

# ruok? day

## How to start a conversation

### 1. ask are you okay?

- Start a general conversation somewhere private.
- Build trust through good eye contact, open and relaxed body language.
- Ask open-ended questions to discuss concerns based on their behaviour. E.g., 'What's been happening? How are you going?' 'I've noticed that... What's going on for you at the moment?'

### 2. Listen without judgement

- Guide the conversation with caring questions. The more they talk the better. A problem shared is a problem halved.
- Don't rush to solve problems for them. It is better to have a full understanding of the issues.
- Listen to the person without judging them. They are trying to cope as best they can.
- Don't give advice like "cheer up" or "pull yourself together" or "you'll be right mate".
- It is important to let them know that it is good they are discussing it. E.g., 'How has that made you feel?' 'How long have you felt this way? Have you talked to anyone about this?'

### 3. Encourage action

- Summarise the issues and ask them what they plan to do.
- Encourage them to take one step, such as see their doctor.
- It is essential to follow up. Nothing changes until someone acts. E.g., 'What do you think might help your situation?' 'Have you considered making an appointment with your doctor?'

### 4. Follow up

- People who are really struggling often find it difficult to take action. Therefore, it is very important to follow up on how they are going.
- Put a note in your diary to call them in one week. If they are desperate, follow up with them sooner.
- Ask if they have managed to take that first step and see someone. E.g., 'How are things going? Did you speak with your doctor?' 'What did they suggest? What did you think of their advice?'