R U OK?™

I'm **here** to **hear**

A guide to giving a presentation on when and how to ask R U OK?

RAIL R U OK?™ | TrackSAFE Foundation

Preparing for a Rail R U OK? presentation

This document will help you deliver an effective presentation using our PowerPoint template.

We suggest you take some time to prepare, so you feel comfortable and can enjoy the experience of presenting.

For guidance on how to create a psychologically safe environment for your audience, please see the Rail R U OK? Interactive Guide at tracksafefoundation.com.au/event/rail-r-u-ok

Some things to think about when presenting

- Smile and make eye contact with people in the audience. If presenting online/virtually – look into the camera
- Look at the audience more than your notes
- Talk from the heart
- Know the content because that will help your confidence
- Avoid speaking too quickly (writing SLOW DOWN on your notes can help)
- Always remember people want to listen to what you have to say because the message you are sharing matters to them.

Suggested presentation structure.

1. **Engage people:** Describe a time when someone asked you 'are you OK?' at work and it made a difference (1-2 minutes)
2. **Connect:** Introduce yourself with some background about who you are, why you are presenting and why you support Rail R U OK? (1 minute)
3. **Tell people why they are here:** In your own words, explain that by the end of the presentation you want everyone in the audience to know they can make a difference by reaching out, asking, 'are you OK?' and lending support to a colleague who may be struggling with life (1 minute)
4. **Explain there's more to say after R U OK?:** Using the PowerPoint slides go through the steps of when and how to have an R U OK? conversation. Rehearsing with the slides before your presentation can help you feel comfortable and confident. This guide also has some additional content you might want to include in your presentation. Try and put things in your own words, as it will make it more authentic
5. Thank people and ask them to go out and ask, 'are you OK?' whenever they're concerned a workmate or someone in their world may be struggling

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Slide 1

- Since 2015, Rail R U OK?Day has been inspiring rail staff across Australia and New Zealand to look out for one another during life's (including work life) ups and downs by genuinely asking 'are you OK?' and really listening to the answer. This annual event is a collaboration between the TrackSAFE Foundation and R U OK?

  By participating in Rail R U OK?Day and encouraging meaningful conversations in your workplace you are building a stronger, psychologically safe and more supportive rail industry.

  This year, Rail R U OK?Day is Thursday 18 April 2024.

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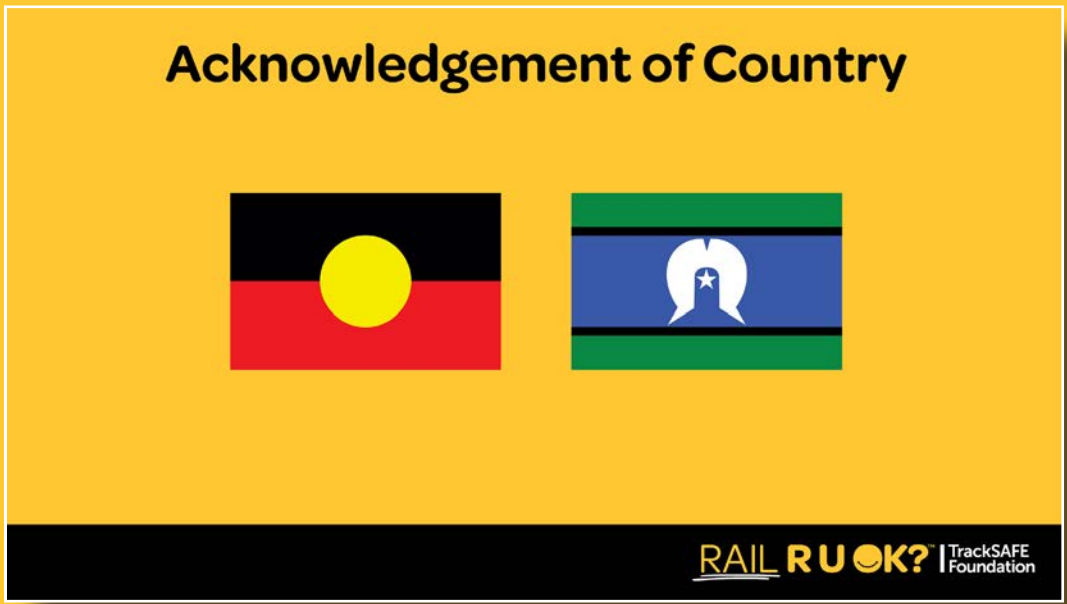

Slide 2

- I acknowledge the land on which we are meeting today and pay my respect to Elders past, present and future. I acknowledge the diversity of First Nations peoples and cultures, their ongoing connection to Country and the strength garnered through such connections.

