



# Mandurah

Psychological Services



# Bunbury

Psychological Services

Your EAP Team



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R U OK? Day took place earlier this month, aiming to start conversations between people about their mental health. Talking about mental health isn't always easy, and it can be normal to feel uncomfortable or embarrassed.

In this month's newsletter I would like to discuss how to have a conversation about mental health, what to ask, and how to listen.

If you believe you are struggling with your mental health or wellbeing, please consult with your GP or contact us here at Mandurah & Bunbury Psychological Services for an appointment with one of our qualified practitioners who will guide you towards better management of your mental health.

## Things to Consider

Before we can look out for others, it can be helpful to check in with ourselves first. If you aren't in the right headspace to help someone, think about others in their support network who could help.

- Are you ready? Am I in a good headspace? Am I willing to genuinely listen? Can I give as much time as needed?
- Understand that we can't 'fix' someone's problems, but we can encourage action.
- Keep in mind some people might not be ready to talk, or might not want to talk to you specifically – and this is okay!

- Are you in an environment that is relatively private and comfortable? Avoid busy or crowded places when possible.
- Consider what time will be good for the other person to chat. Make sure they are not busy with other tasks.
- Make sure you have enough time to chat properly. Having to leave or end the conversation early can leave the other person feeling unheard.
- If you think the person is at high risk of harming themselves, call 000 or transport them to the emergency department.

## How to Ask: Are You Okay?

Got a feeling that someone you know or care about isn't behaving as they normally would? Perhaps they seem out of sorts? More agitated or withdrawn? Or they're just not themselves. By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you can help a family member, friend, or workmate open up.

- Open questions can help others open up, try: 'What's been happening', 'How are you going lately'.
- You can mention specific changes if you've noticed any: 'You seem more quiet than usual, how are you doing?'.
- Try not to interrupt or rush the conversation, allow the person to think of their responses.
- Try to be as non-judgmental as possible, and acknowledge that things might be difficult for them right now.

- Show that you are listening by repeating back what you have heard in your own words. Check with the person if you have understood them properly.

### Encourage action:

- 'What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?'
- 'Who do you know who can support you?'
- Some conversations are too big for family or friends to take on alone. Seeking professional support is a valid option for people having difficulties with their mental health.
- You could say: 'It might be useful to connect with someone who can support you, I am happy to assist you find the right person to talk to'



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