

# An R U OK? Toolkit for Secondary Schools



**RU OK?**<sup>TM</sup>  
**at school**

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# Introduction

RU OK? is a national charity inspiring and empowering everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them and support anyone struggling with life. Looking out for one another and lending support are key life skills for any age group. This toolkit has been designed to encourage students to look out for their classmates by asking RU OK?

The activities have been linked to the Australian Curriculum

- Teachers are encouraged to embed this series of activities into existing comprehensive units of work with content inclusive of themes such as: friendship, resilience, respectful relationships, help-seeking, mental health and wellbeing
- The activities have been designed to be flexible - your class might decide to complete all activities or you might choose the activities that best align to your school context and the time allocated for your lesson
- Activities have been assigned across Years 7–8, 9–10 and 11–12
- All activities incorporate the 4 conversation steps of asking “are you OK?” (ASK, LISTEN, ENCOURAGE ACTION, CHECK IN).

It might also be beneficial to involve your school counsellor/psychologist when you run these activities (where appropriate) to remind students of their role and so they know who to go to for help if needed.

*Disclaimer: This resource has been developed for use by teachers in secondary schools. Before relying on the material, users should carefully evaluate its accuracy, currency, completeness and relevance for their purposes, and should obtain any appropriate professional advice relevant to their particular circumstances and current versions of syllabus/ curriculum documents.*



## Accessing help

Guide discussion so that students consider online and offline services that can help, including organisations/support in the local school area. Discussion **MUST** also include: **If you or a student are worried about someone and feel urgent professional support is needed, turn to a trusted adult to help. If the need for assistance is life threatening, call 000** (triple zero; Australia only).

Places students can go to for help include:	
In-school support:	Out-of-school support:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Teacher</li> <li>Head of Welfare/Wellbeing</li> <li>Teacher's Aide/Support</li> <li>Aboriginal Education Officer/ School/Support Officer</li> <li>Chaplain/Pastoral Care Worker/School Counsellor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Parent/carer/extended family member</li> <li>Friends</li> <li>Community/cultural groups</li> <li>Sports coach</li> <li>Online services, such as Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800)</li> <li>Counsellors/psychologists/GPs</li> </ul>

# RU OK?™ at school

## 7-12 Factsheet



### Signs that a friend might not be OK

RU OK? seeks to create a world where we're all connected. We're never too young to look out for one another and meaningfully connect.

Many factors can contribute to someone feeling low. It isn't always easy to know whether someone is OK, particularly if they haven't talked about it or young people have yet to recognise the importance of changes in behaviour. However, there are signs young people can become familiar with which could indicate that a friend might not be OK.

#### What causes struggles?

A range of circumstances can lead to a young person feeling low, including:

- Big life changes like moving house or school
- Experiencing grief or loss
- Being around people going through tough times
- Arguing with someone
- Problems with schoolwork
- Being bored
- Having a medical condition or chronic illness
- Not sleeping well
- Not exercising enough
- Hormonal changes
- Special needs

#### When to bring it up

It's a good idea to check in with a friend and ask, "Are you OK?" if:

- They've been showing signs of being upset or angry for some time
- Their mood is having an impact on others
- They're not enjoying school or life in general
- You're worried about their safety
- They start to miss school, or don't want spend time with others or take part in their favourite activities





### Other resources

Use our lesson plans and activity templates to embed R U OK? in your school all year round.

R U OK? has developed this resource to help teachers embed peer support in classroom and playground settings.

By recognising and celebrating positive peer behaviour, we can encourage young people to learn from an early age that being supportive, asking, "Are you OK?" and being comfortable with the answer, "No, I'm not OK" can help that person feel supported and more connected.

### What signs can young people look out for?

Going through difficult times can have a big impact on a young person's life, including their:

- Relationships with other people
- Physical health
- Emotional health

So, it's a great idea to be aware of certain behaviours and signs that can indicate a friend might be struggling. The first thing to look out for is changes in behaviour. When people feel low, they often:

- Withdraw from their friends or their family
- Lash out at people and get angry or upset easily, including towards the people they care about
- Cry or become emotional
- Lose interest in activities and things they usually love
- Have changed sleeping patterns. They might be sleeping all the time, not sleeping much at all, or sleeping at strange hours (such as in the middle of the day)
- Have a changed appetite. They could be eating more than usual, or less.

### How can young people help?

Young people cannot be expected to fix someone's problems, nor know the best way to help and support. However, they can listen to what their friend is saying, let them know they care and tell a teacher, school counsellor or trusted adult if they are worried about their friend.

By promoting an environment of positive peer support and accessing support channels via an adult, young people can learn that asking, "Are you OK?", is a key life skill.

# 7-12 newsletter snips

*These complimentary Newsletter Snips are available for newsletter or school website inclusion.*

## Asking, "Are you OK?"

### Newsletter Snip 1

A range of circumstances can lead to a young person feeling low, including:

- Big life changes like moving house or school
- Experiencing grief or loss
- Being around people going through tough times
- Being bullied
- Arguing with someone
- Problems with school work
- Being bored
- Having a medical condition or chronic illness
- Not sleeping well
- Not exercising enough
- Hormonal changes
- Special needs

### Newsletter Snip 2

Be aware of certain behaviours and signs that can indicate a young person might be struggling. The first thing to look out for is changes in behaviour. When people feel low, they often:

- Withdraw from their friends or their family
- Lash out at people and get angry or upset really easily, including towards the people they care about
- Cry or become emotional
- Lose interest in activities and things they usually love
- Have changed sleeping patterns. They might be sleeping all the time, not sleeping much at all, or sleeping at strange hours (such as in the middle of the day)
- Have a changed appetite. They could be eating more than usual, or less.

### Newsletter Snip 3

Young people cannot be expected to fix someone's problems, nor know the best way to help and support.

However they can listen to what their friend is saying, let them know they care and tell a teacher, school counsellor or trusted adult if they are worried about their friend.

By promoting an environment of positive peer support and accessing support channels via an adult, young people can learn that asking, "Are you OK?" is a key life skill.

### Newsletter Snip 4

R U OK? has 4 Conversation Steps to help navigate a conversation when someone says, "No, I'm not OK". These steps are:

- 1 **Ask**
- 2 **Listen**
- 3 **Encourage action**
- 4 **Check in**

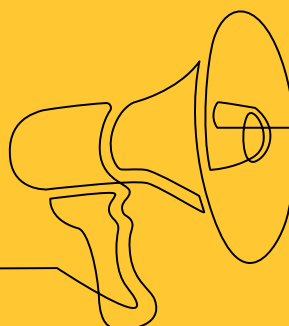
### Newsletter Snip 5

Useful contacts when a young person is not OK:

- School counsellor
- GP or psychologist
- Kids Helpline on 1800 55 1800
- Lifeline on 13 11 14
- Dial 000 if someone's life is in imminent danger

### Other resources

Complementary lesson plans and activity templates can be used to embed R U OK? in school all year round.



# Curriculum links

**Years 7-8**

## AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

### Health and Physical Education

#### Strand: Personal, Social and Community Health

- Investigate the impact of transition and change on identities (ACPPS070)
  - identifying feelings and emotions associated with transitions, and practising self-talk and help-seeking strategies to manage these transitions and associated responsibilities
- Evaluate strategies to manage personal, physical and social changes that occur as they grow older (ACPPS071)
  - accessing and assessing health information and services that support young people to effectively manage changes and transitions as they grow older
  - evaluating and practising coping, communication and problem-solving skills to manage changes and emotions associated with puberty and getting older
- Practise and apply strategies to seek help for themselves or others (ACPPS072)
  - practising different communication techniques to persuade someone to seek help
  - discussing emotional responses to interactions within relationships, and proposing strategies to seek help
- Evaluate health information and communicate their own and others' health concerns (ACPPS076)
  - practising ways to communicate concerns about their health to a variety of support people
  - proposing ways to support others who are going through a challenging time