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Slide 3

- It's important to recognise that some people in the audience might not be OK and encourage them to access appropriate support. You could say, "If today's talk brings up tough emotions for you it's OK to excuse yourself. If you need some extra support, I strongly encourage you to open up to someone you trust, connect with a trusted health professional or access a service like **Lifeline which is available 24/7 on 13 11 14 (Australia) or 0800 543 354 (New Zealand).** You can find other services and support organisations on the R U OK? website at ruok.org.au/findhelp"
- Some people may find presentations that reference mental health and suicide prevention distressing so let them know as early as possible, what you'll be talking about. You could say "Sometimes when talking about mental health and wellbeing this can bring up tough emotions for people. It's OK to excuse yourself."

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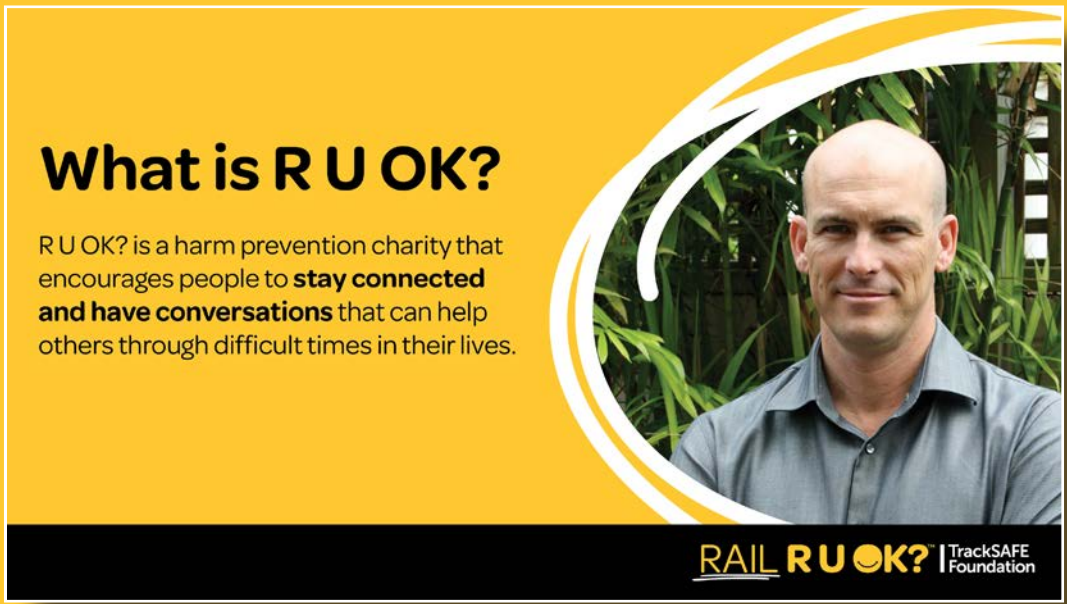

Slide 4

- R U OK? was founded by the late Gavin Larkin, after he lost his father to suicide. Gavin believed that a conversation could change a life, a belief that is backed by academic research that found that feelings of connection and belonging are a protective factor against suicide.

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- R U OK? aims to build the confidence and skills of the help-giver - the person who can have a meaningful conversation with someone who is struggling with life.
- R U OK? believes we all have a role to play in suicide prevention through learning how to spot the signs someone might be struggling and knowing when and how to have an R U OK? conversation.
- The support of friends, family and workmates can help prevent small things becoming bigger issues. That's why we need to make staying connected and asking, 'are you OK?' a part of our everyday.

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- This is a snapshot of how suicide impacts just about everyone in Australia in some way. This is why R U OK? is relevant to everyone here today.
- The third stat also shows the impact that cost of living pressures are having on people right now.

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Slide 7

- When someone says, 'No I'm not OK' and they have a meaningful conversation about it, they feel supported, heard and safe; that they found the conversation helpful; and that they felt better about managing their situation.
- This shows the positive impact that a meaningful conversation can have for someone.

