

Staff Council

Mental Health & Well-Being Updates

Website and RUOK

Bronwyn Threlkeld-Wiegand, LISW UIEAP

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New Well-Being website

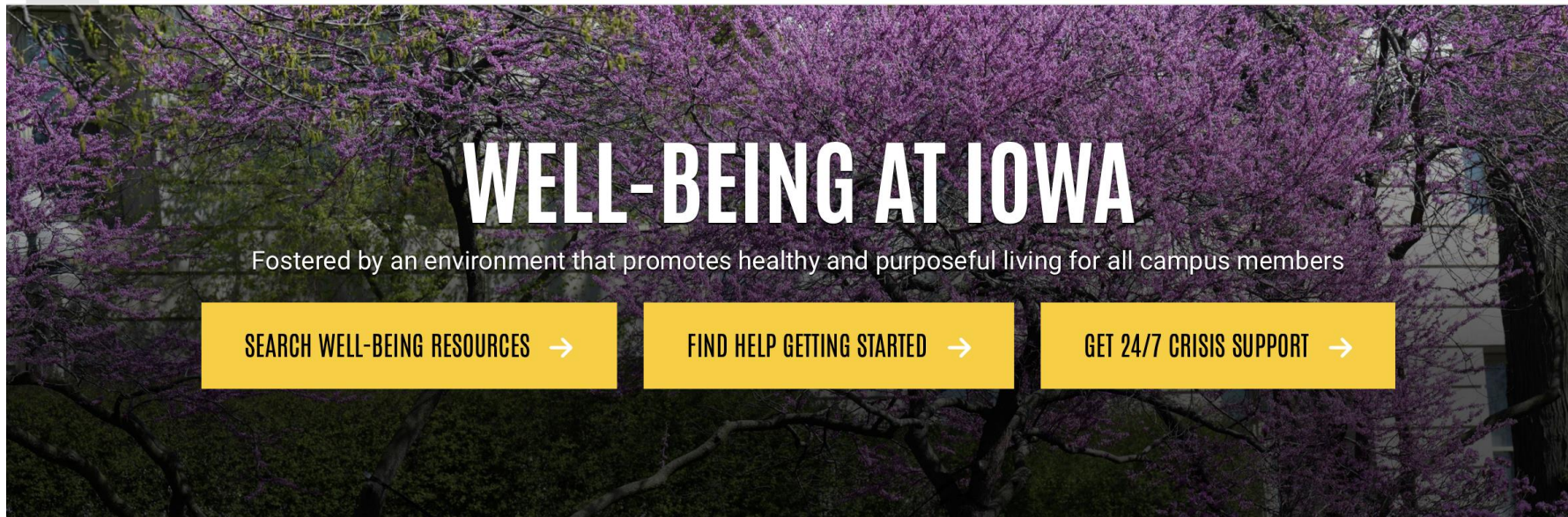
IOWA

Resource Guide for Responding to Distress

Well-Being at Iowa

Q SEARCH

[Home](#) [Well-Being Resources](#) [24/7 Crisis Support](#) [Stories](#) [About Well-Being at Iowa](#) ▾



Our Commitment to Well-Being

P2P (peer to peer support)



WHAT:

Peer to peer support: to expand campus well-being and mental health.

WHY:

We all have a role to play in looking out for those we care about at home, work or in our community. Ask, 'are you OK?' Because a conversation could change a life.

RUOK is an initiative that contributes to improved workplace wellbeing, improved relationships and suicide prevention efforts by encouraging people to invest more time in their personal relationships through building the capacity of informal support networks – friends, family and colleagues - to be alert to those around them, have a conversation if they identify signs of distress or difficulty and connect someone to appropriate support, long before they're in crisis.

based on RUOK in Australia: R U OK? is a public health promotion charity that encourages people to stay connected and have conversations that can help others through difficult times in their lives.

What are
they
SAYING?

What are
they
DOING?

What's going
on in their
LIFE?

