



## MENTAL WELLBEING – ARE YOU OK?

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Mental illness continues to bear a stigma. **That's not OK.**

Doctors are poor health seekers and bad self-diagnosticians. We tend to deny illness. **That's not OK.**

The development of anxiety and depression is often insidious. It may be viewed as burnout or stress. It is often accompanied by lack of insight. **That's not OK.**

Doctors have suicide rates well in excess of the general population. **That's not OK.**

### When do you know you (or others) are not OK?

- Pervasive changes in mood or behaviour
- Diminished performance
- Tendency for overwork or absenteeism
- Poor motivation or lack of interest
- Changes in sleep patterns and eating patterns
- More agitated or withdrawn
- Increased emotional outbursts e.g more tearful or angry
- Increased use of drugs or alcohol
- Not doing things you said you would

### What thinking patterns are not OK?

- Difficulty concentrating or remembering
- Difficulty making decisions
- Confused or jumbled thoughts
- Thoughts that are racing or excessively slow
- Very negative, pessimistic or persecutory thoughts
- Dwelling on past events
- Thinking about harming yourself or others
- Thoughts of death, with or without a specific plan
- Hearing voices that are not coming from other people

### What feelings are not OK?

If you are feeling any of the following more often than usual then **that's not OK**

- Anxious or worried
- Tense or restless
- Depressed or unhappy
- Unsafe or threatened
- Feeling that everyone is against you or feeling persecuted
- Diminished interest in, or loss of pleasure in most activities
- Feelings of worthlessness
- Excessive and inappropriate guilt
- Fatigue or loss of energy nearly every day

If you notice any of these in yourself or others – **that's not OK.**

Trust your instincts – seek help. Also, if someone you know looks like they have been feeling like this, and then suddenly cheer up, don't be relieved: **be cautious.** They may be getting better. They may well have made a plan to commit suicide, and have just decided to follow through on it. Predicting future behaviour is difficult. It is time to look for help.

Start a conversation. Or get someone else to do it if you're not the best person to do so. Take responsibility. Ask, listen and encourage action. The time to act is NOW. Because waiting any longer may be too late.

Have a look at the resources below if you need to help a friend or colleague. Talk to your GP, trusted colleague or a friend if it's you. Every employer has an employee assistance program. There are lots of people waiting and wanting to help. **It's not OK to wait...**

**LIFELINE AUSTRALIA: 13 11 14**

<https://www.lifeline.org.au/>

**LIFELINE AOTEAROA: 0800 543 354**

[www.lifeline.org.nz/](http://www.lifeline.org.nz/)

There are multiple state based resources. Please speak to a trusted colleague and find the appropriate resource that is right for you and your needs.

Every employer has an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). This is a confidential resource and may be a good place to start.

Some other resources that you may find useful:

<http://www.anzca.edu.au/documents/rd-03-depression-and-anxiety-2011>

[https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Branches/Victoria/Keeping\\_the\\_Doctor\\_Alive-pdf.aspx](https://www.ranzcp.org/Files/Branches/Victoria/Keeping_the_Doctor_Alive-pdf.aspx)

<https://www.ruok.org.au/how-to-ask>

<http://www.beyondblue.org.au>