

GET TALKING ACTION PLAN

Sometimes, when we want to reach out to someone and check on how they're doing, it can be hard to know where to start! This action plan is a resource you can use to help you navigate those conversations to make them feel safe and supported.

Where will you have the conversation?

Sometimes, when we notice someone is struggling, all we want to do is immediately reach out and check in. While a great sentiment, ensuring we're starting the conversation somewhere that is appropriate and safe can make all the difference in whether someone feels comfortable opening up.

Things to consider:

- Try to be somewhere that is private and away from where someone may distract you
- Pick a location that feels safe for you and the person you're supporting
- It doesn't have to be somewhere you sit down and stay, it may be a quiet park that you can stroll side by side while you talk.

What have you noticed?

Think about what signs made you think that the person you're reaching out to might not be okay. When you start the conversation, try sticking to signs that you can see and hear. For example:

- Behavioural signs - more/less frequent socialising, more aggressive, more risk taking, quieter, more withdrawn
- Physical signs - weight loss/gain, changes in exercise habits, looking excessively tired.

How will you ask?

Often, our automatic go-to question is something along the lines of "you all good?", but sometimes a closed-ended question like the one above can mean it's way easier for someone to respond with "yeah" when they really may not be. That's why it's good to ask an open-ended question, so that we give people the opportunity to open up about how they're really feeling.

Some open-ended questions might include:

- What's been going on?
- How have you been feeling?
- What's been bothering you?

What happens if they don't open up?

If someone is not ready to open up, this does not mean you have failed to support this person. It's important to acknowledge that you can only do what you can do. You've shown them you care and that when/if they're ready, you're there to listen.

What happens if they open up?

What if I don't know how to help?' Remember, your job is not to 'solve' or 'fix', it's simply to be there, validate, understand and help them feel safe. If someone has opened up to you and wants to find further support, you may be able to help them find the support they're looking for. Some valuable resources include:

- For further information: check out batyr.com.au/get-support to find a comprehensive list of support services and resources.
- For formal support: a GP for a mental health care plan (with telehealth options).

Who will I debrief with afterwards?

Supporting someone through a tough time requires a lot of empathy, so it's important to ensure that you have the structures in place to support you too. One useful strategy is identifying a safe person you can reach out to, to debrief how the experience made you feel, and help support you in ensuring you are using self-care strategies to recharge.

This may be:

- A friend
- A parent
- A community member.

CONVERSATION ACTION PLAN

Where will you have the conversation?

(Think about time and place)

What have you noticed?

(Stick to what you can see)

What happens if they don't open up?

(How can you show you care?)

How will you ask?

(Ask an open-ended question)

Who will I debrief with afterwards?

(Who or what is a safe space right now?)

What happens if they open up?

(What services are available?)

Example Conversation Starters

"Hey, I saw that you're not doing _____ as much as you used to - how can I help make that easier for you?"

"Hey, I've noticed that you seem to have a lot more on your plate than usual. I'm happy to talk or listen and see if I can help"

"Hey! I've missed you at _____, how have you been going?"

"Hey, I've noticed you haven't been yourself lately - perhaps we could catch up on _____"

"Hey, you've been staying up pretty late and going out more than usual, what's been on your mind?"

"Hey, I've noticed that you haven't been showing up to _____, what's been going on? I would love to support you if I can"