

Wellness Bulletin

SEPTEMBER 2020

R U OK? DAY 10th September 2020

While 2020 has delivered movements for social change, this year has also presented hardships including natural disasters and COVID19.

Having to navigate these challenges along with the 'normal' trials and tribulations of daily life has been challenging and complex for many. In addition to this, the ever changing pandemic imposed restrictions have stretched our capacity to rely on our usual coping strategies. For many, the resulting uncertainty in our daily lives has heightened our inherent human vulnerability like never before.

In responding practically and effectively to these challenges it is, now more than ever, important to acknowledge the healing capacity of good mental health for us, our family, friends, colleagues and community. To achieve this we must first make a conscious effort to take care of our own health and wellbeing. We will then be in a position to assist others and they us. Remember that we are all in this together and together we will become stronger.

"A conversation can change a life" Gavin Larkin

R U OK? Day was founded in 2009 and is the brainchild of Gavin Larkin, implemented with Janina Nearn. The day is a real opportunity to promote connectedness in society and ask each other 'Are you ok?'. Just by starting a conversation, you can give someone the opportunity to be able to talk about how they are truly feeling.

As Gavin said during an interview on Australian Story in 2011, "Today is the day that I need to think about someone other than myself who might be struggling and reach out and say R U OK?".

This year, it has even greater significance, with many struggling under the cloud of COVID19. While you may feel nervous about starting a conversation like this, there really is no need to. We humans thrive on communication. We need it and usually want it, but sometimes find it awkward when emotions come into its sphere.



To help make it easier to get this communication flowing, here are some signs to look for;

1. Behavioural changes: if someone is struggling, they may shutdown and withdraw.
2. Negative language: perspective becomes skewed or they catastrophise.
3. Their view of reality becomes distorted.
4. There is a cry for help, reaching out directly or indirectly because they are not coping.
5. Their emotions are triggered easily, and often over seemingly 'minor' issues.

Here are 4 easy steps to start the conversation:

1. Ask "R U OK?" or use your own words with the intention the same. "Are you doing all right mate?"
2. Listen
3. Encourage Action
4. Check in later

Before you ask, it is a good idea to make sure you are in the right head-space to open up. Be ready to genuinely listen to the person you are asking so that you give them the space to share.

You might even think about checking in with a SMG Health consultant through the EAP service before you do. Our experienced mental health professionals can guide and prepare you so you can help your friend, colleague, or loved one the best way possible.

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT SMG HEALTH

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WORLD SUICIDE PREVENTION DAY 10th September 2020

Organised by the International Association for Suicide Prevention (IASP), World Suicide Prevention Day is an opportunity to raise awareness of suicide prevention.

We all share a responsibility to support those at risk of suicide along with their friends and families. It means noticing that someone may be struggling and reaching out to them. It means encouraging someone to talk about their concerns and taking the time to listen.

Again, it is more important than ever to look out for each other with fears that the full impact of Coronavirus on our mental health remains unknown and we could see suicide rates soar.

The World Health Organisation estimates that almost 800,000 people die every year due to suicide. Suicide is the leading cause of death for Australians between the ages of 15 and 44, with 8 Australians dying every day by suicide. While over 65,000 Australians make a suicide attempt each year, there are thought to be more individuals who attempt suicide, many of whom go unreported.



CHAMPION THE MESSAGE

A suicide attempt may be an early sign of a mental illness developing, so it is important to get help from a doctor, psychologist or compassionate caring colleague.

If you want to make a difference, help to champion the message in your workplace, school and community. Starting with the three little, but powerful, words that can make a difference or even save somebody's life, "Are you OK?"

Awareness of mental health issues is continuing to grow in our society and, in our challenging current environment, strong mental health is more important than ever before.

At any stage of our lives, mental health conditions can cause pain that has lasting effects.

This includes our formative years as children, teenagers, and early adulthood as we navigate educational opportunities and our first jobs; mid adulthood as we work on our careers and have families, and ultimately our retirements.

With such lifetime impact, keeping mental health issues on the agenda by promoting events that bring it into the spotlight is critical.

SMG Health are here for you 24/7 365 days a year.

Contact us for a free confidential appointment with one of our professional and experienced counsellors.

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FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT SMG HEALTH

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