**Years 9-10**

# AUSTRALIAN CURRICULUM

## Health and Physical Education

### Strand: Personal, Social and Community Health

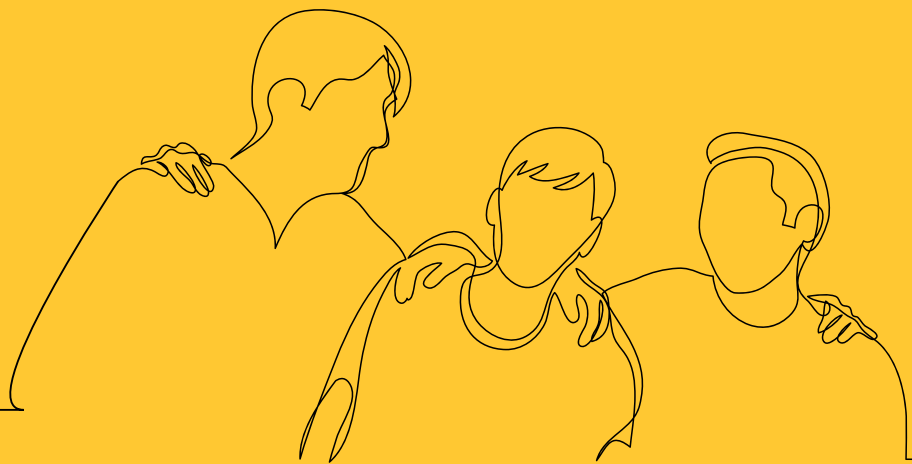
- Evaluate factors that shape identities and critically analyse how individuals impact the identities of others (ACPPS089)
  - analysing the role of family, friends and community in supporting an individual's identities, and proposing strategies to enhance their own and others' wellbeing
- Plan, implement and critique strategies to enhance health, safety and wellbeing of their communities (ACPPS096)
  - developing and implementing proposals to enhance the wellbeing of staff and students in the school



# CREATING A SAFE AND SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT FOR STUDENTS IN YOUR CLASSROOM

Collaborate with students to develop a group agreement that sets the parameters for class discussions when participating in these activities.

- Have students form small groups of 3-4
- Give groups A3 paper and 3 minutes to come up as many ideas as they can regarding “class expectations/ rules” for the classroom and school to be a safe and supportive environment
- Each group nominates two speakers to share their ideas with the class
- The ideas are discussed collaboratively to develop the Class Group Agreement (up to 10 dots points)
- All students write a copy of this agreement in their books (so this can be referenced at any point during the class)
- Display a copy of the agreement in the classroom for all students to see



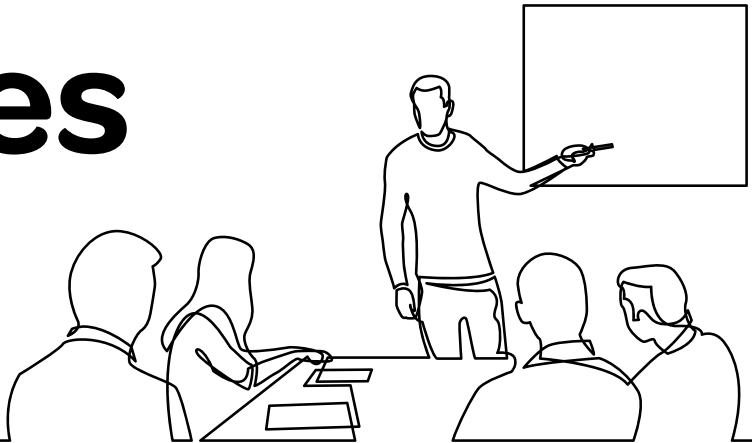
## **Teacher Notes:**

***Creating a safe, supportive and understanding learning environment is particularly important when discussion activities deal with sensitive issues. You might also like to revisit this activity as a reminder to all students of the need for a safe and supportive environment across the various activities. In order to provide a safe and engaging learning environment for students, it is important for the class to:***

- ***Create a sense of trust and openness***
- ***Encourage participants to speak and listen to one another***
- ***Make space and time for student reflection***
- ***Offer multiple avenues for participation and learning such as using a range of questioning techniques that open up discussion rather than trying to get to a quick right answer; recognise that some students might not feel comfortable sharing; and explore ways of dealing with this such as using think, pair, share activities; and explore ways to ensure that all students get an opportunity to speak, such as using talk tickets/sticks.***
- ***Help students to appreciate the points of view, talents and contributions of less vocal classmates***

# Classroom activities

**Years 7-8**



## CONVERSATION STEP 1: ASK

### LEARNING INTENTION

Asking someone if they're OK can help them cope with stressful times, such as exam periods or when school work is building up.

### EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Continuum cards (Appendix A)
- Continuum Worksheet (Appendix B)
- Factsheet: Signs that could mean a friend isn't OK (Appendix C)
- Factsheet: Getting Ready to ask (Appendix D)
- Sticky notes
- Computer/tablet/laptop with internet access
- Online QUIZ- <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask#howtoask>
- Situation Mind Map (Appendix E)
- How to ask: Tipsheet (Appendix F)

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

### Brainswarm – What are some of the signs that someone's not okay?

- A 'brainswarm' is a brainstorm conducted in silence with sticky notes. In brainswarming there is no critiquing of ideas, dominant voices or a reluctance to contribute.
- Students write their thoughts on sticky notes (as many thoughts as they can possibly think of) over a period of 3 minutes. Placing each of their post it notes on the board so there is a collection of ideas.
- Students work together to place similar ideas together in themes on the board
- Discuss collective theme ideas as a class
  - What was the most common idea?



# UNDERSTAND (10mins)

## a) Continuum

- Print the set of Continuum Cards (Appendix A).
- Place the OK card at one end of the room and the NOT OK card at the opposite end.
- Hand out the rest of the cards to the students.
- Ask them to place traits and characteristics that a friend might show on the continuum in relation to the OK or NOT OK cards.
- Once all the cards have been placed on the continuum, discuss as a class if any should be moved.
- When moving the cards, encourage students to explain why they should be moved up or down the continuum. e.g. someone who is the life of the party might fall at either end of the continuum, as they might be a naturally happy person or their hyperactivity might be hiding their insecurities.
- Once the class agrees on most of the placements, students can complete the Continuum Worksheet with their own answers.
- Share the Factsheet: Signs that could mean a friend isn't OK.

(**Computer lab option** – Replace the paper version of the cards with electronic cards and have the students place them on a continuum on the interactive whiteboard.)

## b) Situations where someone might not be OK

- Students to use the Situation Mind Map (Appendix E) to group the signs that show someone might be struggling with life e.g. refusing to complete homework might fall under having trouble at school or trouble at home.

# ACT AND APPLY (20mins)

## a) Getting ready to ask

- Hand out student Factsheet: Getting Ready to ask (Appendix D)
  - Teacher leads class discussion on each of the three information boxes
    - 1 AM I READY?
    - 2 AM I PREPARED?
    - 3 PICKED MY MOMENT?

## b) Are you ready?

- Students head to <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask#howtoask> and complete the quiz, designed to help people feel more confident in asking 'Are you OK?' and starting a conversation with someone they are worried about.
- Whole class discussion about preparing to ask "Are you OK?".

## c) Conversation starters

- Using the How to ask: Tipsheet (Appendix F) students work in pairs to talk through responses
- Whole class discussion

# CONVERSATION STEP 2: LISTEN

## LEARNING INTENTION

Asking people around you if they're OK and demonstrating effective listening skills can help friends feel valued, supported and connected.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Asking R U OK? Table (Appendix G)
- 4 whiteboard markers
- Connectedness Y-Chart worksheet (Appendix H)
- Secondary School R U OK? online clip

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

### Create a social media post campaign (10mins)

- Students work in pairs to create 3 social media posts (such as Snapchat or Instagram) on how to listen to their friends
- Share with whole class

## UNDERSTAND (10mins)

### a) When is it OK to ask "Are you OK?"

- Students complete the Asking R U OK? Table (Appendix G) as an individual then discuss in small groups, the similarities.
- Students should be able to identify appropriate times when it's OK to ask, as well as understand the need for ongoing meaningful conversations.

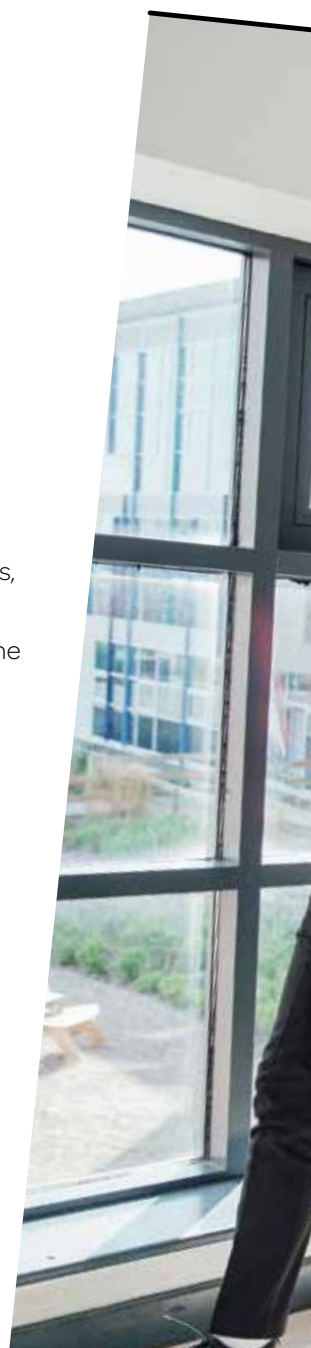
### b) What makes a meaningful conversation?

