



GBS HEALTH & WELLNESS

A Conversation Could Change a Life

If you have the feeling someone you know or care for isn't behaving as they normally would, be prepared to act on that instinct. Are they out of sorts or don't seem like themselves? Do they seem agitated or withdrawn? These signs could indicate a crisis of any level, from a tough day at work to a traumatic event. By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you could help that family member, friend, or coworker open up. If they are OK, that person will know you're someone who cares enough to ask. If they are not OK, you can employ the suggestions below to navigate the conversation in a supportive and judgment-free way.

The **R U OK? Campaign** aims to 'inspire and empower people to meaningfully connect with those in their social circles and lend support when they are struggling with life'. It outlines three steps to prepare individuals for difficult conversations with their loved ones. These steps include 'Am I Ready?', 'Am I Prepared?', 'Have I Picked my Moment?'.

Am I Ready?

It's important to be mentally prepared for a conversation that could involve negative thoughts or serious problems. Consider evaluating your personal mental health and moving forward with a difficult conversation only after establishing a positive headspace. Incorporate personal mental health check-ins to assess for burnout, depression, anxiety, or other mental health struggles. Always be willing to genuinely listen and offer support.

Am I Prepared?

Understand that not everyone will be ready to talk and that they may not be looking for someone to 'fix' their problems. Be prepared to have a conversation with someone when they express feelings of despair or depression. Offer support by taking them seriously and not rushing the conversation. Try not to judge but rather acknowledge and recognize the things they are struggling with.

Have I Picked My Moment?

Choose the right moment to encourage the conversation by being mindful of an appropriate location that offers privacy. Be sure to leave enough time to allow the person to feel heard. If possible, try to choose a moment where that individual won't be busy or distracted.

Pro Tip

Instead of asking someone “How are you doing?”, try to utilize statements like “You seem off today”, or “Something’s different”, or “I’m worried about you”. This can be helpful in guiding the conversation and makes it difficult for individuals to divert the question with a short and typical response of “I’m fine”. Do this with empathy and kindness to show the individual genuine concern.

Encourage Action

If appropriate, find actions that the individual can do to work through their struggles. Ask how they would best feel supported or what they have done to navigate similar situations. Some conversations are too big for friends and family to handle alone. Connect them with professional help if this is the case. Help the individual feel supported and cared for by checking in regularly over time. Foster a genuine friendship and spend time doing fun things. Staying in touch can make a big difference.

Resource
[RU OK?](#)

