



## Supervisors Part 1

The University of Iowa has partnered with [R U OK?](#) to help you and your staff better understand how to help someone you suspect is struggling with their mental health.

If you have questions about R U OK? or would like further training before presenting this information to your staff, the [UI Employee Assistance Program](#) is available at 319-335-2085 or [eaphelp@uiowa.edu](mailto:eaphelp@uiowa.edu).

Please use this handout to guide a conversation with your staff about supporting employee well-being. Promoting resources like R U OK? is just one way the university is working to support the [holistic well-being and success](#) of our faculty, staff, and students.

1. [Play the R U OK? video introduction for your team.](#)
2. Review the information below and the handout highlighting A.L.E.C.
  - o Ask, Listen, Encourage action, Check in
3. Encourage your team to follow R U OK? on Instagram.
4. Inform them this information will be reviewed at the next staff meeting and you'll begin Part 2.
5. Leave time for questions.

### What are the signs someone might need extra support?

- **Changes in physical appearance.**
  - o Look more tired than usual; have had a pattern of illness or being constantly run down; are complaining of physical health issues such as headaches or migraines.
- **Changes in mood.**
  - o Seem more irritable, snappy, or fly off the handle when they normally wouldn't.
- **Changes in behavior.**
  - o Are not performing to their usual standard; seem more withdrawn than usual.
- **Changes in how thoughts are expressed.**
  - o Struggle to be positive; take situations personally; assuming the worst about people.

#### Contacts for someone who's not OK:

- [UI EAP](#) – 319-335-2085 or [eaphelp@uiowa.edu](mailto:eaphelp@uiowa.edu)
- [UI 24/7 Support & Crisis Line](#) – 844-461-5420
- [988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline](#)



Asking a colleague if they're going through a hard time can be difficult. What if they get angry or sad? What if they don't want to talk to you? Below are a few suggestions to manage scenarios as they arise. For more resources like the information presented below, visit <https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

## How do I deal with anger?

**Make time to ask RUOK?** If someone is visibly upset, you can say something like this: "I can see that this is upsetting. Just feel free to share what you think would be helpful for me to know."

**Make time to ask RUOK?** Use active listening to keep the conversation on track by nodding, maintaining eye contact, and rephrasing their concerns where necessary to check for accuracy. This isn't the time to change someone's mind, but to listen attentively and make them feel understood.

## How do I deal with sadness?

**Make time to ask RUOK?** Show empathy by acknowledging the challenges they're facing.

**Make time to ask RUOK?** Silence is OK and gives people a chance to think.

**Make time to ask RUOK?** It's difficult to be in the presence of sadness but it's not our job to stop the person from feeling sad.

## What if they don't want to talk to me?

**Make time to ask RUOK?** Try not to take it personally. It can take time to process what you've said and respond.

**Make time to ask RUOK?** Encourage them to talk to someone (family, friends, EAP) and always circle back to check in on them.



### AM I READY?

- Am I in a good headspace?
- Am I willing to genuinely listen?
- Can I give as much time as needed?



### AM I PREPARED?

- Do I understand that if I ask how someone's going, the answer could be: "No, I'm not"?
- Do I understand that I can't 'fix' someone's problems?
- Do I accept that they might not be ready to talk? Or they might not want to talk to me?



### PICKED MY MOMENT?

- Have I chosen somewhere relatively private and comfy?
- Have I figured out a time that will be good for them to chat?
- Have I made sure I have enough time to chat properly?