



Helping others

Knowing what to do & say

When a friend or family member is going through a tough time, it can be hard to know what to do or say.

You might have noticed they don't seem like themselves or they're acting differently.

What can YOU do?

You might

Let them know that you care

Ask them what you can do to support them

Let them know that you're there if they need

They might not open up at first but showing them you are there for them and have their back can give them strength and hope. This also lets them know you're someone they can talk to if they decide to open up later on.



What can you say?

It can be hard to know how to start a conversation. Sometimes it can be as simple as 'are you doing OK?'.

Let them know you believe them, you can see it's having an impact on them, and let them know they're not alone.

Be genuine. Raise your concerns in a way that is comfortable for you.

There's no right or wrong way to say that you're concerned.

Explain why you're concerned. What have you noticed about them that's worrying you?

Maybe their mood has changed or they've been acting differently.

Listen to what they tell you.


Take time to try and understand their experience of feeling anxious or depressed or stressed.

Everyone's experience is unique and it's important to recognise and validate how they're feeling.



Don't give advice. It's natural to want to solve the problem to make them feel better. However, the most helpful thing you can do is listen.



It's important to give them space to talk and feel heard. Try to avoid making assumptions or offering solutions or a 'diagnosis'.







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They may need additional support

If you think they might need additional support, you can say things like:

 *Have you talked to anyone else about this? It's great you've talked to me but it might be good to get advice and have a yarn with a counsellor.* 

 *Counselling doesn't have to be super intense and you can decide what you want to share with them.* 

 *Its ok to feel this way and I'm here for you* 



What if they don't want help?

For many people, reaching out for support can be really difficult. Be patient. Don't judge them or get frustrated if they don't take you up on your offer of support straight away.

Some people need a bit more time and space before seeking help. Remind them that you're there if they need you and give them time.

Look after yourself too. When you're supporting someone with mental health difficulties it can become overwhelming so remember to look after yourself too and seek support when you need it.

Our Tips for Tough Times tip sheet has some great ideas for supporting your mental health and wellbeing.



Getting further support

If someone you know is going through a tough time, they can get help and support through **Rural Aid's Mental Health & Wellbeing** team by calling **1300 327 624** or emailing mhwb@ruralaid.org.au