

# R U OK ?

6<sup>th</sup> Edition

## In this edition:

R U OK?

Things to consider before asking RUOK?

Preparing to talk

Show you are listening

Avoid temptation to fix everything

Free Apps

Carer supports for people looking after someone with a mental illness

Some Mental Health Symptoms to look out for to prompt RUOK conversation

Do they seem:

Confused/irrational

Moody

Unable to switch off

Worried about the future

Feeling like a burden

Lonely/Lacking self-esteem

Are they showing:

Mood swings

Appear withdrawn

Unable to concentrate

Changed sleep patterns

Changed online behaviour

What's Going on?

Relationship issues

Health issues

Work pressures

Financial Difficulty

Loss of someone or

something they care about.

Source: <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

# Parenting During Covid-19

## R U OK?

RUOK Day was 10<sup>th</sup> September 2020 and many schools focused on RUOK activities. Never before has this day been as important for Victorians, as this year. Most of us during 2020 have felt at times anxious, disappointment, loneliness, worried, overwhelmed or experienced grief. With the recent events of bushfires and Covid-19 many of us are assessing our mental health or worried about someone else's mental health. For many people this will be the first time they have experienced mental health symptoms or reached out to a mental health service. Usually friends and family will notice changes in the person they care about but aren't sure what to do.

A survey conducted in 2019 found 'In the last 12 months 51% of Australians wished someone had asked them if they were Ok?' This indicates many people struggle to put their hand out for help, however if asked they would have shared how they felt.



Beyond Blue research indicates '¼ of Australians will experience an anxiety condition in their lifetime, this is the equivalent of 4.96 million people today.' We all know someone who has suffered from anxiety or depression in their lifetime, however many of us feel nervous discussing mental health with family and friends.

Covid-19 has increased discussions and media coverage of mental health, learning about it and the services available have become increasingly accessible. Many people may consider asking family and friends if they are OK?

**Before asking anyone if they are OK, please consider the following:**

Am I feeling OK and do I have the energy at the moment?

Am I prepared if they say they aren't Ok?

Do I have the time and energy to listen to the person I am concerned about?

If you answer No to the above questions that is Ok and it's probably best to leave it at the moment. RUOk day is a day, nothing stops us from checking in at another time. Now is probably the time to prioritise your mental health.

# Mental Health Support Agencies



<https://www.ruok.org.au/>

[https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/RUOKday\\_Posters\\_297x420\\_Long%20.pdf](https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/RUOKday_Posters_297x420_Long%20.pdf)

Click the links for more tips and info about asking RUOK



<https://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au>



Ph: 1800 512 348

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au>



Ph: 1800 650 890.

Provides fact sheets, blogs and courses for parents and youth 12-25 years. Family clinicians available.

## Preparing to talk:

Asking someone if they are Ok during stage 4 restrictions will be different this year. If the person is not in your household, you may need to plan a walk with the person you are concerned about. Two people can meet and walk together if they are in your 5km radius.

You may need to plan a facetime or ordinary call to check in with your friend or family member. Give yourself time and make the call when you are feeling relaxed, consider when might be a good time for your friend to talk. Calling as they are preparing the family dinner is not a good time.



Be relaxed and be yourself, this will show you genuinely care. You decide how you want to ask the person if they are Ok? It can be as simple as 'How are you?' or if you are really worried, perhaps say. 'I've noticed you don't seem yourself lately, I'm worried about you, Are you Ok?'

**Be mindful you have planned this conversation, the person you ask if they are Ok? may be caught off guard and not be ready to talk. They may not want to talk to you. Don't force the conversation and respect their right to decline engaging in this conversation.**

Don't force a conversation if the person doesn't want to engage, change the topic and move on. Let them know you care and are available for them if they need you or want to talk at another time.

Don't take offence if they don't want to talk to you and avoid arguments with the person. They won't engage with you in the future if you are critical of them.

## Show you are Listening:

Avoid the temptation to rush the conversation or interrupt the person, give them time to collect their thoughts.

Repeat or paraphrase what they have said, to show them you are listening and have understood.

If you are on a facetime call, look at the camera, nod, use facial expressions to show you are actively listening. Resist the urge to multitask whilst on facetime.

