Ask R U OK?® ANY DAY



Build an R U OK? Culture in your football community

ruok.org.au



R U OK? is a suicide prevention charity and registered public health promotion that aims to inspire and empower people to meaningfully connect with friends, family and colleagues who might be struggling with life.

Professional Footballers Australia (The PFA) represents and collectively bargains for Australia's elite professional footballers, including the Socceroos, Matildas, A-League players and emerging talent in Australia and overseas. Run by players, for players, its mission is to support players and build the game.

The PFA provides players with development and wellbeing programs, which aims to enhance players' physical and mental health, along with legal representation and advice.

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Football brings players together

Football builds connection, camaraderie and a sense of belonging both on and off the pitch.

Together the PFA and R U OK? are encouraging every member of the football community, whether a current or past player to look out for one another.

Whether you’re on contract, between clubs, or transitioning out of the game, regular meaningful conversations can help someone who might be struggling feel connected and supported, long before they are in crisis.

If you spot the signs that a teammate might need support, trust your gut and **Ask R U OK? Any Day. A conversation could change a life.**

Building an R U OK? Culture

An R U OK? Culture is built on mutual respect, trust, authenticity and a willingness to support your teammates, both on and off the pitch. Everyone in the football community has a role to play in building genuine connections and an environment where players feel safe and supported. Building this culture isn't down to one person, it's a team effort.

These ten principles are your guide to the values and behaviours that build an R U OK? Culture within the football community.





"Life has so many distractions. We can miss the opportunity to check in about what's really going on. Check in and support each other in the ups and downs of life".

Joey Peters

110-time Matilda
R U OK? Player Champion

1. Life skills and self-esteem are encouraged and developed.
2. Teammates feel connected, supported and valued.
3. Kindness, compassion and respect guide how people treat one another.
4. Football is a positive and enjoyable experience for everyone involved.
5. Teams foster positive relationships built on trust and mutual respect.
6. Physical and emotional safety are prioritised.
7. People work together and support one another.
8. Individuals feel confident recognising when someone may be struggling.
9. Meaningful R U OK? conversations are encouraged and embraced.
10. A strong sense of connection and belonging exists throughout the football community.



Spot the signs it might be time for an R U OK? Conversation

It won't always be obvious when someone is off their game, but these signs might signal they need a little extra support.

WHAT ARE THEY SAYING?

Do they sound:

- Confused or irrational
- Angry or irritable
- Concerned they are a burden
- Concerned about the future
- Lonely or disengaged
- Excessively worried.

WHAT ARE THEY DOING?

Are they:

- Lacking motivation
- Not training or competing as they usually would
- Becoming disruptive in a team environment
- Experiencing changes in mood
- Dismissive or defensive
- Withdrawing or becoming less social
- Losing interest in what they used to enjoy
- Behaving differently online
- Making less effort in their appearance or personal hygiene
- Unable to concentrate
- Experiencing ongoing fatigue
- Lacking in confidence.

WHAT'S GOING ON IN THEIR LIFE?

Have they experienced:

- Relationship challenges
- Trauma
- Pressure at work or school
- Major health challenges or an injury
- Financial difficulties
- Change in life circumstances.



How to start an R U OK? Conversation



If you think someone might be struggling with life then it's time to trust your gut instinct and ask, 'are you OK?' The steps below will help you prepare for the conversation.



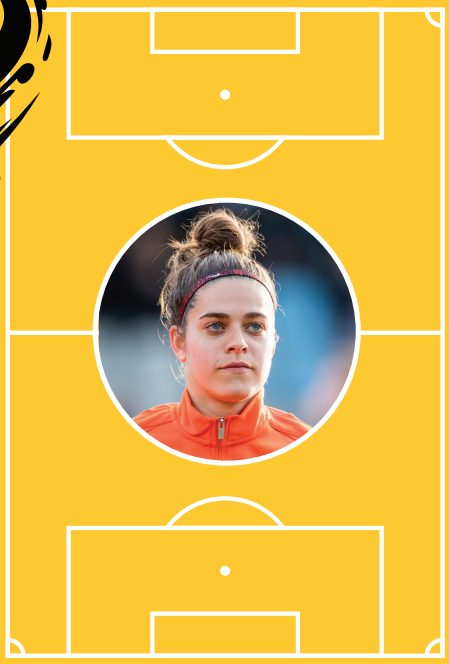
Ask yourself

- Are you in a good headspace?
- Are you willing to genuinely listen?
- Can you give as much time as needed?
- Are you the best person to have the conversation? If not, is there someone else in their support network you can encourage to reach out to them?



Be prepared

- Remember you won't have all the answers (and that's OK).
- Listening is one of the most important things you can do.
- If someone is talking about personal struggles it can be difficult and they might become emotional, defensive, embarrassed or upset.
- Have you researched what appropriate support is available for the person you're talking to?



"As teammates, you see each other on a day-to-day basis. More than you see your own family and friends, in most cases. If you notice a teammate's behaviour being off, and you have capacity to do so, ask them if they are okay. It can make a real difference to someone's day, and it helps build a stronger connection between yourself and your teammates."

Tessel Middag

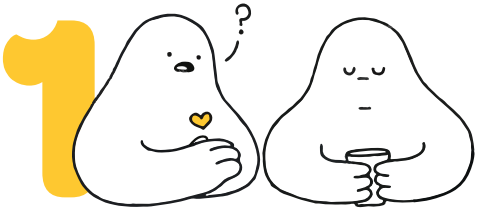
44-time Netherlands International
R U OK? Player Champion



Pick your moment

- Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and informal where they'll feel comfortable?
- You don't want to rush the conversation so make sure you both have enough time.
- If they can't talk when you approach them, try to confirm another time to have a conversation.
- Consider whether the person might prefer to be side-by-side with you e.g. walking together, rather than face-to-face.