- Put the heading 'What makes a meaningful conversation?' on the whiteboard.
- Ask students to come up 4 at a time to write their responses to the question on the board.
- As a class, group similar answers and discuss the differing viewpoints.
- Identify that the ingredients for a meaningful conversation might be different for different people.

## ACT AND APPLY (20mins)

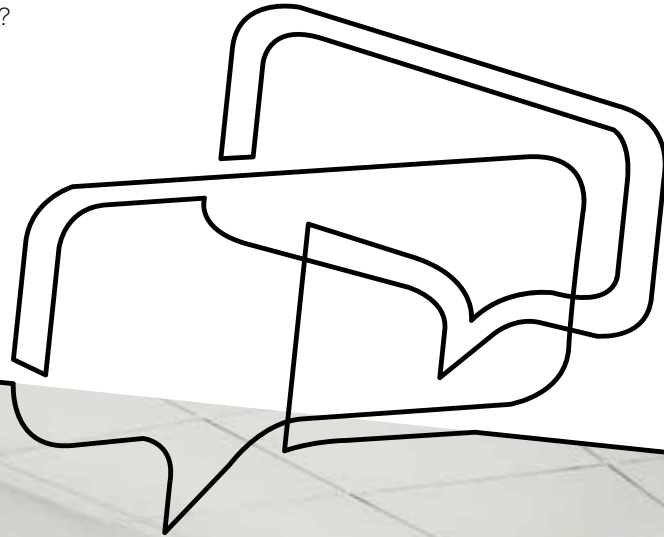
### a) Students watch secondary school R U OK? Short video clip

- Whole class discussion
  - In the clip with Alec and Jenny what was the impact/result/affect of asking LOOK LIKE, SOUND LIKE, FEEL LIKE?



## b) Connecting with others (Think-Pair-Share)

- Students complete the Connectedness Y-Chart (Appendix H).
  - What does connectedness look like?
  - What does connectedness sound like?
  - What does connectedness feel like?
- When the chart is complete, discuss with students the importance of connectedness and feeling connected.
  - Use the following questions to guide discussion:
    - What does it mean to be connected?
    - Who can make us feel connected?
    - What makes us disconnected?
    - Who can we connect with?





Classroom Activities Years 7-8 cont...

## CONVERSATION STEP 3: ENCOURAGE ACTION

### LEARNING INTENTION

When you need information to support someone, there are people and places in your community that you can turn to for assistance. Encouraging friends to seek help early will enable them to manage the situation and potentially stop the problem growing bigger.

### EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Online Chat Worksheet (Appendix I)
- Sticky notes (at least two colours)
- Computer/Tablet/Laptop with internet access
- Online research: Encourage action (Appendix J)

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

### Sticky note slam!

- Students in groups of 3, have 45 seconds to write down as many ways as they can think of to encourage action to seek help when someone is not OK.
- Using different coloured sticky notes, students write down how they could encourage immediate action (45 sec time limit).
- The aim of the activity is to see if students can fill their desk with post it notes before the time limit is up
- Discuss responses as a group



# UNDERSTAND (10mins)

## a) Speed chat! Communicating the need for support:

There are many ways friends and family can communicate when they need support. A popular way to communicate is through social media or text with friends.

- Move students in to a large free space
- Position students facing each other, in pairs. One person indicates they are Person A, the other, Person B.
  - Person A - asks questions 1, 3 and 5
  - Person B - asks questions 2, 4 and 6
- Students are provided with the questions (written on board) and are to ask their first partner question 1. Each pair has 1 minute to discuss their responses.
- Student A moves one space to the left, Student B remains in the same place and the next question is read out by their new partner and answered. And, so on until all questions are answered.

## QUESTIONS

- 1 What are the strengths of using text/social media such as Snapchat or Instagram to ask someone if they are okay?
- 2 What are the weaknesses of using text/social media such as Snapchat or Instagram to ask someone if they are okay?
- 3 What are the opportunities of using text as a form of communication?
- 4 What are the threats to using texts as a form of communication when asking if someone is OK?
- 5 Discuss a situation where you have asked a friend if they are OK? How did you ask? Would you have used this same way to ask another friend if they were OK? If not, what would you have changed?
- 6 What immediate supports are available for you and a friend at your school if you or they are not OK?

## b) Whole class discussion on seeking help

### Accessing help

Guide discussion so that students consider online and offline places to go for help, including organisations/support in the local school area. Discussion MUST also include: If you or a student are worried about someone and feel urgent professional support is needed, turn to a trusted adult to help. If the need for assistance is life threatening, call 000 (triple zero; Australia only).

Places students can go to for help include:	
In-school supports:	Out-of-school supports:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Teacher</li><li>○ Head of Welfare/Wellbeing</li><li>○ Teacher Aide/Support</li><li>○ Aboriginal Education Officer/School/Support Officer</li><li>○ Chaplain/Pastoral Care Worker/School Counsellor</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Parent/carer/extended family member</li><li>○ Friends</li><li>○ Community/cultural groups</li><li>○ Sports coach</li><li>○ Online services, such as Kids Helpline (1800 55 1800)</li><li>○ Counsellors/psychologists/GPs</li></ul>

## c) Responding online to a friend

- Students are to use the Online Chat Worksheet (Appendix I) to respond to messages they might receive from a friend that demonstrates a sense of connection and support.

# ACT AND APPLY (30mins)

## a) Students complete the worksheet: Online research: Encourage action (Appendix J)

## b) Think-Pair-Share

Teacher shares the following examples of encouraging action through conversations (these can be written on the board, printed out and projected on to screens.

- Ask: "What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?"
- Ask: "How would you like me to support you?"
- Ask: "What's something you can do for yourself right now? Something that's enjoyable or relaxing?"
- You could say: "When I was going through a difficult time, I tried this... You might find it useful too."
- If they've been feeling really down for more than 2 weeks, encourage them to see a health professional. You could say, "It might be useful to link in with someone who can support you. I'm happy to assist you to find the right person to talk to."
- Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times.

## c) Students work in pairs to practice saying the above examples

## d) Whole class discussion

- How did the conversation feel to you?
- Did you add or take away any of the words?
- What examples of your own did you come up with?
- Would these conversations look or sound any different online through social media? Justify your responses.



# CONVERSATION STEP 4: CHECK IN

## LEARNING INTENTION

Checking in on our mates assists in letting them know we have been thinking about them, wanting to know how they are and encouraging them to seek support if needed.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Cartoon Connection Worksheet (Appendix K),
- SWOT analysis worksheet (Appendix L)
- Factsheet: Inspiring students to stay connected (Appendix M)
- Planning Worksheet (Appendix N).
- Scaffold (Appendix O)

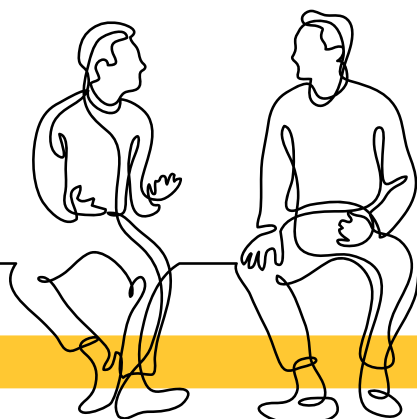
## SWITCH ON (5mins)

- Y-Chart check in
- A large letter **Y** is drawn on the board
- Whole class discussion on what does 'checking in' on a friend:
  - **LOOK LIKE**
  - **FEEL LIKE**
  - **SOUND LIKE**

*(Teacher note - Encourage students to think about how checking in on a mate might or might not differ when online through social media and online gaming.)*

Ideas may include:

- Pop a reminder in your calendar to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, follow up with them sooner.
- You could say: "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going since we last chatted."
- Ask if they've found a better way to manage the situation. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them. They might just need someone to listen to them for the moment.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.





## UNDERSTAND (10mins)

**a) Students re read over Factsheet and discuss main points**

**b) SWOT analysis: Type of communicating when checking in on a friend**

- Students use the SWOT analysis worksheet (Appendix L) to explore the ways people could check in on a friend.