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Slide 8

- So what could help people feel more comfortable to share how they're doing?
- In the research, people commonly mentioned these three things:
  1. **Trust** - The person asking is someone they have an existing close relationship with.
  2. **Authenticity** - the person asking cares about them and is genuinely listening.
  3. **Environment** - ensuring that you choose a time and place with enough privacy to open up.

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- When these elements of trust, authenticity and environment are present, a meaningful conversation can take place.
- And this is what people share with us is the impact of such conversations...

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Slide 10

- With this research in mind, this year, we want you to let the people in your world know you care about them and support them every day of the year and that you are 'here to really hear' them.
- When we're genuinely here to hear, we provide a safe space for those we care about to open up and share how they're feeling. This in itself can go a long way to helping them feel heard and better able to manage whatever they might be going through.
- I'm here to hear is the theme for Rail R U OK?Day 2024.

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Slide 11

Life has its ups and downs:

- Relationship breakdowns can leave us confused, sad or angry.
- Financial struggles, like rising cost of living.
- Illness can rob us of confidence and energy.
- Work - or lack of work - can make us feel frazzled or inadequate.
- Falling short of our goals can make us feel hopeless.
- The death of a loved one can lead to complex feelings of grief and loss.
- The birth of a baby can bring joy to a family, but also have its ups and downs.
- A new job while exciting can heighten nerves.
- Follow these simple steps to have an R U OK? conversation.

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Slide 12

- You can look for changes in what they're saying or doing or the things that are happening in their life that might indicate they are feeling under pressure or stressed.
- When you notice a change, no matter how small, it's time to ask R U OK?
- You may consider asking the audience what are some of the changes they look out for in the people in their world. You could say, "What might someone be saying or doing and what might be going on in their life that could indicate they need support?"

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Slide 13

- There are 4 clear steps to an R U OK? conversation.

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Slide 14

- Before you can support someone else, you need to look after yourself. And that's OK. You might not be in the right headspace or maybe you're not the best person for the conversation. If that's the case try to think of someone else in their network who could talk to them.
- To help decide whether you're ready to start a meaningful conversation, ask yourself:
  - **Are you ready?**

    Are you in a good headspace?

    Are you willing to genuinely listen?

    Have you set aside the time you might need?

  - **Are you prepared?**

    Remember that you won't have all the answers (and that's OK).

    It can be difficult for people to talk about personal struggles and they might be emotional, embarrassed or upset.

  - **Have you picked your moment?**

    Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and where you'll both be comfortable?

    Have you figured out a time that is convenient for them to chat?

    If they don't have time when you first approach them, arrange another time for the conversation. It might be more comfortable for the person to be side-by-side with you (e.g. walking together or sitting in the car) rather than face-to-face.

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Slide 15

Recap the 4 simple steps to an R U OK? conversation:

- Ask R U OK?
- Listen
- Encourage Action
- Check in

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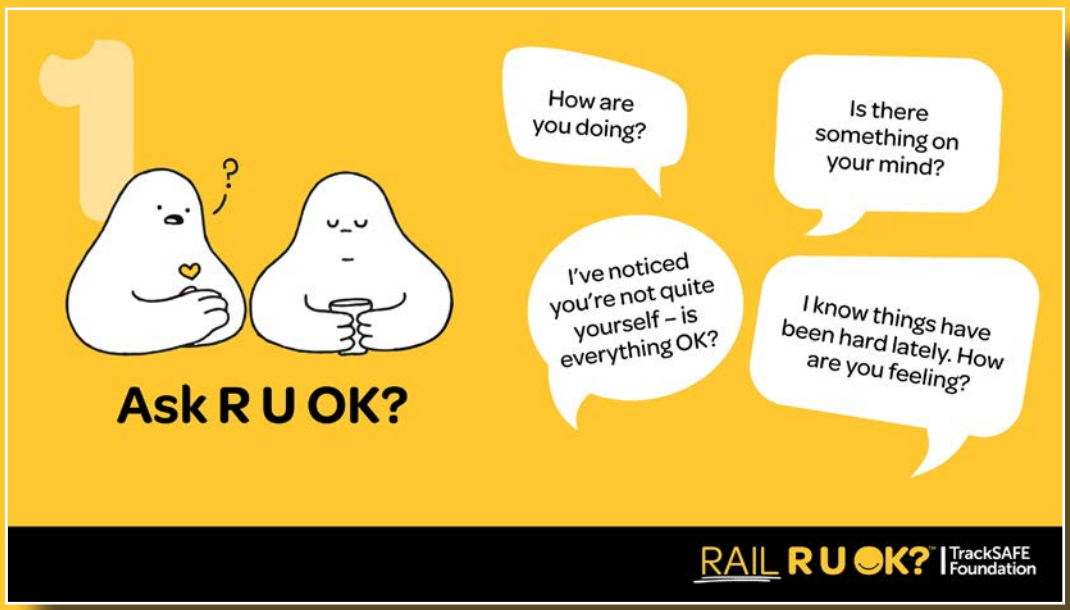