## Avoid the temptation to fix everything:

As a friend it is not your job to fix how the other person feels. This is an unrealistic expectation and set you both up for failure. Sometimes it is enough to listen and show you care. Perhaps you could organise another catch up or suggest the person takes some time out to do what they enjoy.

## Lifeline

**Call 000 if you are in immediate danger**

**Lifeline**

**13 11 14**

24hrs 7 days a week, call to talk to counsellors if you feel suicidal.

**0477 131 114**

Text only service if it is too hard to talk. 6pm-midnight 7days

**Crisis online Chat**

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/get-help/online-services/crisis-chat>

Follow the link for online chat 7pm-midnight 7 days

**Interpreter Service for Lifeline:**

**131 450**

Ask to talk to lifeline in the language you would prefer.

Parenting During Covid-19 newsletter, written by

Kate Roberts

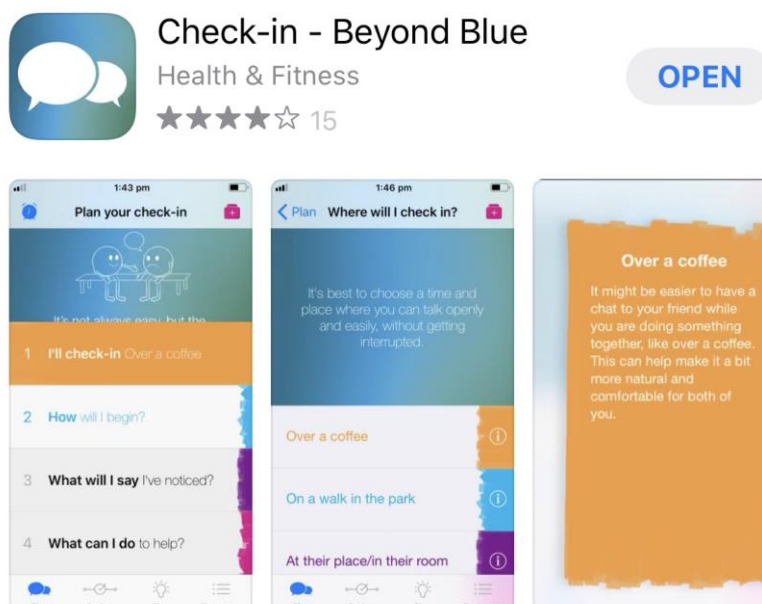
Adolescent Health Nurse (RN Div 1)

If they say they are struggling, recommend they call their GP for a telehealth appointment or suggest they contact a mental health organisation; these are listed in the green bar.

If your friend indicates they are suicidal, and in immediate danger this is an **emergency please call 000** for assistance. If they have felt suicidal however are not in immediate danger, recommend they call Lifeline and have the number if they need to speak to counsellor.

## Free Apps

Beyond Blue have created a free app to help you plan your check in, it gives you helpful tips, links to resources and can give you reminders to check in. If you like to be prepared this could be a helpful app for you.



## Final Word

Never underestimate the power of showing someone you care by asking 'Are you OK?' This could be the conversation starter that gives someone you care about the chance to really talk about how they are. In 2020 many people are experiencing loneliness and mental health symptoms; they may welcome your genuine concern. For those caring for loved ones with mental health illness, please see the list of services you can engage with to support you during this time.

## References

Beyond Blue,2020. Statistics,[webpage] <https://www.beyondblue.org.au/media/statistics> accessed 7/9/2020

RUOK, 2020 Trust the signs, ask RUOK?, [webpage] <https://www.ruok.org.au/signs> accessed 7/9/20

RUOK, 2019 Omnibus Report 2019. [webpage] [https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/RUOK\\_OmnibusReport\\_2019](https://irp-cdn.multiscreensite.com/22b3e3c9/files/uploaded/RUOK_OmnibusReport_2019) accessed 7/9/20

## Supports for Parents and Carers'

Caring for someone who is struggling with mental health illness or other disorders can be exhausting and lonely at times. Finding someone you can trust, confide in and who will listen can be challenging. Support services are available in the community. When engaging with a support service you will speak with professionals or individuals who have a lived experience of caring for someone with a mental illness. Please see this list of services you can access for support, not all services are the same, so try a few to find the right one for you.

