

We want to make it easy to check in on each other. These tips can help you have a supportive conversation.

HOW TO ASK: Different Ways to Start a Conversation about Mental Wellness

Ask genuinely. There are no special words. Being authentic is more important than what you say.

“Just wanted to check in with you. How are you doing?”

Ask directly. Letting someone know you want to hear about mental health can help them feel okay about opening up to you.

“Just checking in. You seem a little down today. How are you doing?”

Share how you are first. Being open about your struggles can help normalize what others are going through.

“I’ve really been anxious lately with everything that is going on. How have you been?”

Ask about today. It can be overwhelming to think about your overall emotional health if you are struggling. Focusing on the moment can be helpful.

“How are you feeling today? How are you feeling right now?”

Ask regularly. If you think someone is struggling, make it an expected part of the conversation that you’ll ask how they are, even if they don’t want to talk that day.

“I just wanted to check in on how you are doing today. I’m thinking of you.”

Talk to them about things other than mental health too. Connect over other aspects of your relationship.

“This meme made me think of you!”

HOW TO ANSWER: Different Ways to Respond to Someone Who is Struggling

Stay calm. If someone lets you know they are having a hard time, it is because they trust you to listen. You don’t need any special skills other than being yourself.

“Thanks for sharing that. Tell me more about what’s going on.”

Ask follow-up questions. Let them know you are interested by asking for more information.

“How long have you been feeling like this? What kinds of things have been helpful or not helpful?”

Validate their feelings. Comparing their situation to other people or letting them know why things aren’t so bad is not helpful. Acknowledge that they aren’t ok.

“That sounds really hard.”

Be open about your own struggles without comparing. Normalizing mental health challenges is helpful.

“I’ve been having a lot of anxiety lately too.”

Check back in regularly. Let them know they’re on your mind.

“I’ve been thinking about you since we talked. How are you doing today?”

Find ways to stay connected. Social connection is critical for mental health.

“I’m thinking of having a virtual watch party for our favorite series this week. What night works best for you?”