## ACT AND APPLY (30mins)

**a) Following up on a conversation**

- Watch the YouTube clip How to ask a school mate R U OK?: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFzRTwTCmXA&feature=youtu.be>
- Using the Cartoon Connection Worksheet (Appendix K), students devise ways they could assist someone after an initial conversation.
- Discuss possible answers as a whole class.
- Identify adult and expert support at school they can refer a friend to.

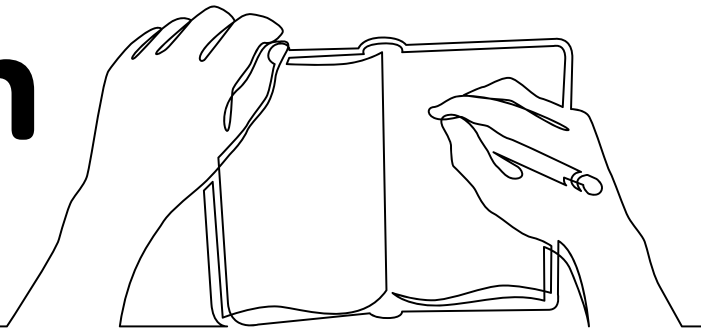
**b) Creating conversations**

- After reading the Factsheet: In reviewing students to stay connected (Appendix M), brainstorm ways to promote meaningful conversations at school. Answers might include:
  - Sporting competitions
  - Short film competitions
  - Morning teas
  - Team building activities
- Divide students into small groups (4-6) to design a school campaign.
  - Designate an idea to each group and ask them to complete the Planning Worksheet (Appendix N). Once completed and approved, they can scaffold the ideas (Appendix O) for the event.
  - The ideas generated by each group can be implemented as a class, or through the leadership body or student representative council. Students could be asked to vote on which activities should be held as a school activity for R U OK?

**(Teacher Note: Further information and ideas on running whole of school events are available on page 27 of this toolkit.)**



# Classroom activities:



**Years 9-10**

## CONVERSATION STEP 1: ASK

### LEARNING INTENTION

Asking someone if they're OK can help them cope with stressful times, such as exam periods or when school work is building up.

### EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Using a series of picture cards (you may like to use images sourced from magazines, newspapers and from Twitter, Pinterest/Instagram- through Creative Commons licenses and print out/cut out)
- Body Outline Worksheet (Appendix P)
- Factsheet: Signs that could mean a friend isn't OK (Appendix C)
- Sticky notes
- Whiteboard markers & Whiteboard
- Computer/tablet/laptop with internet access
- Online quiz: <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask#howtoask>
- How to ask: Tipsheet (Appendix F)

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

Using a series of picture cards (you may like to use images sourced from magazines, newspapers and from Twitter, Pinterest/Instagram- through Creative Commons licenses and print out/cut out)

- Spread cards out over the classroom floor
- Students choose a card they see as being in reference to the phrase 'RU OK?'
- Whole class discussion on what does it mean to ask these three words?

# UNDERSTAND (15mins)

## a) Bodyline: How would you know someone isn't OK?

- Students draw on the Body Outline Worksheet (Appendix P) typical physiological effects the body may experience when someone's not OK. e.g. sweating, oily skin, under/over weight, headaches etc.
- Discuss as a class the effect stressful times can have on an individual and the importance of being able to recognise these signs in others.

## b) Ask students to bring in a picture, photo or drawing that depicts an emotion of someone who's not OK.

- Moving around the circle, ask students to discuss the following questions:
  - Why did you choose this picture?
  - What feelings does the picture display?
  - What do you think might contribute to someone feeling this way?
- Do you think that someone who is not OK will openly display these feelings? Why or why not?
- If someone is feeling this way how might they physically display their feelings?
- Share the Factsheet: Signs that could mean a friend isn't OK (Appendix C).

# ACT AND APPLY (25mins)

## a) What makes a meaningful conversation?

- Teacher writes the heading 'What makes a meaningful conversation?' on the whiteboard.
- Each student has 2 post-it notes on which to write their responses, to be placed on the board around the heading.
- As a class, group similar answers and discuss the differing viewpoints.
- Identify that meaningful conversations might be different for different people.

## b) Getting ready to ask

- Teacher hands out, Factsheet: Getting Ready to ask (Appendix D)
- Teacher leads class discussion on each of the three information boxes

❶ AM I READY?

❷ AM I PREPARED?

❸ PICKED MY MOMENT?

## c) Are you ready?

- Students head to <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask#howtoask> and complete the quiz, designed to help people feel more confident in asking 'Are you OK?' and starting a conversation with someone they are worried about.

**(Teacher Note: Inform students that all answers are confidential and will not be stored or shared.)**

- Whole class discussion

## d) Conversation starters

- Using the How to ask: Tipsheet (Appendix F) students design two scenarios where they have noticed a friend isn't OK and decide to ask, "Are you OK?"
  - Where are they - at school, online, at the park, at home...?
  - How will they ask the question? What words, tone and on-verbal cues might they use? How might they respond?
- Whole class discussion



# CONVERSATION STEP 2: LISTEN

## LEARNING INTENTION

Asking people around you if they're OK and demonstrating effective listening skills can help friends feel valued, supported and connected.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Personal Reflection Worksheet (Appendix Q)
- Placemat activity template (Appendix S).

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

### Think-Pair-Share

- Students work as individuals then in pairs to discuss the following topic;
  - Listening to someone online is completely different to in person (agree or disagree - justifying your answers)

## UNDERSTAND (15mins)

### a) Students complete the Personal Reflection Worksheet (Appendix Q) .

- In the thought bubbles, students list times when they needed someone to ask if they were OK.
- In the speech bubbles, they suggest ways to ask someone experiencing a similar situation "Are you OK?" in a sensitive and caring way.

## ACT AND APPLY (20mins)

### a) Students watch the YouTube clip How to ask a school mate R U OK?: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFzRTwTCmXA&feature=youtu.be>

### b) Placemat thoughts

- Students work in groups of 4 to complete the Placemat activity template (Appendix S). Each student is allocated a corner of the page to write their ideas or top tips for listening to friends and family. After 1 minute, students share their thoughts with their group and write the top responses in the middle box.
- Whole class discussion on tips for listening



# CONVERSATION STEP 3: ENCOURAGE ACTION

## LEARNING INTENTION

When you need information to support someone, you can turn to many people and places in your community. Encouraging friends to seek help early will enable them to manage the situation and potentially stop the problem growing bigger.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Whiteboard
- Whiteboard markers
- Paper to make planes
- Pens/Markers/Pencils
- Open classroom space/Outdoor area

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

### Brainstorm

- What do the words 'encourage' and 'action' mean?

## UNDERSTAND (10mins)

### a) Brainstorm:

- Students discuss when they might need to seek additional help to support a friend. Suggested might include:
  - Not showing up for an organised meeting, event or activity
  - Missing school after having a bad day
  - Ignoring texts or direct messages
  - Not answering phone calls
  - Looking unhealthy or unusually tired
  - Poor body image



# ACT AND APPLY (20mins)

**a) Teacher shares the following examples of encouraging action through conversations (these could be written on the board, printed out and projected on to screens.**

- 1** Ask: "What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?"
- 2** Ask: "How would you like me to support you?"
- 3** Ask: "What's something you can do for yourself right now? Something that's enjoyable or relaxing?"
- 4** You could say: "When I was going through a difficult time, I tried this... You might find it useful too."
- 5** If they've been feeling really down for more than 2 weeks, encourage them to see a health professional. You could say, "It might be useful to link in with someone who can support you. I'm happy to assist you to find the right person to talk to."
- 6** Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times.

**b) Whole class discussion**

**c) Flying thoughts!**

- Students write down at least three things they can do today to encourage a friend to take action (using the previous activity as prompts)
- Students create a paper plane.
- Students fly paper planes together for 30 seconds aimed at the ceiling or, if outside, the sky and taking care to avoid people's faces, attempting to keep all planes in the air at the same time.
- Students collect one paper plane (not the one they created)
- Class discussion, with students volunteering the answers written on the plane they collected.



# CONVERSATION STEP 4: CHECK IN

## LEARNING INTENTION

Checking in on our mates lets them know we've been thinking about them, want to know how they are and by checking in we can encourage and help them seek support if needed.

## EQUIPMENT REQUIRED

- Role Play Worksheet (Appendix R)
- 5X7 index cards
- Sticky notes

## SWITCH ON (5mins)

- Students each use one small index card (5x7) and a handful of sticky notes.
- Students allocated 2 minutes to record their answers to the following:
  - What are some of the ways people can check in on a friend/family member? List words/phrases.
  - Is checking in online the same as offline (face to face)? Give examples.
  - List ways to check in with someone online.
- Invite students to place their card on the wall or designated display space.
- As a group, students explore the cards on display.
- Students use sticky notes to vote for cards they agree with. Where students agree, they put their post it note on top of the card(s).
- As a whole class, discuss the top three response cards based on the number of votes..