Slide 16

- By starting a conversation and commenting on the changes you've noticed, you could help a family member, friend or workmate open up.
- Pick your moment. Start the conversation at a time and in a place where you'll both be comfortable.
- If they can't talk when you approach them, arrange a better time with them.
- Be relaxed and friendly in your approach. Think about how you can ease into the conversation.
- If they don't want to talk let them know you'll always be ready for them when they are or ask if there's someone else they'd be more comfortable chatting to.

You can start by letting them know you've noticed a change. You could say something like:

- I've noticed a few changes in what you've been saying/doing. How are things for you at the moment?"
- "I know there's been some big life changes for you recently, how are you going with that?"

OR

- "You don't seem yourself lately – want to talk about it?"

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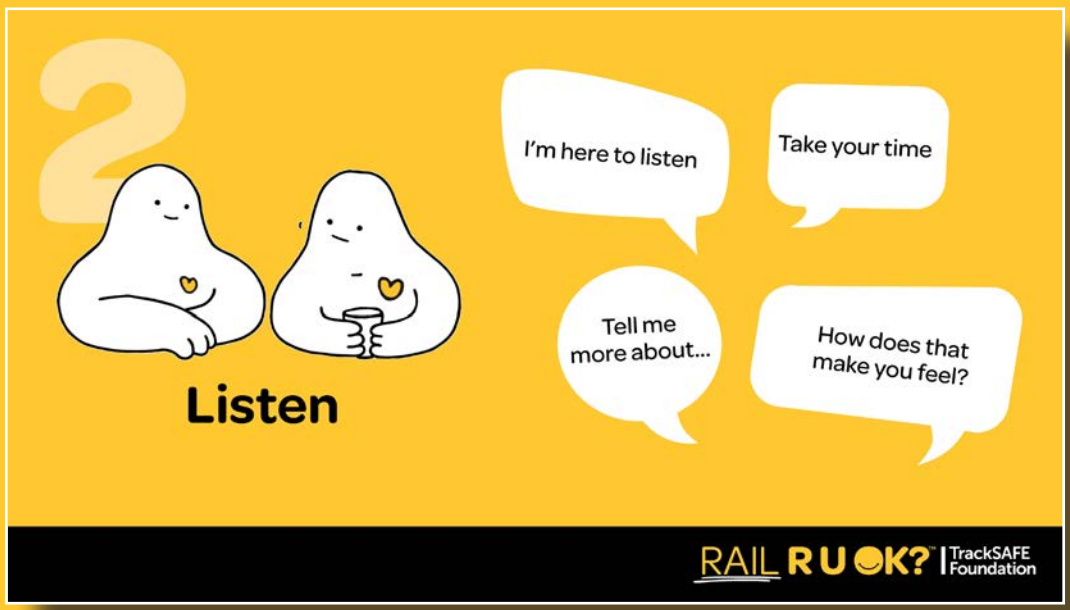

Slide 17

Listening with an open mind can be the hardest thing to do. Let them know that you're here to hear.

- It can be tempting to jump in and try to push someone's worries away or offer a 'quick fix'. It can be really hard to hear that someone is in pain or struggling – but try and sit with the discomfort and remind yourself that your support can be crucial.
- Avoid rushing the conversation and don't be afraid to sit in silence.
- Give the person some space and quiet so they can find the words to express what they're going through.

You could say:

- "I'm here to listen if you want to talk more"
- "How are you feeling about that?"

OR

- "I'm not going to pretend I know what it's like for you, but I'm here to listen to why you feel the way you do."

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- Once they've shared what they're going through, you might suggest to them that they think about one small step they might be able to take to improve their situation.
- If they've been feeling this way for more than two weeks they might need to see their doctor or an appropriate health professional.
- You don't have to have the answers or be able to offer professional health advice, but you can help them consider the next steps and actions they can take to manage their situation.

