines, long hours, shift work and isolation are all contributing factors to feeling less connected.

You can make a difference by listening and giving someone your time. It's not about fixing their problems, it's about showing that you care.

By having regular, meaningful conversations, we can help the people in our world feel supported and encourage them to access professional help before they are in crisis.

We all have what it takes to ask R U OK? - No qualifications needed. Because a conversation could change a life.



Scan the QR code or go to [healthyheads.org.au/ruok](https://healthyheads.org.au/ruok)

# Ask

## R U OK? inTrucks&Sheds

No qualifications needed



I was no expert or counsellor, but I knew how to be a friend. It's about being available and ready to listen.

”

**Vikki**

Distribution Centre  
Manager, Coles

## What's in the guide?

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# Spot the signs that someone might be doing it tough

It may not always be obvious when someone is struggling, but these are some signs to look out for that indicate someone you know might need support.

If you've noticed  
a change, no matter  
how small, trust your  
gut instinct and ask,  
'are you OK?'

## WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

### Do they sound:

- Angry or irritable
- Confused or irrational
- Lonely
- Numb or switched off
- Concerned they are a burden
- Concerned about the future

## WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

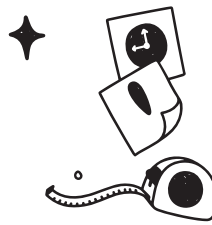
### Are they:

- Unable to concentrate
- Dismissive or defensive
- Feeling tired all the time
- Making less effort in their appearance or personal hygiene
- Easily frustrated or have limited patience
- Missing shifts or turning up late to work

## WHAT'S GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE?

### Are they experiencing:

- Long hours and extended periods away from family and friends
- Financial difficulties
- Relationship challenges
- Health issues or physical injuries
- Changes in life circumstances



# Preparing to have an R U OK? conversation

If you think someone you know might be struggling with life, then it's time to trust your gut instinct and ask, 'are you OK?' The below steps will help you prepare for the conversation.



## Be ready

- Are you in a good headspace?
- Are you willing to genuinely listen?
- Can you give as much time as needed?
- Are you the best person to have the conversation? If not, is there someone else in their support network you can encourage to reach out to them?



## Be prepared

- Remember, you don't need to be an expert and you won't have all the answers (and that's OK)
- Listening is one of the most important things you can do
- If someone is talking about personal struggles it can be difficult and they might become emotional, defensive, embarrassed or upset
- Have you researched what appropriate support is available for the person you're talking to?



## Pick your moment

- Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and informal where they'll feel comfortable?
- You don't want to rush the conversation so make sure you both have enough time
- If they can't talk when you approach them, try to confirm another time to have a conversation
- Consider whether the person might prefer to be side-by-side with you e.g., walking together, rather than face-to-face

## 'It's none of my business'

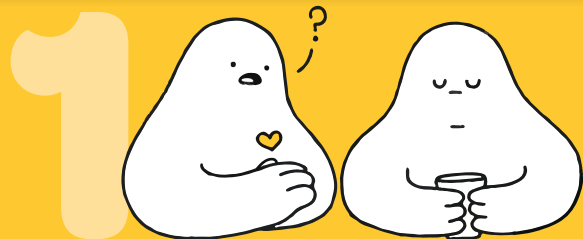
We all value our privacy and respect the privacy of others. It's understandable to be unsure or nervous about having an R U OK? conversation but it's better to start a conversation than to ignore the feeling that something isn't quite right.

There's no guarantee they'll be ready to talk - but they'll know someone cares and next time you ask they might be ready.

Having someone show they care can make all the difference for someone who is feeling overwhelmed or distressed.



# The 4 steps of an R U OK? conversation



**Ask  
R U OK?**



**Listen**

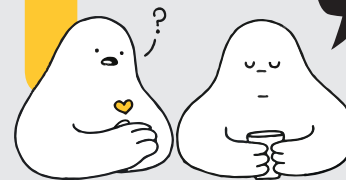


**Encourage  
action**



**Check in**

1

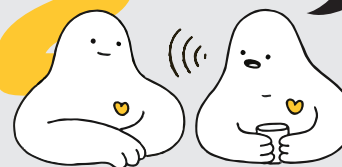


How are you  
travelling?

**Ask  
R U OK?**

- Be relaxed
- Help them open up by asking questions like 'How are you going?' or 'What's been happening?'
- Mention what you have noticed that has concerned you, like 'I've noticed that you seem more tired than usual, is there something worrying you?'
- Let them know you are asking because you are concerned about them

2



I'm here to  
listen if you want  
to talk more.