<b>Alcohol and Drug Support Groups</b>	
<p><b>ARCHES Ringwood Support Group</b></p> <p>Ph: 1300 660 068 or Just turn up</p> <p>(Not operating during stage 4 restrictions. Call to confirm dates for recommencing)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Is Someone you care about using alcohol and / or drugs?</li><li>• <b>When:</b> 2nd and 4th Wednesday of each month</li><li>• <b>Time:</b> 6.30pm – 8.30pm</li><li>• Community Room, Bendigo Community Bank, 62 Railway Ave, Ringwood East</li></ul>
<p><b>Parenting Support Group</b></p> <p>Ph Leigh 0427 975 071 or email <a href="mailto:Leigh.Davidson@angicare.vic.org.au">Leigh.Davidson@angicare.vic.org.au</a> for current program dates</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• For individuals supporting someone using drugs or experiencing alcohol issues</li></ul>
<p><b>SHARC Self Help Addiction &amp; Resource Centre</b></p> <p>Ph: 1300 660 068</p> <p><a href="https://www.sharc.org.au/family-drug-help/family-drug-helpline/helpline-resources/">https://www.sharc.org.au/family-drug-help/family-drug-helpline/helpline-resources/</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• SHARC provides the Family Drug Helpline and gambling resources</li><li>• Providing support to families managing a family or friends alcohol and drug use.</li></ul>

## ASD Supports

### Spectrum Journeys

<https://spectrumjourneys.org.au/carer-services-overview>

Ph: 0491 066 698

Monday - Thursday 9am - 2:00pm  
Closed Friday, Saturday & Sunday  
(This may differ to therapy hours)

- Autism specific support resources
- blogs and resources for carers of ASD children
- Counselling for carers also available

## Mental Health Support Services

### Beyond Blue

<https://www.beyondblue.org.au/>

<https://online.beyondblue.org.au/#/chat/questions1>  
webchat daily 3pm-12am

Ph: 1300 224 636 24hours/7days

- Online chats
- Phone support and counsellors
- Fact sheets and resources
- Links to other services

### Butterfly Foundation

<https://butterfly.org.au/get-support/helpline/>

Ph 1800 334 673 8am-midnight 7 days

- Advice and support regarding eating disorders and body image concerns.
- This is available if you are concerned for yourself or for someone else.

### Carers Australia

<https://www.carersaustralia.com.au/>

Ph: 1300 242 636

- This is a service for all carers, including those caring for people with mental health illnesses.

### Carer Gateway

<https://www.carergateway.gov.au/>

Ph: 1800 422 737 8am-6pm Mon-Fri

- Speak to a counsellor
- Online coaching & learning modules available free
- Online carer chat forums
- Online webinar for parents with their own mental health challenges

<p><b>Child Youth Mental Health Service</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/mental-health-services/child-youth-mental-health-service-cymhs">https://www.easternhealth.org.au/services/mental-health-services/child-youth-mental-health-service-cymhs</a></p> <p>Ph: 1300 342 255 select option 2 or on weekends/afterhours for urgent calls: 1300 721 927</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health service for children and young people up to the age of 24 years who are displaying symptoms of psychiatric disorder or severe emotional and behavioural disturbance.</li> <li>• The service is available to families who live in the central and outer eastern region of Melbourne.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Headspace</b></p> <p><a href="https://headspace.org.au/">https://headspace.org.au/</a></p> <p>Ph: 1800 650 890</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Headspace has family clinicians available to support you with parenting or managing your teens mental health</li> <li>• Answering your questions regarding Mental Health and discuss any concerns you may have about your family members</li> <li>• Headspace have blogs, fact sheets for youth, friends and family.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Lifeline</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.lifeline.org.au/">https://www.lifeline.org.au/</a></p> <p>Ph: 13 11 14 available 7 days a week 24 hours a day. If you believe someone's life is in danger call 000.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lifeline has fact sheets</li> <li>• Counsellors available for people experiencing thoughts of suicide</li> <li>• Supports carers who are worried and wanting information about how to support the person they care about.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Mind</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/resources/carers">https://www.mindaustralia.org.au/resources/carers</a></p> <p>Ph: 1300 554 660 9am-5pm Mon-Fri</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Written resources and information for carers managing the care of someone else's mental health.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Sane Australia</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.sane.org/services/help-centre?_ga=2.137871408.188603885.1598405542-368522916.1598405542">https://www.sane.org/services/help-centre?_ga=2.137871408.188603885.1598405542-368522916.1598405542</a></p> <p>Ph: 1800 187 263 Mon-Friday 10am-10pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sane provides online blogs</li> <li>• telephone counselling for people with significant mental illness and for the carers who support them</li> <li>• resources and links to latest research are available.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Tandem Carers</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.tandemcarers.org.au/metro.php">https://www.tandemcarers.org.au/metro.php</a></p> <p>Ph: 1800 314 325 9am-5pm Monday – Friday Support and referral line.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mental Health Advocacy, advice and information on services.</li> <li>• NDIS support and enews.</li> <li>• Tandem runs online craft activities and guided meditation 12pm Thursday.</li> </ul>

