

Subject 4: How to have a conversation with someone about depression

You can usually tell if someone isn't behaving the same as they normally do. Some people withdraw from other people, some people speak more negatively or with disregard for the outcome, some are angrier than normal, and some are more impulsive than they normally are.

How to have a conversation (R U OK)?

Reach Out

Say that you noticed that they are not their usual self. Try to be relaxed and start with just saying "hello". Introduce yourself if they don't know your name. You could chat about something you have in common to help build rapport and ease any awkwardness you might feel. When the time is right, tell the person you have noticed they aren't their usual self and were wondering if things were okay. Ask open-ended questions that ask for a long answer.

Undivided Attention

Listen and don't judge. Don't try to rush them, jump in, or fix things. Acknowledge what they are describing sounds difficult or upsetting. If they confide in you about things that are going wrong - don't promise them that things will be alright. Only make promises you can keep. What you can say is that you hear what they are saying; that things are really difficult at the moment, and that you will do your best to assist them to find help.

Offer support

Ask them where they think they could go from here. Offer further support to listen to them or just sit with them, or help them find some support (e.g. doctor, the resources section below). It doesn't matter that you are not an expert in counselling - because what counts is that you are someone who is willing to listen. That does not make you their counsellor. If you think they need more support, suggest they see the EAP or their own doctor.

Keep in touch

If they don't need immediate help, ask them if they are okay with you checking in with them in a few days' time. Show your genuine concern by following up with your offer of support.

What to do if someone might be suicidal

If someone says that they currently have suicidal thoughts, you should get them immediate medical assistance. You can ask them directly if they are having thoughts about suicide. Do not promise to keep it a secret. Stay with them or make sure that they are not left alone.

If you are concerned about depression

Effective treatments for depression are available to help. Speak to your doctor or company provided counselling service for advice on the best option for you.

Do you want to find out more?

The Generali Employee Benefits Network has partnered with FlourishDx to provide video and other resources on mental health and sleep health. Access these resources [here](#).