



SUPPORTING OTHERS IN TIMES OF UNCERTAINTY

COVID-19 is an evolving situation that has changed the way we live, work and connect with family, friends and colleagues. Each day, we learn new ways of adapting to COVID-19. Everything from working from home to physical distancing and separation from our loved ones.

Making these changes can take a significant toll and impact the way we think, feel and act. If someone you know needs some extra support, we've put together some tips to help you reach out and start a conversation.



Practical tips

- **Stay connected.** Keep in touch via phone, video conferencing and online platforms. Consider routinely checking in with others – e.g. scheduling activities such as sharing a virtual lunch or dinner with friends, family and colleagues.
- **Recognise the signs.** Be aware of behaviour changes, such as tone of voice, loss of focus and/or no longer participating during check-ins. Others may show signs of feeling overwhelmed, scared, confused or angry.
- **Help others focus on what they can control.** Be positive and encourage self-care. Talk through a daily routine that supports healthy habits, such as getting enough sleep, eating well and engaging in relaxing activities.
- **Show support and acknowledge their experience.** Be accepting and non-judgemental. Take the time to listen and ask what would help them feel more supported.
- **Know your boundaries and when to seek outside support.** If someone needs professional support, talk to them about the services available. Use the helpful services listed below.
- **Check in with yourself.** It can be difficult to see someone in distress. Make sure you take care of yourself.



This fact sheet is designed to help:

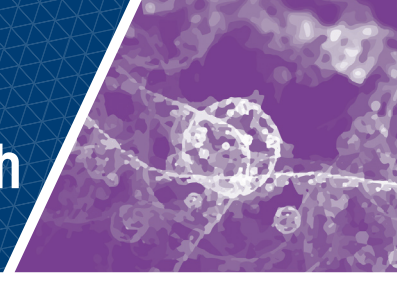
- Parents and families*
- Friends and community members
- Managers and colleagues

*This guidance is a useful starting point for talking with children about COVID-19.



Support services

- [Beyond Blue: 1300 22 4636, COVID-19 guidance](#)
- [Lifeline: 13 11 14, COVID-19 guidance](#)
- [R U OK?: conversation tips, flow chart](#)
- [Heads Up strategies for healthy workplaces](#)
- [Supporting children during COVID-19](#)

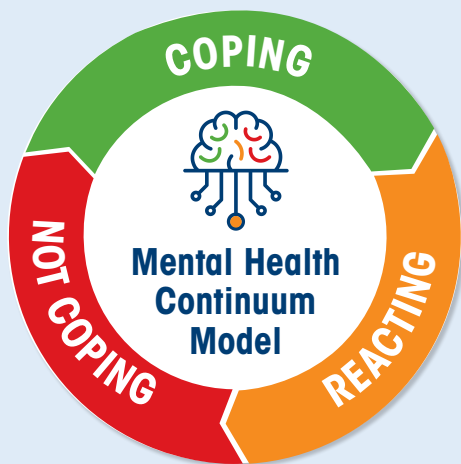


STARTING THE CONVERSATION



When you are worried about someone it can help to reach out and have a conversation. Find a good time, consider talking about any changes you've noticed and ask if they would like some extra support.

Remember, it is possible to form meaningful connections over technology platforms while we maintain physical distancing during COVID-19. You can use the mental health continuum to guide you when someone seems like they're not ok.



Coping

- Do they sound well and are they staying connected?
- Do they seem able to focus, be productive and maintain a healthy routine?
- **ACTION:** Keep checking in and stay connected.

Reacting

- Do they sound sad, overly anxious, overwhelmed, angry or preoccupied?
- Do they seem unable to concentrate, less engaged or withdrawn?
- **ACTION:** Reach out and offer other supports if needed - trusted friend, colleague or refer to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

Not Coping

- Are they acting differently and/or sound like they are not themselves?
- Do they seem excessively distressed, anxious, hopeless and/or indicating they feel nothing will improve?
- **ACTION:** Ask if they need some support. Encourage professional help from their GP, counsellor, psychologist, EAP or other services.



Conversation tips

- **Acknowledge their feelings.** 'It sounds like this is a tough time for you.'
- **Ask open questions.** 'You've had a rough time, how are you going?'
- **Re-phrase what they say.** 'It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed and uncertain, did I understand that right?'
- **Don't provide solutions.** 'What have you found helps you in times like this?'
- **Some people may not want to talk.** 'I am always available if you want to talk.'
- **Make a warm referral.** 'I want to help. If you like, I can connect you with a support service.'