



EMPLOYEE SERIES

Tips for how to have a conversation on R U OK? Day

-  **Know your colleagues.** Relationship building is very important when it comes to mental health in the workplace. You will need to feel comfortable to approach a colleague that you may be concerned about. Also in order to pick up that someone is behaving out of character you will need to know how they usually behave.
-  **Approach the person.** It may be difficult to do. Feeling a little anxious about approaching a colleague to ask them if they are OK is normal. Think about whether you are the right person to approach your colleague. If for any reason you think you may not be the best person, ask the appropriate person if they will approach your colleague, explaining your concerns. Make sure this is done with discretion and confidentially.
-  **Explain why you are having this discussion with them.** Be clear that you are concerned about the person and give specific examples of the observed behaviour change that sparked your concern. E.g. *“you are usually the first one at Friday drinks after work and the life and soul of the party. However, I’ve noticed you have not been coming for the past few weeks”*. Or *“you are usually the first one at work and never take a sick day. However, I have noticed that over the past few weeks you have been arriving at work late and have had a few sick days.”*
-  **R U OK?** Ask the question clearly and directly.
-  **Listen.** Listen to what the person is saying and also listen for how they are feeling. Do not interrupt, just listen and at the end summarise what you have heard to check that your understanding is correct.
-  **Do not go into solution mode.** It is not your responsibility to “fix” the problem or “save” your colleague – giving solutions might make the situation worse.
-  **Do not counsel the person.** You are not a counsellor or psychologist and should not try to be that for the person.
-  **Encourage the person to take action.** Point the person in the right direction i.e. HR, EAP and/or their GP.
-  **Ask what way you can assist.** Allow the person the opportunity to explain what would be helpful for them. For some it will be joining them for a walk, for others it might be a ride to work.
-  **Follow up.** Don’t just leave it there, it is very important to check in with the person regularly to see if they are OK.

If you would like to book an appointment and /or speak with one of our Counsellors, it’s as easy as calling 1300 66 77 00 or New Zealand 0800 327 669 or visit our website www.accesswellbeingservices.com.au