

I'm
here to
listen

Rail R U OK? Workplace Champions

Communications Guide

Supporting Workplace Mental Health and Wellbeing

Your role as a Rail R U OK? Workplace Champion is to encourage regular meaningful conversations as a platform to build an R U OK? Culture across your organisation. There are various forums you might use, in coordination with your managers, to help normalise R U OK? conversations and support and protect the mental health and wellbeing of all those in your workplace.

This resource includes ideas for you to safely, effectively and consistently communicate within your workplace as you build an R U OK? Culture. In doing so, you will also want to ensure your efforts align with existing mental health and wellbeing plans or strategies of your organisation, and are discussed with your managers.



Communicating safely

Your role as a Rail R U OK? Workplace Champion is to:

- promote the importance of wellbeing, connection and an R U OK? Culture in your organisation;
- ask supportive questions and genuinely listen;
- demonstrate care and support – colleagues are well placed to recognise when someone might be struggling; and
- guide others to the support options available.

However, the role of a Rail R U OK? Workplace Champion is NOT to diagnose mental ill-health, provide counselling or fix problems. You are not expected to take on the role of a counsellor nor is it your role to provide ongoing active intervention to support someone.

How to communicate safely

- Be an advocate and provide support. Your role is not to fix or be an expert.
- Be realistic. Don't promise more than you or your employer can deliver.
- Do draw on facts, and base what you say on evidence, not opinion.
- Do encourage colleagues to generate ideas to support themselves and each other.
- Do share your own experiences but only if you are comfortable doing so. You can also find useful information about how to communicate safely about mental health at the Mindframe website: mindframe.org.au and lifeinmind.org.au/the-charter

Remember to set an example for others around workplace wellbeing, **how you** communicate is critical. It's important you demonstrate supportive, safe and effective wellbeing communication – speak respectfully, listen not tell, and focus on strengths not weaknesses.



Consistency is key

You can build momentum and engagement better over time if you establish a communication rhythm around workplace wellbeing.

Simple ideas delivered regularly and consistently have more impact than infrequent, complex or lengthy messages. This will increase interest and engagement and prompt discussions in your workplace.

You might be able to use existing workplace communication channels such as intranet, newsletters, meetings, and social media posts to communicate your ideas. Think in terms of weekly, monthly, and quarterly time frames, and announce what you are doing. Give your communications a name – for example 'Wayne's Wellbeing Weekly' to focus attention and build awareness.

Have a plan

As a Rail R U OK? Workplace Champion, it is useful to develop an Action Plan to structure, schedule and map out your activity. This involves setting goals (e.g., to build the R U OK? Culture in my workplace) and specifying actions you will take to achieve those goals.

Think about who is responsible for which actions, what resources you need, and when you want the actions to be completed (R U OK? has templates and resources to support you).

A goal might be to develop a communication plan. You can share this with your managers and colleagues, ask for feedback, and ensure everyone is kept up to date with progress.

You should also try to mobilise your colleagues to actively participate with ideas and input.



Map out your topics - the monthly theme

We encourage you to highlight a particular theme or topic each month and distribute a short article about that topic. Please refer to the R U OK? resources for content tips.

You can then make it the focus for discussions or even activities at work. For example, you can:

- collect ideas and examples about the topic from others to post on a noticeboard or share in a weekly update;
- supplement with a short questionnaire on employee attitudes to this topic;
- ask management to devote a few minutes at a staff meeting to gain people's thoughts and input;
- screen a short video on the subject or create your own if you have the skills and resources; or
- arrange a guest speaker or community ambassador.

Consistent actions, regular communications and meaningful activities all help to build a supportive environment where discussions about wellbeing and R U OK? conversations are part of the workday routine.

R U OK? has information on a number of sample monthly topics to help you write an article or plan a discussion. You can copy, paste and publish, or adapt to suit your particular context. You can use as many as you want and in whatever order best suits your needs.

Additionally, you might be able to work with your Employee Assistance Provider (EAP) (if you have one) to generate other content and tips.

Map out your approach and remember to enlist the support and involvement of leaders and colleagues.

Theme topics

- Get on the front foot – the importance of proactively building your wellbeing
- Handy apps and online resources for mental health
- The power of gratitude
- Reducing stigma about mental health
- The advantages of focusing on strengths
- Tips for healthy relationships
- Diet and mental health
- Take a deep breath – meditation and mindfulness
- Staying well whilst working remotely
- Supporting diversity and inclusion
- Get better sleep
- Ways to manage wellbeing through winter
- Characteristics of psychologically healthy workplaces
- Why it's OK to seek help
- How to spot the signs that someone may be struggling
- How to have an R U OK? conversation

Review what you are doing and maintain momentum

Don't forget to take some time to review your communication plan, and amend as required.

- Seek feedback from others about what has worked and what hasn't worked
- Consider how well the R U OK? message has been received by your colleagues
- Identify what support you need from your manager
- Explore new ideas you could incorporate and invite others to contribute their thoughts
- Regularly visit the R U OK? website to source more ideas and personal stories from Workplace Champions at other organisations
- Monitor and maintain your own mental health

The key to maintaining momentum is to stay committed and consistent whilst being flexible and evolving as you go.

Every day is a day to support wellbeing at work and to ask, 'are you OK?'

Your overall goal is to build an R U OK? Culture where wellbeing is promoted, and all staff are encouraged (and feel safe) to talk about any worries or challenges they may be experiencing.



Keep the
conversation
on
track

For more information visit ruok.org.au

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