If you’re worried that someone you know is doing it tough or having suicidal thoughts, it’s important that you give that person an opportunity to talk about it. Find a quiet and private space to ask them how they’re feeling and whether they’ve had any
judgmental manner to help them feel supported and reassured.

If someone says they’re thinking about suicide, it’s important you take it seriously. Tell them that you care about them and you want to help. Don’t become agitated, angry or upset. Explain that thoughts of suicide are common and don’t have to be acted upon.

It’s also essential that you determine whether they’ve formulated a plan to take their life. Ask if they’ve decided how they’ll kill themselves or if they’ve begun to take steps to end their life. If they have, it’s critical that you do NOT leave them alone and do NOT use guilt or threats to prevent suicide. Even if someone says they haven’t made a plan for suicide, you still need to take it seriously. Lack of a plan does NOT guarantee their safety. Get immediate professional help or call emergency help lines – such as Lifeline on 13 11 14 or Suicide Call Back Service on 1300 659 467 – for advice and support.

People who are thinking about suicide may signal their suicidal intentions to others. In other cases, there may be no warning. It’s therefore critical that you regularly engage with family, friends and colleagues and provide them with the attention and time to ask them how they’re going.

What if you think the person is considering suicide?

1. **Ask R U OK?**
   - Start a general conversation; preferably somewhere private
   - Build trust through good eye contact, open and relaxed body language
   - Ask open-ended questions
   - ‘What’s been happening? How are you going?’
   - ‘I’ve noticed that... What’s going on for you at the moment?’
   - ‘You don’t seem like yourself and I’m wondering are you ok? Is there anything that’s contributing?’

2. **Listen without judgement**
   - Guide the conversation with caring questions and give them time to reply
   - Don’t rush to solve problems for them
   - Help them understand that solutions are available when they’re ready to start exploring these
   - ‘How has that made you feel?’
   - ‘How long have you felt this way? Have you talked to anyone about this?’
   - ‘What do you think caused that reaction?’

3. **Encourage action**
   - Summarise the issues and ask them what they plan to do
   - Encourage them to take one step, such as see their doctor
   - If they’re unsure about where to go to for help, help them to contact a local doctor, counsellor or the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
   - ‘What do you think might help your situation?’
   - ‘Have you considered making an appointment with your doctor?’
   - ‘Would you like me to make an appointment or come with you?’

4. **Follow up**
   - Put a note in your diary to call them in one week. If they’re desperate, follow up sooner
   - Ask if they’ve managed to take that first step and see someone
   - If they didn’t find this experience helpful, urge them to try a different professional because there’s someone out there who can help them
   - ‘How are things going? Did you speak with your doctor?’
   - ‘What did they suggest? What did you think of their advice?’
   - ‘You’ve had a busy time. Would you like me to make the appointment?’

**Dealing with denial?**
- If they deny the problem, don’t criticise them. Acknowledge they’re not ready to talk
- Say you’re still concerned about changes in their behavior and you care about them
- Ask if you can enquire again next week if there’s no improvement
- ‘I understand that you don’t want to talk about it but call me when you’re ready to discuss it.’
- ‘Can we meet up next week and have a chat about what’s happening for you?’
- ‘Is there someone else you’d rather discuss this with?’

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**Thursday 13 September**

**How to ask R U OK?**

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The content on this document is for general information only. It’s not intended as professional, medical or other advice on which reliance should be placed. For more information, please visit www.ruokday.com.
### Thursday 13 September

#### How to ask R U OK?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>National Crisis Lines</th>
<th>1800 RUOKDAY (7865 329) – Connects you to 5 crisis information lines for free from any landline</th>
<th>1800 RUOKDAY (7865 329)</th>
<th><a href="http://www.ruokday.com">www.ruokday.com</a></th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lifeline</td>
<td>24/7 telephone counselling service</td>
<td>13 1114</td>
<td><a href="http://www.lifeline.org.au">www.lifeline.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suicide Call Back Service</td>
<td>24/7 telephone counselling for people at risk of suicide, carers and bereaved</td>
<td>1300 659 467</td>
<td><a href="http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au">www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kids Helpline</td>
<td>24/7 telephone and online counselling for young people 5–25 years</td>
<td>1800 55 1800</td>
<td><a href="http://www.kidshelp.com.au">www.kidshelp.com.au</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ReachOut.com</td>
<td>Online crisis and mental health information for young people</td>
<td>ReachOut.com</td>
<td>ReachOut.com</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Hope Line</td>
<td>24/7 telephone counselling for people bereaved by suicide</td>
<td>1300 467 354</td>
<td><a href="http://www.suicideprevention.salvos.org.au">www.suicideprevention.salvos.org.au</a></td>
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<tr>
<th>Professionals</th>
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<tr>
<td>Your local doctor (GP)</td>
<td>Contact the Employee Assistance Program to speak to a counsellor</td>
<td>Details may be listed on Intranet but contact HR if unsure.</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find a GP with an interest in mental health issues through beyondblue</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a></td>
<td>1300 224 636</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Find a psychologist by postcode through the Australian Psychological Society</td>
<td><a href="http://www.psychology.org.au">www.psychology.org.au</a></td>
<td>1800 333 497</td>
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<td></td>
<td>To find youth-friendly mental health services for 12–25 year olds, visit your local headspace centre</td>
<td><a href="http://www.headspace.org.au">www.headspace.org.au</a></td>
<td><a href="http://www.eheadspace.org.au">www.eheadspace.org.au</a></td>
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<td></td>
<td>To find your closest Aboriginal Medical Service, check out Vibe’s interactive service map</td>
<td><a href="http://www.vibe.com.au/vibe-health/medical-services.html">www.vibe.com.au/vibe-health/medical-services.html</a></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>If English isn’t your first language, please call the Telephone Interpreter Service for assistance contacting a helpline</td>
<td>131 450</td>
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<th>Helplines and Information</th>
<th>SANE Australia Helpline – Mental health information, weekdays 9am–5pm</th>
<th><a href="http://www.sane.org">www.sane.org</a></th>
<th>1800 187 263</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>beyondblue Info Line – Information about depression, anxiety and related disorders</td>
<td><a href="http://www.beyondblue.org.au">www.beyondblue.org.au</a></td>
<td>1300 224 636</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Black Dog Institute – Information about depression and bipolar disorder</td>
<td><a href="http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au">www.blackdoginstitute.org.au</a></td>
<td>(02) 9382 4523</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Mental Health in Multicultural Australia – Translated mental health information and contacts for state transcultural mental health services</td>
<td><a href="http://www.mhima.org.au">www.mhima.org.au</a></td>
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Principal sponsor:

- **medibank Community Fund**
- **Gloria Jean’s COFFEE**

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