

# R U OK? DAY: A TOOLKIT FOR EMPLOYEES

## What is R U OK? Day?

R U OK day is a national day of action dedicated to reminding people to ask family, friends and colleagues, 'Are you okay?' The purpose is to inspire and empower everyone to meaningfully connect with people around them on a regular basis to make a difference to anyone who might be struggling. It's a way for us to reach out and demonstrate that we genuinely care.

However, the spirit of R U OK? goes beyond the day itself. It's about embracing these conversations as a part of our culture and how we work collectively to support each other. Connecting with others in a meaningful way helps support our wellbeing, improve our relationships and build a sense of belonging and purpose.

This R U OK? guide provides some practical tools and strategies for us to have these wellbeing conversations every day. We all have the right to work in a safe, inclusive and respectful environment where we feel and supported. We encourage everyone across the Department to have these wellbeing conversations with their colleagues. These conversations are a great way for all of us to build on the Whole of Victorian Government [Mental Health and Wellbeing Charter](#) and play an active role in creating positive wellbeing experiences within our teams.

## How can you use R U OK? Day to support your team's wellbeing?

### Having regular wellbeing conversations

- We can all make a difference by having regular, meaningful conversations about life's ups and downs with our colleagues.
- We all go through times when we might be struggling to cope with the multiple demands placed on us – both in and outside of work.
- If you notice that someone's not travelling well, take the time to ask how they're going.
- You don't have to be an expert to have a caring, meaningful conversation.
- Follow the R U OK? four steps:
  1. Ask R U OK?
  2. Listen with an open mind
  3. Encourage action
  4. Check in
- For more tips on having the conversation, visit the ['How to Ask'](#) page.

### Things you can do to celebrate R U OK? Day

Many teams like to get together for morning or afternoon tea – it gives people the opportunity to talk to each other about things that aren't directly related to work, to get to know each other a little bit more.

Your event doesn't need to be a morning tea – you can invent whatever event you like. In fact, if it's an event you can do regularly throughout the year, even better.

Some ideas might be:

- host a wellbeing activity for your team (please refer to the Appendix for a simple activity that you could use to start a wellbeing discussion in your team)
- place event posters around the noticeboards, kitchens and other relevant areas
- get your colleagues involved to help plan an event on the day (e.g. – have a morning tea/ picnic/barbeque, organise a team walk or a quick game of cricket, etc.)

- promote your event using tips and resources from the official [R U OK?](#) site
- to organise catering for your event please check with your Business/Office Manager and refer to [DET's policy for external catering](#). If your preference is to keep it more personal, ask everyone to bring a plate to share

## **R U OK? everyday ideas to consider to keep the message alive**

- Welcome new and returning team members over morning coffee, team lunch, during team meetings.
- Assign mentor or 'buddy' to new and returning members; look for volunteer mentors or buddies from other teams within your area to vary conversations.
- Support meaningful 'shadowing opportunities' for staff who would like to develop new skills, share their knowledge and skills, and interact with other areas or people.
- Promote a weekly 'time-out' morning tea or lunchtime activity such as trivia, crosswords, share photos, share stories.
- Form a social committee to keep the fun activities, charity events, team milestones, celebrations rolling all year long.
- Build relationships with your colleagues – remember to say hello and goodbye each day or thank you when someone has helped you. These simple gestures may mean the difference between someone communicating with you when in need.

## **Supporting materials available for wellbeing and *RUOK?* Day**

- [RUOK? website](#), [including posters](#), a [practical guide for the workplace](#) and [other everyday resources](#)
- [Top tips to safely approach RUOK day](#)
- The Department employee [health, safety and wellbeing resources](#) site
  - Employee Assistance Program (1300 361 008)
  - Manager Assist (1300 361 008)
  - Conflict Resolution Support Service (1300 687 633)
  - Employee Conduct Branch (9637 2594 or 9637 2595)

## APPENDIX: A wellbeing starter activity for your team

### Think, Pair, Share, Care

#### Instructions

This simple activity is designed to get teams talking about wellbeing and generate some helpful insights into how we can all build a more supportive and caring environment for each other.

This activity may help team members to better:

- understand how their colleagues respond under pressure
- be more aware of the signs when their colleagues aren't travelling well
- identify ways to support each other within the team

This activity can be run as part of a team meeting and requires 45 minutes to run. Please print out a copy of the Wellbeing Activity Worksheet for each participant prior to the session.

Please note, this activity is better suited for teams with up to 10 team members.

It can be led by any member of the team using the steps below:

1. Set the introduction and context
  - We all go through times when we might be struggling to cope with the multiple demands placed on us – both in and outside of work.
  - As individuals, we all have different ways of responding to the pressures and challenges life throws at us.
  - Similarly, our idea of what support looks like can also vary significantly (e.g., some of us may seek out support from others, while some of us may withdraw from people to have time to reflect and process before talking about it).
  - It's important to understand and respect each other's different coping styles to be better equipped to support each other more effectively within our team.
  - Through this simple exercise, we will first take some time to reflect on how we each cope under pressure, and then share our reflections with others in our team.
  - We will then identify what support looks like for each of us, so that as a team, we are better equipped to support each other.
  - **It is important to keep in mind that some of the things we discuss and share today may be quite personal. Please treat any information shared as part of this activity with respect and trust.**

2. Use the activity instructions and questions provided as part of the worksheet to run the session.

Remember to have on hand a list of resources for people who might need to access further support. We recommend reminding your colleagues about the range of supports available through the [Department employee health, safety and wellbeing resources](#) page.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Please do not use the Wellbeing Activity Worksheet below without setting the relevant context for the session (as described above). Without the right introduction and context, the activity may lose its impact.**

# WELLBEING ACTIVITY WORKSHEET

## Step 1: Think

We all have different ways in which we respond under pressure.

Spend **5 minutes** reflecting on and answering the following questions.

### My response to pressure

**When I'm under pressure (focus on a work related pressure like meeting tight deadlines)....**

<b><i>I feel...</i></b> How do you respond physically and emotionally?	<b><i>I act...</i></b> How do you typically behave or act?	<b><i>Others notice...</i></b> What do others notice about you when you're under pressure?

### What makes me feel supported

**When I'm under pressure, I feel supported when.....**

<b><i>I do.....</i></b> What strategies do you personally draw on to look after yourself?	<b><i>Others do.....</i></b> What kind of actions from others around you may help you feel supported?

## Step 2: Pair

Now, turn to the person next to you and discuss what you've listed in Step 1.

Listen openly and reflect on what you're hearing when your colleague speaks.

Ask for examples to better understand the context and clarify.

Allow **10 minutes** for this activity (5 minutes each).

## Step 3: Share

Get back to the broader team.

Each person will now share what they have learnt about their colleague during Step 2, including:

- How do they typically react under pressure?
- What have you learnt about how best to support this colleague under pressure?

Allow 15 minutes for this activity allowing each person to share key insights about their colleague.

## Step 4: Care

As a final step, think about how you can apply what you have learnt about your team members to how you work every day.

1. What can you do as a team to build stronger relationships with each other?
2. What are some activities you can do as a team to better support each other?
3. Identify 3 things:
  - **You** will do differently as a result of this session
  - **The team** can do differently as a result of this session
4. Allow **15 minutes** for this activity.