## UNDERSTAND (10mins)

a) **Students watch the YouTube clip How to ask a school mate R U OK?:**  
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=hFzRTwTCmXA&feature=youtu.be>

- Using the Role Play Worksheet (Appendix R), students suggest ways they could further assist someone after an initial conversation.
- Discuss answers as a whole class.



# ACT AND APPLY (20mins)

## a) Teacher writes 'Check in' ideas list on board

- Pop a reminder in your calendar to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, follow up with them sooner.
- You could say: "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going since we last chatted."
- Ask if they've found a better way to manage the situation. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them. They might just need someone to listen to them for the moment.
- Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.

## a) Plus, minus, interesting

- Using an A4 piece of paper, students work in pairs to write down the Pluses, Minuses and Interesting points using an online forum (social media, online gaming) and offline (face to face) methods to check in on a friend. A table similar to the one displayed here can be used as the basis.

Checking in on a friend online (via social media/online gaming etc.)		
Pluses	Minuses	Interesting

Checking in on a friend offline (e.g. at school, in the park etc.)		
Pluses	Minuses	Interesting

## c) Share ideas as a whole class through discussion

# Classroom activities:

## Years 11-12

These short activities have been designed to be explored by Senior students in Year meetings and/or pastoral care groups.

## CONVERSATION STEP 1: ASK

### LEARNING INTENTION

#### a) Getting ready to ask

- Hand out student Factsheet: Getting Ready to ask (Appendix D). Teacher leads class discussion on each of the three information boxes
  - ① AM I READY?
  - ② AM I PREPARED?
  - ③ PICKED MY MOMENT?

#### b) Are you ready?

- Students head to <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask#howtoask> and complete the quiz, designed to help people feel more confident in asking 'Are you OK?' and starting a conversation with someone they are worried about.

**Teacher Note:** Inform students that all answers are confidential and will not be stored or shared.

- Whole class discussion

#### c) Conversation starters

- Using the How to ask: Tipsheet (Appendix F) students work in pairs to talk through responses
- Whole class/group discussion

## CONVERSATION STEP 2: LISTEN

#### Students watch Secondary School R U OK? short video clip

- Whole class discussion
  - In the clip with Alec and Jenny what was the impact/result/affect of asking LOOK LIKE, SOUND LIKE, FEEL LIKE?



# CONVERSATION STEP 3: ENCOURAGE ACTION

- a) **Teacher shares the following examples of encouraging action through conversations (these could be written on the board, printed out and/or projected on to screens.)**
- Ask: "What have you done in the past to manage similar situations?"
  - Ask: "How would you like me to support you?"
  - Ask: "What's something you can do for yourself right now? Something that's enjoyable or relaxing?"
  - You could say: "When I was going through a difficult time, I tried this... You might find it useful too."
  - If they've been feeling really down for more than 2 weeks, encourage them to see a health professional. You could say, "It might be useful to connect with someone who can support you. I'm happy to assist you to find the right person to talk to."
  - Be positive about the role of professionals in getting through tough times.
- b) **Whole class/group discussion**

# CONVERSATION STEP 4: CHECK IN

- a) **Students read Check in tips on R U OK? website [ruok.org.au/how-to-ask](https://ruok.org.au/how-to-ask)**
- Pop a reminder in your calendar to call them in a couple of weeks. If they're really struggling, follow up with them sooner.
  - You could say: "I've been thinking of you and wanted to know how you've been going since we last chatted."
  - Ask if they've found a better way to manage the situation. If they haven't done anything, don't judge them. They might just need someone to listen to them for the moment.
  - Stay in touch and be there for them. Genuine care and concern can make a real difference.
- b) **Whole class discussion:**
- What makes it easier to check in with a friend at school?
  - The words, phrases and tone you use might be different online and offline. Do you agree with this comment? Justify your answer.

## Whole of School R U OK? Events!

**Do you want to run a whole of school activity as a school leader? Check out our events ideas (Appendix T) for ideas, tips and further information on how to run your own R U OK? Event!**



# Continuum cards



**OK**

**RU OK?™ at school**

**Not OK**

**RU OK?™ at school**



# Continuum cards



**Life of  
the party**

**Intoxicated**

**Angry**

**Sleepy**

**Popular**

**Shy**

**Social media  
addict**

**Missing from  
school**



# Continuum cards



**Bloodshot  
eyes**

**Not completing  
school work**

**Poor  
hygiene**

**Split family**

**Younger  
siblings**

**Bad breath**

**Smoking**

**Reserved**

# Continuum cards



**In a  
relationship**

**Single**

**Sitting alone  
during breaks**

**Sitting in the  
library during  
breaks**



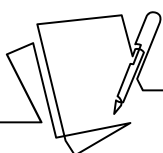
# OK/Not OK Continuum

After you have placed the characteristics along the continuum as a class, complete your own continuum.

**OK**

A vertical line with horizontal dashed lines for placement. The line is solid black, and the dashed lines are also black. The line is centered on the page.

**Not OK**





# Signs that could mean a friend isn't OK

It isn't always easy to know whether someone is OK, particularly if they haven't talked about it. However, there are some signs you can look for which could indicate that a friend or family member may need your support.

## What causes problems?

A whole range of different things can lead people to feel low. It can be a combination of different things, including:

- Going through something stressful
- Experiencing grief or loss
- Being around people going through tough times
- Arguing with someone
- Problems at school
- Big life changes e.g. moving house
- Caring for someone who's unwell
- Being bored
- Having a medical condition or chronic illness
- Not sleeping well
- Not exercising enough

## When to bring it up

It's a good idea to check in with a mate about how they're doing if:

- They've been showing signs of being in a low mood for a couple of weeks or longer
- You notice their mood is having an impact on how you behave towards them
- They're not enjoying life
- You're worried about their safety
- They start to miss school or work, or don't want to hang out with people and do their favourite activities

## What signs should I look out for?

Going through difficult times can have a really big impact on a person's life, including on their:

- Relationships with other people
- Physical health
- Emotional health

So, it's a great idea to be aware of certain behaviours and signs that can indicate a mate or a family member might be going through something. The first thing to look out for is signs of a low mood and the second thing to keep an eye on is the length of time someone seems down.

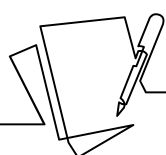
## What are the signs of a low mood?

When people feel low, they often:

- Withdraw from their friends or family
- Lash out at people and become angry or upset really easily, even towards people they care about
- Cry or become emotional
- Lose interest in activities and things they usually love
- Have changed sleeping patterns. They might be sleeping all the time, not sleeping much at all, or sleeping at strange hours (such as in the middle of the day)
- Have a changed appetite. They could be eating more than usual or less.

## How do I know they need help?

If someone's been showing a few or all of the signs of a low mood for two weeks or more, it could mean they're not OK and need support. Talk to your doctor, a school counsellor or an adult you trust about how to help them



# Getting ready to ask

Before you can look out for others, you need to look out for yourself, and that's okay. If you're not in the right headspace or you don't think you're the right person to have the conversation, try to think of someone else in their support network who could talk to them.

To help you decide whether you're ready to start a meaningful conversation, ask yourself:



## AM I READY?

- Am I in a good headspace?
- Am I willing to genuinely listen?
- Can I give as much time as needed?



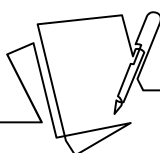
## AM I PREPARED?

- Do I understand that if I ask how someone's going, the answer could be: "No, I'm not"?
- Do I understand that I can't 'fix' someone's problems?
- Do I accept that they might not be ready to talk? Or they might not want to talk to me?



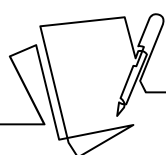
## PICKED MY MOMENT?

- Have I chosen somewhere comfortable and relatively private?
- Have I figured out a time that will be good for them to chat?
- Have set aside enough time for a proper chat?



# Situation mind map

Is someone struggling with life? Use the mind map to group under the different headings the signs that someone might be struggling with life. For example, refusing to complete homework might fall under having trouble at school or trouble at home.



# How to ask: Tipsheet

**Ask  
R U OK?**

**or something like this:**

"How you travelling?"

**No, I'm not OK.**

**Dig a bit deeper:**

"What's been happening?"

"How long has that  
been the case?"

"I'm ready to listen  
if you want to talk."

**Yes, I'm fine.**

**But your gut says they're not:**

"It's just that you don't seem  
like your usual self lately."