**Listen**

- Listen with an open mind and let them know you are there to listen, not judge
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation
- Take what they say seriously
- If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence
- If they become upset or angry, stay calm and don't take it personally
- You might need to ask, 'are you OK?', a couple of times before they feel comfortable opening up. You might also like to think about who else in their world might be appropriate to have a chat with them



## Encourage action

### If someone says they're not OK

- Encourage them to reach out and talk to family, a trusted friend, their doctor or a health professional, a support service, or an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
- You might also like to consider taking action together as a way of showing support and encouraging them to take a next step

**You can contact one of the support services listed on page 15 if you need advice on what to do or say**



## Check in

- Remember to check in a few days later to see how the person is doing (sooner if you are concerned)
- Ask how they're coping with the situation or if they need more support to manage it
- If they haven't found help, keep encouraging them and remind them you're always there if they need a chat
- Understand that it might take a long time before someone is ready to seek professional help
- Try to reinforce the benefits of talking to a doctor or other support services such as your EAP if available





“ I slipped into a dark hole. What turned things around was a simple conversation with my mate. He didn't interrupt me or tell me what I should do, he just listened. I'm confident that conversation saved my life. ”

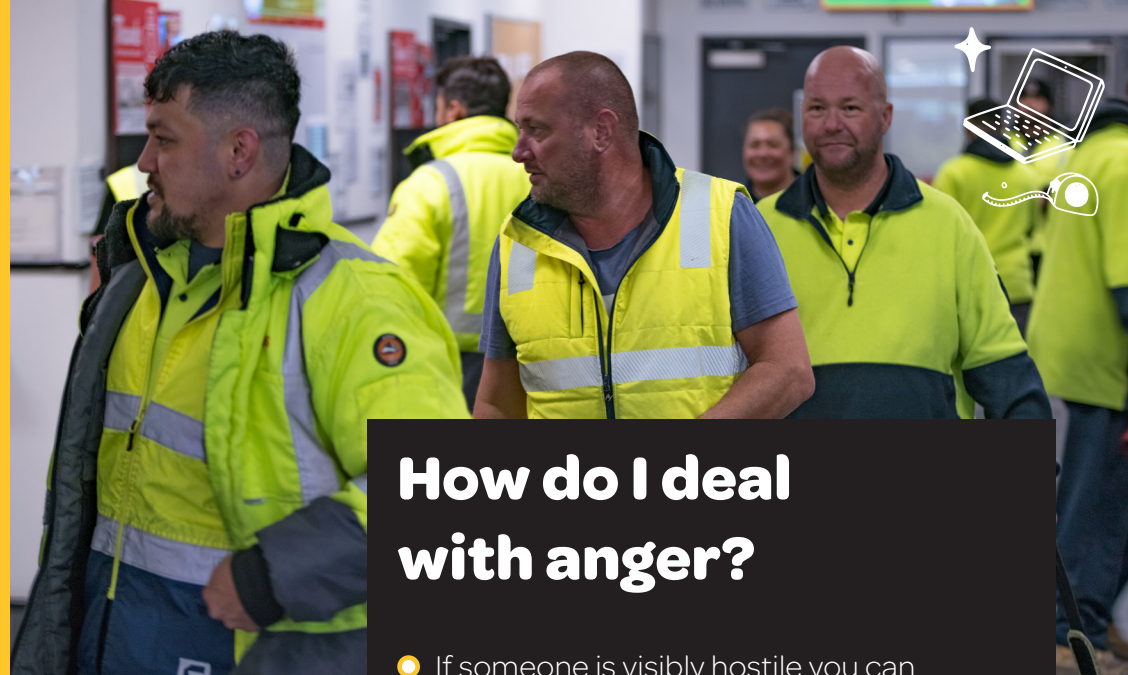
**Glenn**

Truck driver

## How can I prepare for strong emotional reactions?

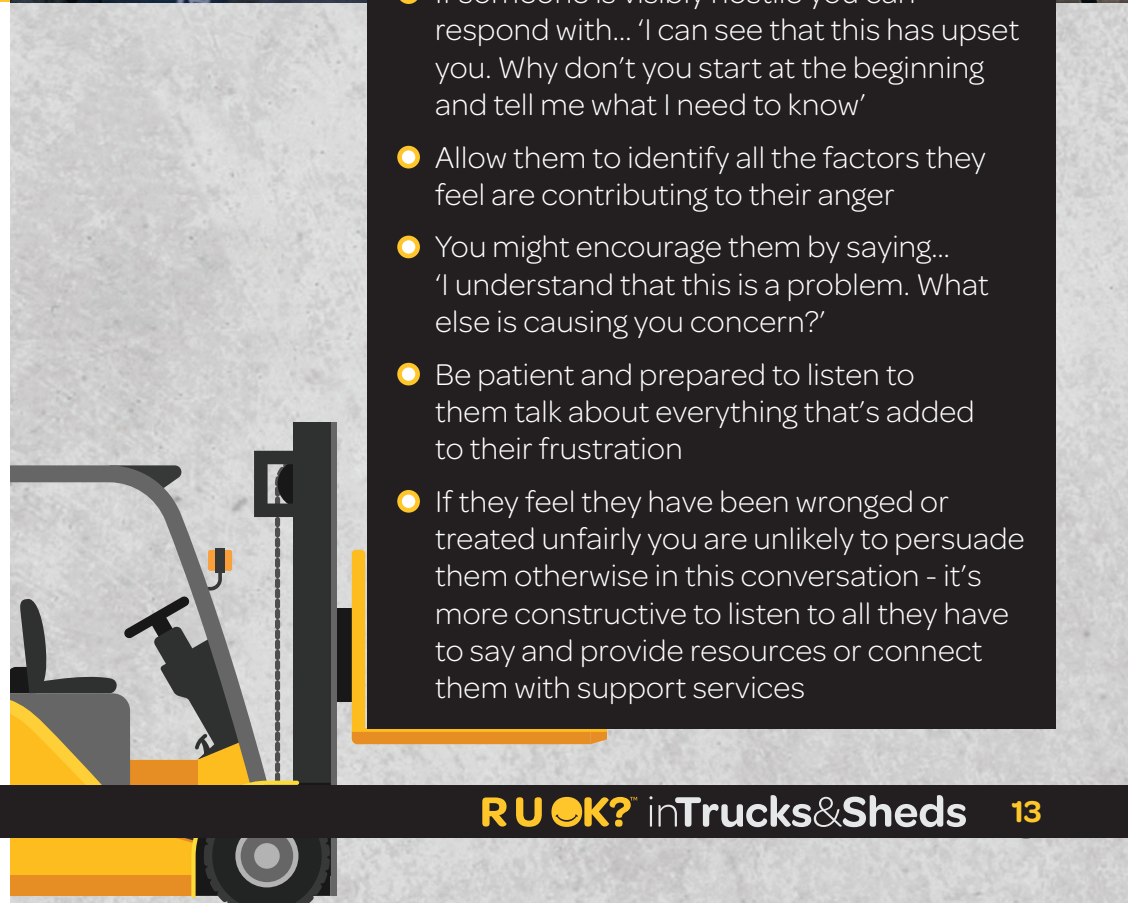
- Recognise their reaction might be in response to a range of circumstances, some of which you might not know about
- Allow the person to fully express their emotions
- Actively listening is one of the best things you can do for someone when they are distressed
- Deal with emotions first, you can discuss the issues more rationally once emotions have been addressed
- Manage your own emotions by staying calm and not taking things personally

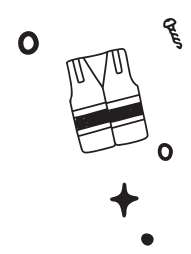
By using these tips, you can help someone feel supported when they are confronted with life's challenges.