<b>Parenting Supports</b>	
<p><b>Child First</b></p> <p>Ph: 1300 369 146 Knox, Maroondah and Yarra Ranges. Mon-Fri 9am -5pm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing support for families, children and young people.</li> <li>• Providing latest information about parenting programs and programs for your child.</li> <li>• Promoting safety, good health and wellbeing for families.</li> <li>• Families can call Child First</li> </ul>
<p><b>Parentline</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx">https://www.education.vic.gov.au/parents/services-for-parents/Pages/parentline.aspx</a></p> <p>Ph: 13 22 89 8am-9pm 7 days a week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Providing online counselling for parents for children 0-18yrs</li> <li>• Providing resources, advice and referral to local services</li> <li>• Practical support and advice for parenting</li> </ul>
<b>Sexuality Support Lines</b>	
<p><b>Minus 18</b></p> <p><a href="https://www.minus18.org.au/articles">https://www.minus18.org.au/articles</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online resources, articles and information about LGBTIQ communities</li> <li>• Supports for families and friends</li> </ul>
<p><b>Q Life</b></p> <p><a href="https://qlife.org.au/">https://qlife.org.au/</a></p> <p>Ph: 1800 184 527 3pm-midnight 7 days per week.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supports for individuals and carers seeking information and resource relating to gender, sexuality, identity, relationships and feelings.</li> <li>• Online counselling available</li> </ul>
<b>Adolescent Violence in the home</b>	
<p><b>Meridian Program Anglicare</b></p> <p>Ph 9876 6322 or <a href="mailto:meridian@anglicarevic.org.au">meridian@anglicarevic.org.au</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Youth therapy for young people 10-23 years.</li> <li>• Managing conflict, violence, anxiety, bullying, depression and suicide ideation</li> </ul>
<p><b>Breaking the Cycle</b></p> <p>Ph 9876 6322 or <a href="mailto:meridian@anglicarevic.org.au">meridian@anglicarevic.org.au</a></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Online Parenting group for parents or carers who have adolescents who are violent or abusive in the home.</li> </ul>

## Local Carer Support Groups

### EACH Partner Support Group

Ph: Bronwyn 8870 5300 or 0467 718 262

Please note this group will not be running during Covid-19 Stage 4 restrictions please call to discuss if it is available online.

- EACH Social and Community Health provides an opportunity for mental health carers to meet informally on a regular basis.
- Come and have a free cup of coffee and chat with others in a similar situation.
- When: Every second Wednesday
- Time: 1–3pm
- Recovery Eastern, 9 Greenwood Avenue, Ringwood

### Grow Better Together Carer Support Group

Ph: Julie-Anne Dooley 9528 2977 or [vic@grow.org.au](mailto:vic@grow.org.au)

Please note this group will not be running during Covid-19 Stage 4 restrictions please call to discuss if it is available online.

- Open support group for carers of someone with mental health issues to discuss the day-to-day issues of caring and seek solutions through mutual support.
- Mind Australia, upstairs at 353 Whitehorse Road, Nunawading
- When: 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month  
Time: 7–9pm

### Outer East BPD Carer Support Group

Ph: EACH Boronia office on 03 8720 2500

Please note this group will not be running during Covid-19 Stage 4 restrictions please call to discuss if it is available online.

- DATE: Group meetings held every third Monday of the Month
- TIME: 1.00pm to 3.00pm
- For referral information & group details please call Each

## Children Carer/Supporting Parents with Mental illness

### Children of Parents with Mental Illness

<http://www.copmi.net.au/>

- Whilst this site does not provide online phone supports, it has excellent resources for parents who suffer from a mental illness
- Resources for their children to understand their parent's condition.
- Something for everyone involved in the care of families, including Grandparents.