You could say:

- "What do you think is a first step that would help you through this?"
- "What can I do right now to support you?"
- "Have you spoken to your doctor or a health professional about this? It might be a matter of finding the right fit with someone."

OR

- "What's something you enjoy doing? Making time for that can really help."

Some good options might include talking to family, a trusted friend, their doctor or another appropriate health professional.

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- Recognise their reaction might be in response to a range of circumstances, some of which you might not know about.
- Allow the person to fully express their emotions.
- Actively listening is one of the best things you can do for someone when they are distressed.
- Deal with emotions first, you can discuss the issues more rationally once emotions have been addressed.
- Manage your own emotions by staying calm and not taking things personally.

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Useful contacts for someone who's not OK

Lifeline (24/7)
13 11 14
lifeline.org.au

Beyond Blue (24/7)
1300 224 636
beyondblue.org.au

Suicide Call Back Service (24/7)
1300 659 467
suicidecallbackservice.org.au

Mensline
1300 78 99 78
mensline.org.au

Find more services and support at ruok.org.au/findhelp

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- Sometimes that person might need immediate support. These are some useful contacts for Australian services that are available nationally and can provide emotional and crisis support.
- If at any time you feel overwhelmed by any feelings, it is important that you talk to someone you trust. A doctor, family member or friend, or make contact with one of these services.
- These services can also provide you with guidance to support someone else.
- You can find a directory with more services and supports on the R U OK? website: ruok.org.au/findhelp

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- After the conversation, make sure you stay connected and keep checking in. Make a joint decision to spend some time together in the near future so you can see how they're going. Your ongoing care and support can make a difference.

When you check in you could:

- Lock in a regular catch up and one-on-one time.
- Ask them about activities they like to do and help them make plans to do them or offer to do them together.
- Arrange group catch-ups to help them connect with others.
- You may consider asking the audience how they stay connected with people in their world.

When you check in you could say:

- "Just wanted to check in and see how you're doing?"
- "Have things improved or changed since we last spoke?"
- "What's been working for you since we last chatted?"
- "Do you need more support?"

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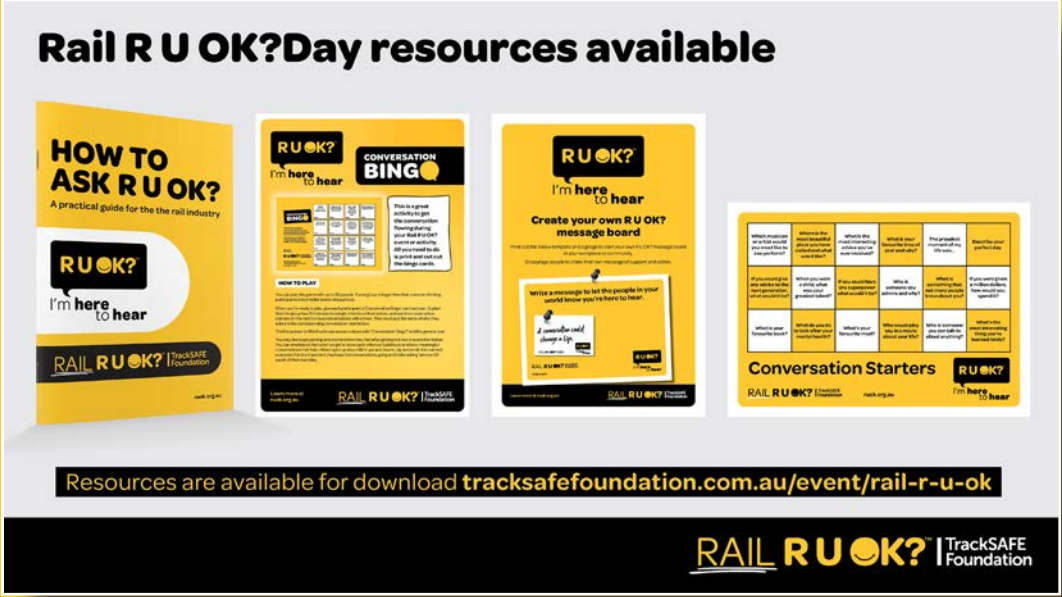

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- This year, Rail R U OK?Day has a number of resources available, including a conversation guide and toolkit with practical tools and tips.
- These can be downloaded at https://tracksafefoundation.com.au/event/rail-r-u-ok/