"I'm always here if  
you want to chat."

"Is there someone else  
you'd rather talk to?"

**Listen; don't judge**

**Encourage action and offer support:**

"How can I help?"

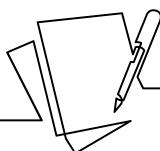
"What would help take the pressure off?"

"What do you enjoy doing? Making time for that can really help."

"Have you thought about seeing a professional?"

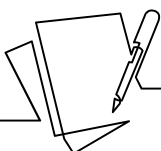
**Make time to check in:**

"Let's chat again next week."



# Asking R U OK? table

Complete the table by listing when it is and isn't the right time to ask a friend, "Are you OK?"

[illegible]

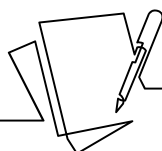
# Connectedness Y-Chart

A Y-Chart identifies what something:

- Looks like
- Feels like
- Sounds like

Use the chart below to record what you think connectedness looks, feels and sounds like.

<b>Looks like:</b>	
<b>Sounds like:</b>	<b>Feels like:</b>



# Online Chat Worksheet

- Online communications can send mixed messages, especially when someone is struggling
- How would you reply to the messages below to show your friend you're there to support them?

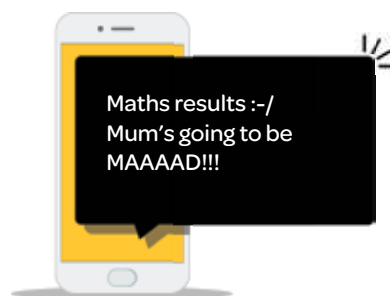


1

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2

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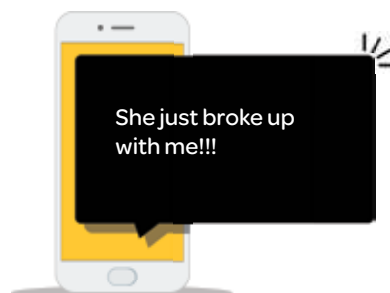


3

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5

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6

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Online research:

# Encourage action

## What makes a good friend?

When someone you know is showing signs that they're not OK, you may need to give them some extra support.

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/what-makes-a-good-friend> to answer the questions below to find out how you can become a more supportive friend when someone is not OK.

- 1 List 5 common signs of a good friend
- 2 List the 7 ways to be a good friend
- 3 Describe 2 of the ways you could be a good friend.

## After asking the question

Once you've initiated a meaningful conversation with someone to ask if they're OK, you may be required to seek support for yourself or the person you're supporting.

Use the links below to answer the questions about how you could support someone you know who isn't OK, or even find out some background information for yourself.

### Loneliness

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/how-can-i-stop-feeling-lonely>

- 1 What are some of the signs that someone may be experiencing loneliness?
- 2 What are 3 things you could suggest someone do when experiencing loneliness?

### Living in a rural or remote area

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/living-in-a-rural-and-remote-area>

- 1 What is a common difficulty faced by people living in rural and remote areas when looking after their mental health and well-being?
- 2 What could you suggest to a friend living in a rural or remote location to help them overcome limited access to support services?

## Fighting with a brother or sister

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/conflict-with-family>

- 1 What are the 4 main reasons that brothers and sisters fight?
- 2 If someone you know is fighting with their brother or sister, what are 4 things you could suggest to help them deal with their issues?
- 3 What could you advise someone to do if they wanted to better communicate with their brother or sister?

## Dealing with divorce and custody

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/articles/dealing-with-divorce-and-custody>

- 1 If someone you know is experiencing a divorce in their family, what are 5 things you could advise them to do?

## Building better coping skills

Visit: <https://au.reachout.com/mental-fitness/coping>

- 1 If you needed to explain to someone the positive effects of using coping strategies, what are 5 things you could say to them?
- 2 From the list of coping strategies, explain the ones you think are most suited to young people.

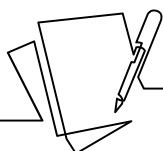
## What if someone isn't OK and doesn't want help?

A friend may or may not respond to your support or advice. This doesn't mean that you should ignore them and leave them alone. There are other ways you can support them.

Visit the website below to assist you in answering the questions below.

<https://au.reachout.com/urgent-help>

- 1 Name 2 agencies you could refer someone to for them to seek further support
- 2 Which agencies are specifically for young people?
- 3 If you feel that someone is in immediate danger who should you contact?

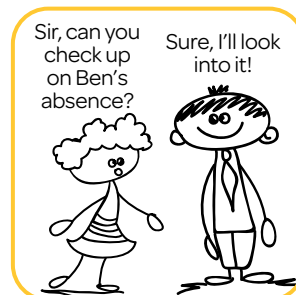
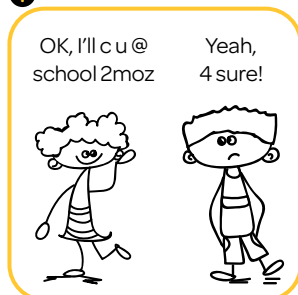




# Cartoon Connection

After watching **How to start a conversation** YouTube clip, design 4 cartoon strips that depict how you would follow up on that conversation.

1



2



3



4



# SWOT analysis

Analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each way of checking in on a friend.

## Text/instant/direct message

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Threats:

Opportunities:

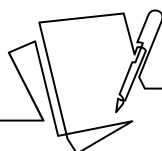
## Phone call

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Threats:

Opportunities:



# SWOT analysis

Analyse the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats of each way of checking in on a friend.

## Face-to-face chat

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Threats:

Opportunities:

## Instagram/Snapchat post

Strengths:

Weaknesses:

Threats:

Opportunities:

Factsheet:

# Inspiring students to stay connected

R U OK?Day is about encouraging all people to look out for friends, family and teachers by regularly asking them “Are you OK?” and then listening to the answer. We don’t have to be an expert to do this because we all have the capacity to reach out and support anyone doing it tough. If you want to organise an event, there are some things you’ll need to think about to make sure it’s fun for everybody.

## How do I encourage other students to get involved?

R U OK?Day should be fun and inclusive. Here are suggestions to make the day a success in your school:

### 1. Encourage people to connect

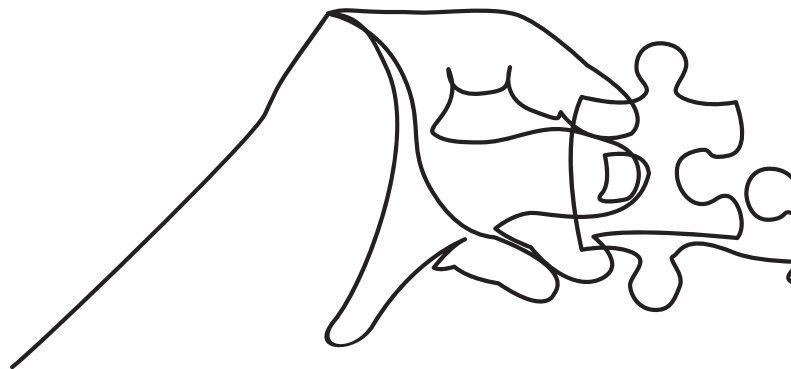
R U OK?Day is dedicated to educating people about how to reach out and ask the question “Are you OK?” You can help educate your friends by:

- Sharing some of our video materials (under the Resources for You section of the website)
- Introduce the school counselor and ask them to talk about the support they provide
- Introduce other local and national support services and ask them to talk about their services
- Talk about your commitment to the R U OK? message and why it’s important
- Invite a student leader to tell their personal story of connecting with someone and how it helped them deal with a difficult situation

### 2. Organise fun activities

R U OK?Day is about celebrating the importance of community and friendship in overcoming tough times. Below are some ways to get students involved:

- Organise an art competition or art stall around the theme ‘Conversations, community, connection’
- Organise teacher versus student sport matches, 3-legged races or face painting
- Host a food stall and invite people to bring a dish to share (you could also challenge people to only bring orange and yellow food)
- Organise a school concert



### 3. Create a splash of colour on the day

R U OK?Day's official colour is bright and happy and should be used on the day. Below are suggestions, just make sure you discuss with the Principal or teacher first:

- Encouraging students to incorporate the colour into their uniform (e.g. shirts, socks, hair band, ribbons)
- Yellow and orange chalk can be distributed so that students can write positive messages or draw the R U OK?Day logo on the sport court or footpaths
- Create an R U OK?Day poster to put up around school
- Create an R U OK? banner for the school entrance to welcome students on R U OK?Day (or every day!)
- Put up bunting around the school – you can either buy our official merchandise or buy yellow and orange bunting from a party shop
- Use orange and yellow disposable plates, cups and serviettes for a school morning tea

### 4. Document the day and inspire others

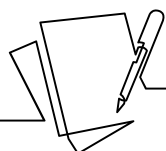
- Record a short video of the activity or take photographs of the activities and artwork created (make sure everyone involved is comfortable with having their involvement recorded)
- Share these with [hello@ruokday.com.au](mailto:hello@ruokday.com.au) or post on [facebook.com/ruokday](https://facebook.com/ruokday)

### 5. Get your teachers on board

Let relevant school staff at your school know at least a week in advance you are interested in running an activity for R U OK?Day and share the website details with them. Perhaps you could share the information at a staff meeting or or ask to put a poster up in the staff room.