RUOK

This work focuses on building the motivation, confidence and skills of the help-giver – the person who can have a meaningful conversation with someone who is struggling. Departmental leadership (supervisors, managers, leaders) for both faculty/staff and students are encouraged to embrace the promotion of peer support during staff/faculty/team meetings.

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

RUOK? has developed our four conversation steps to give you the skills and confidence to navigate a conversation with someone you're worried about.



1. Ask



2. Listen



3. Encourage
action



4. Check in

[LEARN MORE](#)



- <https://uicapture.hosted.panopto.com/Panopto/Pages/Viewer.aspx?id=393b968e-2510-4e59-b291-b16b00c4c2a4>

Call to Action: Who will be an early adopter?

15 mins in your staff meeting x2

- 1) Use the Supervisor suggestions to introduce the concept
- 2) Provide the companion document & Part 2
- 3) Play the video (under 3 minutes) and discuss
- 4) Earn swag 😊
- 5) Revisit at your subsequent staff meeting with Part 2
- 6) Provide us feedback please

<https://www.ruok.org.au/work>



Companion Content: Supervisors



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
- [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 R U OK? 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 R U OK? 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 R U OK? Show empathy by acknowledging the challenges they're facing.

Make time to ask R U OK? Silence is OK and gives people a chance to think.

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



Companion Documents: Staff

1. Ask R U OK?

Choose a comfortable place and time to ask: "How's it going?" You may say something like: "I've noticed you haven't seemed like yourself lately – is everything all right?" At the time that you ask, they might not be ready to talk. Avoid pressing for a response and instead suggest another time to check in.

2. Listen

It's natural to want to be a problem-solver, but when someone is going through a tough time, listening to *understand* rather than *respond* can be the most effective support. Try not to rush the conversation and know it's ok to have moments of silence. You may even find that as they're talking, they're working through the problem themselves.

3. Encourage Action

You can help your colleague think of ways to manage a stressful situation by asking something like: "Have you spoken to a family member or friend about what you're going through?" "Do you think it would be helpful if we looked into resources to support you? I'd like to help." The [University of Iowa Employee Assistance Program](#) (UI EAP) provides free and confidential access to counselors for employees needing personal or professional mental health support.

4. Check In

Check in again in a few days, or sooner if you're worried they might be in crisis. Remind them they can come to you to talk. If you spoke about seeking professional help, continue to encourage them, but also understand that sometimes it can take a while for someone to be ready to see a professional.

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Part 2: Getting Ready to Ask

Before you can look out for others, you need to look out for yourself – and that's OK. If you're not in the right headspace or you don't think you're the right person to have the conversation, try to think of someone else in your colleague's support network who could talk to them. To help you decide whether you're ready to start a meaningful conversation, ask yourself:

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 doing, the answer could be: "I'm not doing well."
- 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?

Have I picked my moment?

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

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Start a conversation using these 4 steps



RUOK? Pilot Feedback (July/August)

UHR-(OE/Ergonomics/LiveWELL, Leadership, Payroll; CPH (epidemiology)

1) Was it easy to use? Yes-ish....

- ‘Liked that it was simple, liked that it provided an actual tool’
- ‘I needed to read through material more’
- ‘It helped to provide a prompt to get my team talking as in “how/when would you liked to be asked RUOK?”’

2) Was it helpful? Yes!

- Most teams shared that this initiative went over as kind/caring/compassionate

3) Suggestions?

- Some want more scripting
- Some want more resources for those ‘not ok’
- Authenticity and rapport important....if there is not good rapport within the team, this information is more difficult to present



Next Steps



- Need 1-2 'Early Adopters' in addition to ITS Enterprise and DSL (next up)
- Contact Bronwyn at eaphelp@uiowa.edu or 319-335-2085
- Get materials (pdfs, access to video)
- Get your individual swag 😊
- Complete the delivery of the material and get swag for your team

Caring, connected, conversations

RUOK?

Getting ready to ask

 **Be ready**

 **Be prepared**

 **Pick your moment**

Having the conversation

1  **Ask R U OK?**

2  **Listen**

3  **Encourage action**

4  **Check In**