## How do I deal with anger?

- If someone is visibly hostile you can respond with... 'I can see that this has upset you. Why don't you start at the beginning and tell me what I need to know'
- Allow them to identify all the factors they feel are contributing to their anger
- You might encourage them by saying... 'I understand that this is a problem. What else is causing you concern?'
- Be patient and prepared to listen to them talk about everything that's added to their frustration
- If they feel they have been wronged or treated unfairly you are unlikely to persuade them otherwise in this conversation - it's more constructive to listen to all they have to say and provide resources or connect them with support services





## Useful contacts for someone who's not OK

**If your life is in danger or you are concerned for someone else's safety, please call 000.**

If you're finding life tough or need some extra support, it can help to talk with someone you trust.

You and your loved ones can find support by contacting your local doctor or one of these support services below for advice on what to do next.

### **Lifeline (24/7)**

13 11 14  
lifeline.org.au

### **MensLine (24/7)**

1300 78 99 78  
mensline.org.au

### **Suicide Call Back Service (24/7)**

1300 659 467  
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

### **13 YARN (24/7)**

Support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people  
13 92 76  
13yarn.org.au

### **Beyond Blue (24/7)**

1300 224 636  
beyondblue.org.au

### **QLife (3pm-midnight)**

Anonymous, free  
LGBTIQA+ support  
1800 184 527  
qlife.org.au

### **Kids Helpline (24/7, for youth 5-25)**

1800 55 1800  
kidshelpline.com.au

### **More contacts**

ruok.org.au/findhelp

For additional information on how to access Australia's most trusted mental health service providers, visit **headtohealth.gov.au**

## What if they say they're fine but you're still concerned?

- Tell them you care about them and you're concerned about the changes in their behaviour
- Ask again, you could say... 'It's just you don't seem like yourself lately'
- Check in with them again soon
- Examples of how you could respond to 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?'
- Reach out to someone else who is close to that person to see if they've noticed changes. Perhaps encourage them to also check in
- It's important to remember that it can take time for someone to open up to you. You might need to ask 'are you OK?' a few times before they feel comfortable talking



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