#### Things to consider when organising an event

- What equipment do I need to run the activity?
- Where is the best space in the school for the activity?
- How many people will be involved in the activity?
- Which activities are best suited to my school community?
- Do I need help to run the activity? Who can I get to help me at school? Can I get my friends to help me organise and run the activity?
- Be flexible in your timing of the activity. If your school suggests another day of the week, or the school year to run an R U OK?Day activity, that's perfectly OK! Work with your school community to decide the best timing.



# R U OK? Day Planning Sheet

**Main idea:**

What message do we want to get across? Who do we want to communicate that message to?

**Activity:**

What event would help us share that message? How do we keep it fun and inclusive?

**Support:**

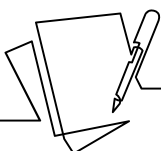
Who do we need help from?

**Extras:**

What costs are involved? How long will it last?  
What permissions do we need?

**Promotion:**

How do we tell others about our event?



# R U OK? Day Event Scaffold

**Name of activity:**

**Aims of activity:**

**Group leaders:**

**Which year groups will be involved?**

**How can we use social media to promote the idea?**

**What costs are involved?**

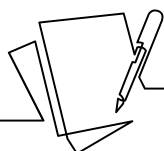
**What resources do we need?**

**How can we promote the event? (e.g. school newsletter, classroom flyers/posters etc.)**

**Leadership support: Which teachers do we need to ask/get support from?**

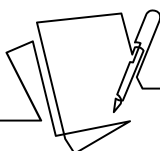
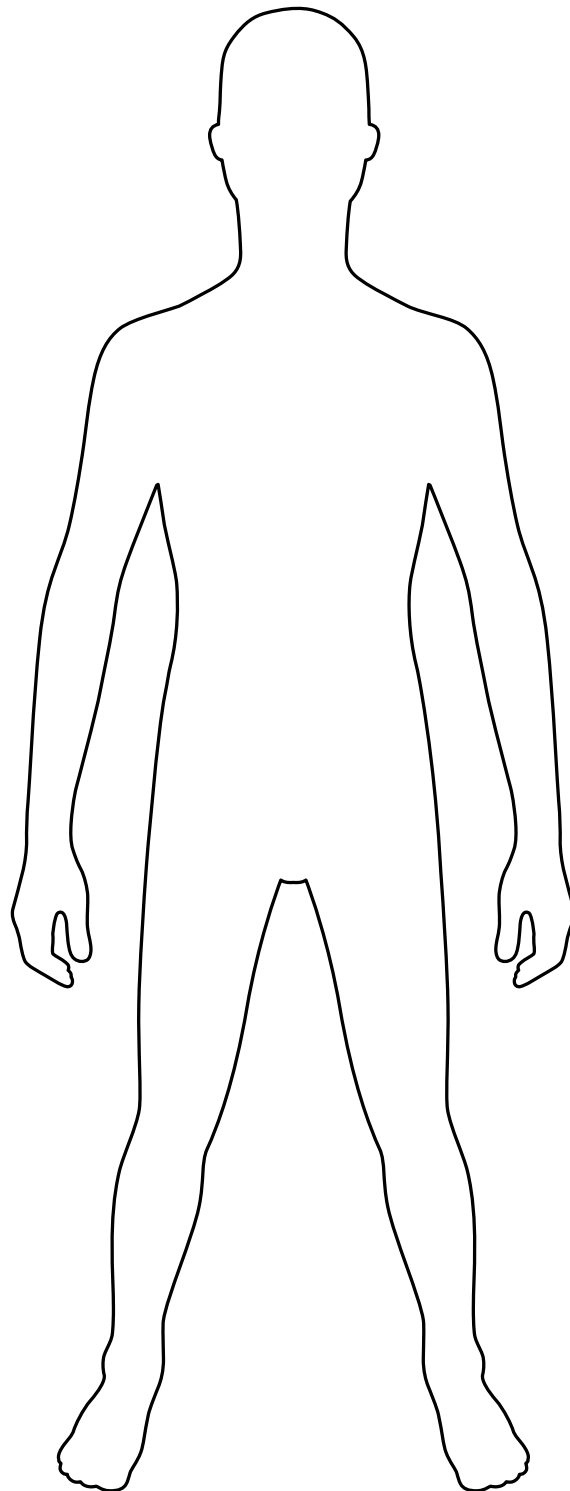
**What on-going support will this activity provide?**

**What precautions need to be taken to reduce environmental and learning disruptions?**



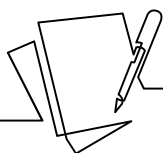
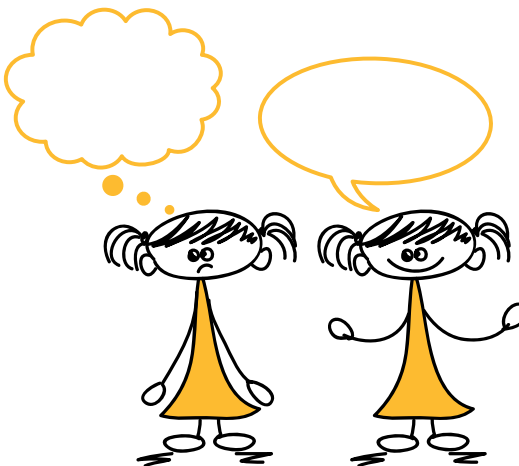
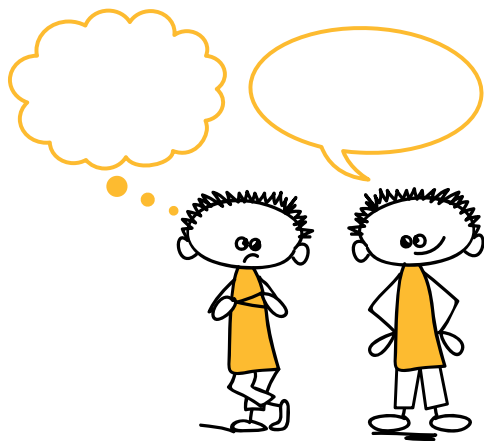
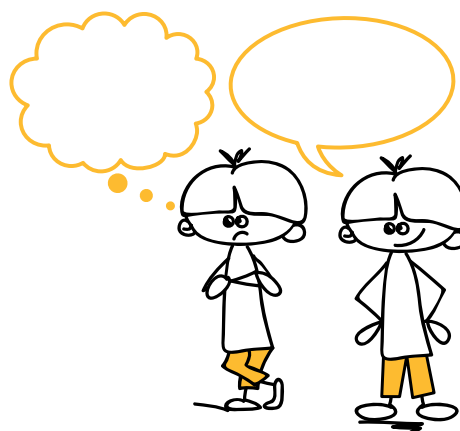
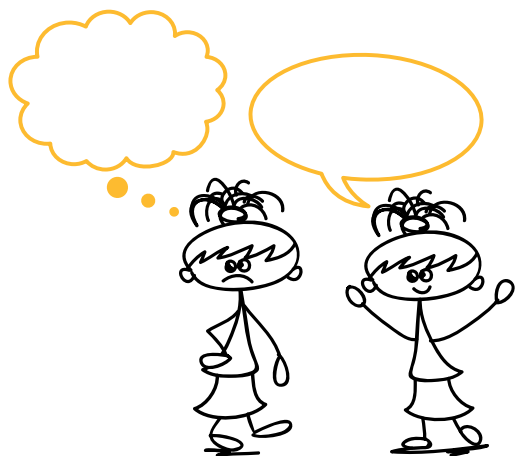
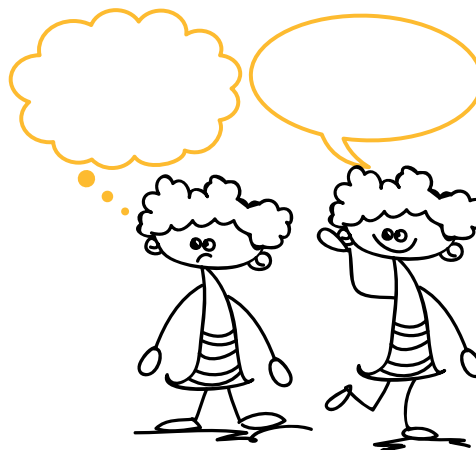
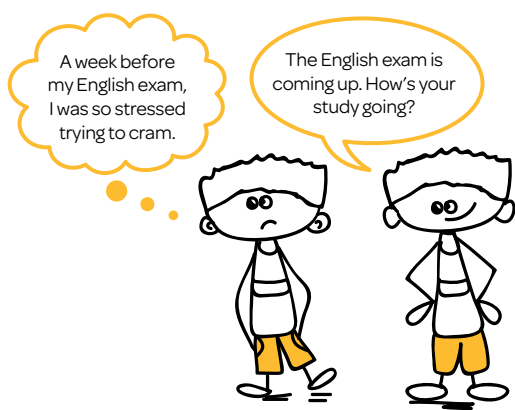
# Body Outline Worksheet

Identify the warning signs that might indicate someone's not OK. Draw or write the physiological changes that might occur.