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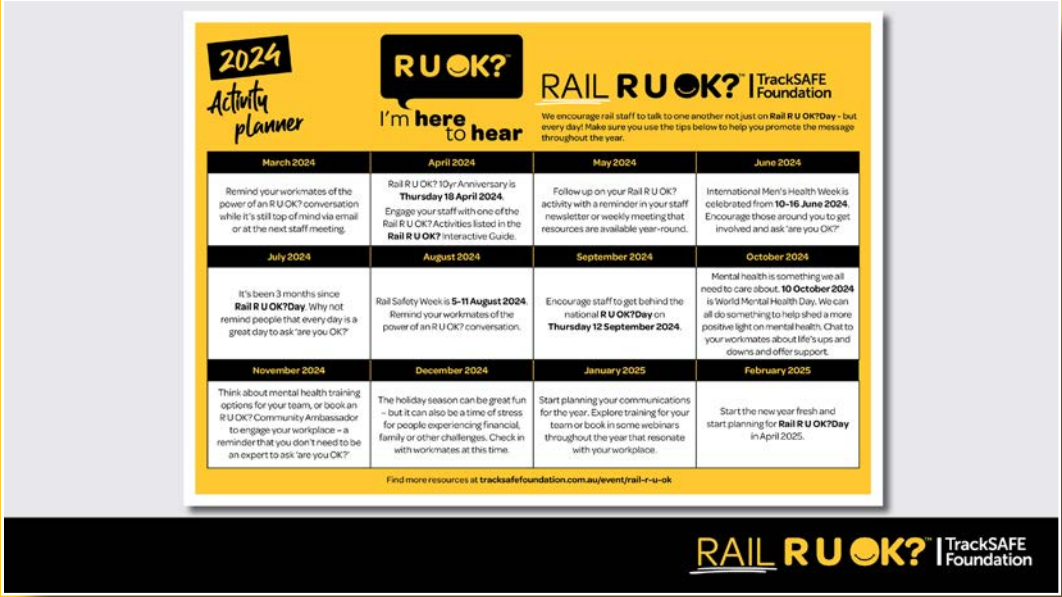

2024 Activity planner

R U OK? I'm here to hear

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We encourage rail staff to talk to one another not just on **Rail R U OK?Day** - but every day! Make sure you use the tips below to help you promote the message throughout the year.

March 2024	April 2024	May 2024	June 2024
Remind your workmates of the power of an R U OK? conversation while it's still top of mind via email or at the next staff meeting.	Rail R U OK? 10yr Anniversary is **Thursday 18 April 2024**. Engage your staff with one of the Rail R U OK? Activities listed in the **Rail R U OK?** Interactive Guide.	Follow up on your Rail R U OK? activity with a reminder in your staff newsletter or weekly meeting that resources are available year-round.	International Men's Health Week is celebrated from **10-16 June 2024**. Encourage those around you to get involved and ask 'are you OK?'
July 2024	**August 2024**	**September 2024**	**October 2024**
It's been 3 months since **Rail R U OK?Day**. Why not remind people that every day is a great day to ask 'are you OK?'	Rail Safety Week is **5-11 August 2024**. Remind your workmates of the power of an R U OK? conversation.	Encourage staff to get behind the national **R U OK?Day** on **Thursday 12 September 2024**.	Mental health is something we all need to care about. **10 October 2024** is World Mental Health Day. We can all do something to help shed a more positive light on mental health. Chat to your workmates about life's ups and downs and offer support.
November 2024	**December 2024**	**January 2025**	**February 2025**
Think about mental health training options for your team, or book an R U OK? Community Ambassador to engage your workplace – a reminder that you don't need to be an expert to ask 'are you OK?'	The holiday season can be great fun – but it can also be a time of stress for people experiencing financial, family or other challenges. Check in with workmates at this time.	Start planning your communications for the year. Explore training for your team or book in some webinars throughout the year that resonate with your workplace.	Start the new year fresh and start planning for **Rail R U OK?Day** in April 2025.

Find more resources at **tracksafefoundation.com.au/event/rail-r-u-ok**

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- It's important to keep the Rail R U OK? message constant throughout the year, as a reminder that every day is a great day to ask 'are you OK?'
- The Rail R U OK? Activity Planner includes some practical tips on how to engage your workplace year-round

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- Take a moment to consider who will you hear?

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ruok.org.au