The 4 Steps of an R U OK? Conversation



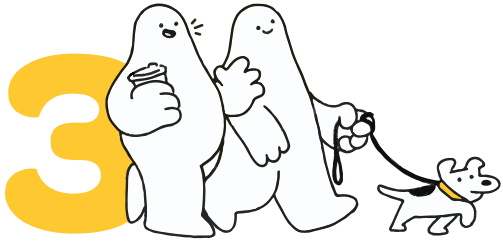
Ask R U OK?

- Be relaxed.
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How are you travelling?" or "What's been happening?" or "I've noticed you haven't been yourself at training lately, is there something you want to chat about?"
- Make an observation. Mention specific things that have made you concerned about them, like "I've noticed that you seem really tired recently."
- If they don't want to talk, let them know that you care and that you're available whenever they need a listening ear – you could say, "Is there someone else you'd be comfortable talking to?"



Listen with an open mind

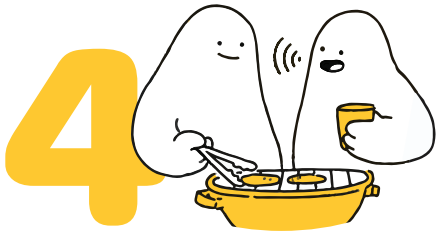
- Emphasise that you're here to listen not judge.
- Take what they say seriously.
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation.
- If they need time to think, try and sit patiently with the silence.
- Encourage them to explain.
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally.
- Let them know you're asking because you're concerned.



Encourage action

If someone answers, "No, I'm not OK"

- Ask them: "Where do you think we can go from here?"
- Ask: "What would be a good first step we can take?"
- Ask: "What do you need from me? How can I help?"
- You could ask: "Do you think it would be useful if we look into finding some professional or other support?"
- Good options for action might include talking to family, a trusted friend, a doctor or a crisis support service.



Check in

- Remember to check in and see how the person is doing in a few days time.
- Ask how they're coping with the situation or if they need support to manage it.
- If they haven't done anything, keep encouraging them and remind them you're always there if they need a chat.
- Understand that it might take a long time for someone to be ready to seek professional help.
- Try to reinforce the benefits of talking to a doctor or other support services.



"Asking R U OK? any day is important because people's struggles don't follow a schedule.

Being asked R U OK? made me feel noticed and cared for at a time when I was finding things difficult. It gave me permission to be honest instead of simply saying I was fine. Having someone listen helped me feel less alone and reminded me that I didn't have to manage everything by myself.

It also taught me the importance of checking in with others. Asking R U OK? may seem like a small gesture, but it can open the door to an important conversation and let someone know that their wellbeing matters"

David Clarkson

National Soccer League Champion
R U OK? Player Champion

A simple, genuine check-in can:

- Help someone feel seen, supported, and less alone
- Create a safe opening for them to talk about what they're experiencing
- Encourage them to seek support before things become overwhelming
- Strengthen relationships and reduce stigma around mental health
- Remind people that support is available.

A meaningful check-in is more than asking once. Listen without judgement, take their response seriously, and follow up later.

What if they say "I'm fine" but you're still concerned?

- Tell them you care about them and you're concerned about the changes in their behaviour.
- Ask again, you could say "It's just you don't seem like yourself lately."
- If you're still concerned check in with them again soon.
- Reach out to someone else who is close to that person to see if they've noticed changes. You can encourage them to also check in.
- It's important to remember that it can take time for someone to open up to you. You might need to ask 'are you OK?' a few times before they feel comfortable talking about what's going on in their world.



Useful contacts – Australia

If you are concerned for your safety or the safety of others, seek immediate assistance by calling Triple Zero (000).

If you're finding life tough or need some extra support, it can help to talk about how you're feeling with someone you trust.

Family and friends can also call the services below for advice and assistance on how to support someone who is struggling with life.

Lifeline (24/7)
13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue (24/7)
1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service (24/7)
1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mensline (24/7)
1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

Kids Helpline (24/7)
(for ages 5-25)
1800 55 1800
kidshelpline.com.au

13 YARN (24/7)
13 92 76
13yarn.org.au
Support line for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples

QLife (3pm-midnight)
1800 184 527
qlife.org.au
Anonymous, free LGBTIQ support

1800RESPECT (24/7)
1800 737 732
1800respect.org.au

More contacts:
ruok.org.au/findhelp

For additional information on how to access Australia's most trusted mental health service providers, visit **medicarementalhealth.gov.au**

Useful contacts – New Zealand

If you are concerned for your safety or the safety of others, seek immediate assistance by calling Triple One (111).

Lifeline Aotearoa
(7am - midnight)
0800 543 354
Free text 4357
lifeline.org.nz

1737 (24/7)
Call or text 1737
1737.org.nz

Youthline (24/7)
(for ages 12 to 24 years)
0800 376 633
Text 234
youthline.co.nz

Depression Helpline (24/7)
0800 111 757
Text 4202
depression.org.nz

OutLine NZ (6pm-9pm)
0800 688 5463
outline.org.nz
Anonymous, free
LGBTIQ support

More contacts:
ruok.org.nz/findhelp



PFA members can access the PFA's counselling or psychological services

The Mind Room
+61 3 9495 6261
hello@themindroom.com.au

Members can also contact their Player Development Manager who will arrange a referral.

R U OK?®

A conversation could change a life.