# Personal Reflection Worksheet

In the thought bubbles, recall a time when you weren't OK. In the speech bubbles, suggest ways to ask someone experiencing a similar situation "Are you OK?"



# Role Play Scenarios

After watching the video, complete the scenarios below to support someone at school who's not OK. Sometimes you may need to direct them to an adult, the school counsellor or a professional.

## Scenario 1

**Ben:** The work has just got on top of me. I need to stay at home to get back on track.

**Suzie:** Perhaps there is a teacher at school you like who could help?

**Ben:**

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**Suzie:**

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## Scenario 2

**Ben:** Yeah, I'll be at school tomorrow for sure.

**(2 days later)**

**Suzie:** Sir, Ben isn't here again. I'm worried. That's 4 days in a row.

**Ben:**

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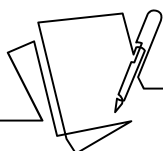
**Suzie:**

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# Role Play Scenarios

After watching the video, complete the scenarios below to support someone at school who's not OK. Sometimes you may need to direct them to an adult, the school counselor or a professional.

## Scenario 3

**Ben:** I can't do the science project. I just don't want to.

**Suzie:** Do you really not want to or do you need some help?

**Ben:**

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**Suzie:**

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## Scenario 4

**Ben:** So you've been off 2 days now. How long have you been feeling like this?

**Suzie:** Usually I just feel lonely. But now I feel empty and it's hard getting out of bed.

**Ben:**

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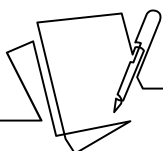
**Suzie:**

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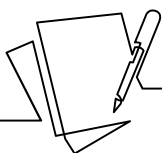
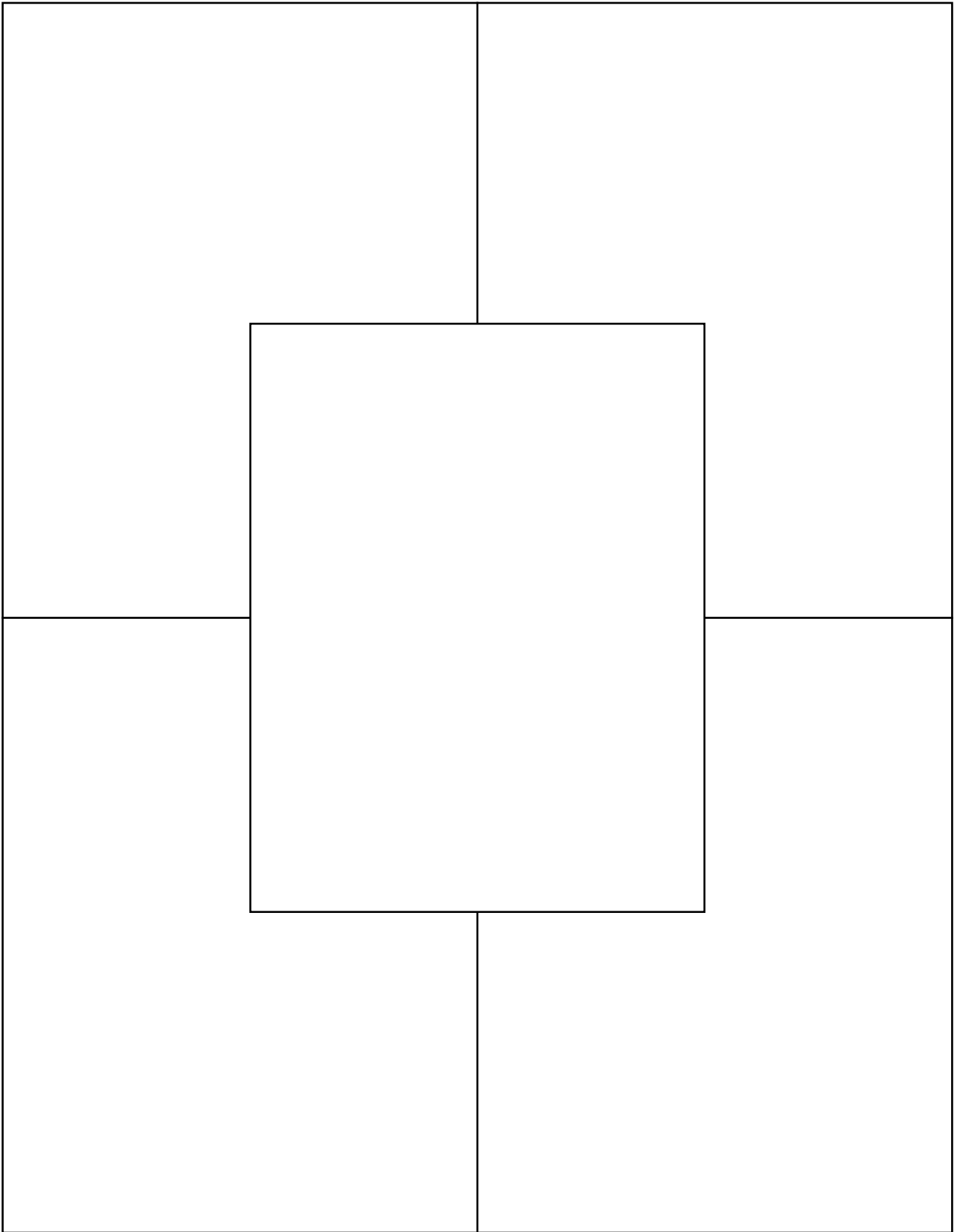
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# Placemat activity template



# Event Ideas



An R U OK? event aims to bring people together to demonstrate the power of conversation, learn the R U OK? four conversation steps, connect and get to know one another a little better. Some of the best conversations are ones which take place between people who trust and know one another. Here are some ideas to get you started (feel free to add your own twist):

- Host an R U OK? sausage sizzle, a breakfast, or a morning /afternoon tea and invite everyone along
- Host a team challenge event that brings people together and gets the conversation flowing
- Speed mating – similar to speed dating. Teams can practise asking questions of each other that they pull out of a hat such as, “What’s your happiest childhood memory?”, “What is the best advice you ever received and who gave it to you?”, “What’s a trip that changed your life?” and, of course, “Are you OK?”
- Task everyone with submitting old photos of themselves (e.g. as babies, school kids, doing their favourite thing), which are displayed on a wall where others must guess which photo is of which person
- Recruit roving “R U OK? Reporters” to interview people and create mini videos. Questions could include: “What’s the best conversation you ever had?”, “Who’s the person you know you can turn to in a tough situation?”, “What are the ingredients for a caring and supportive conversation?” and “What place do you like to head to for a chat with a mate?”
- Host a Wear-Yellow-Day
- Create “Conversation Corners” by flagging certain areas with yellow and black speech bubbles or bunting and set out tables and chairs to cater for groups of two
- Host a lunchtime music concert and invite someone to share their thoughts on the conversations that can make a difference
- Share your photos with [hello@ruok.org.au](mailto:hello@ruok.org.au)



Add a splash of yellow and reinforce the power of a conversation at your event.  
Check out R U OK?'s merchandise here: [store.ruok.org.au](https://store.ruok.org.au)

Register your event so we can support your efforts and share more resources with you: [ruok.org.au/events](https://ruok.org.au/events)



# Remember these 4 steps for an R U OK? conversation



**1. Ask R U OK?**



**2. Listen**



**3. Encourage action**



**4. Check in**