We want to make it easy to check in on each other. These tips can help you have a supportive conversation.

**HOW TO ASK:** Different Ways to Start a Conversation about Mental Wellness

**Ask genuinely.** There are no special words. Being authentic is more important than what you say.

> “Just wanted to check in with you. How are you doing?”

**Ask directly.** Letting someone know you want to hear about mental health can help them feel okay about opening up to you.

> “Just checking in. You seem a little down today. How are you doing?”

**Share how you are first.** Being open about your struggles can help normalize what others are going through.

> “I’ve really been anxious lately with everything that is going on. How have you been?”

**Ask about today.** It can be overwhelming to think about your overall emotional health if you are struggling. Focusing on the moment can be helpful.

> “How are you feeling today? How are you feeling right now?”

**Ask regularly.** If you think someone is struggling, make it an expected part of the conversation that you’ll ask how they are, even if they don’t want to talk that day.

> “I just wanted to check in on how you are doing today. I’m thinking of you.”

**Talk to them about things other than mental health too.** Connect over other aspects of your relationship.

> “This meme made me think of you!”

**HOW TO ANSWER:** Different Ways to Respond to Someone Who is Struggling

**Stay calm.** If someone lets you know they are having a hard time, it is because they trust you to listen. You don’t need any special skills other than being yourself.

> “Thanks for sharing that. Tell me more about what’s going on.”

**Ask follow-up questions.** Let them know you are interested by asking for more information.

> “How long have you been feeling like this? What kinds of things have been helpful or not helpful?”

**Validate their feelings.** Comparing their situation to other people or letting them know why things aren’t so bad is not helpful. Acknowledge that they aren’t ok.

> “That sounds really hard.”

**Be open about your own struggles without comparing.** Normalizing mental health challenges is helpful.

> “I’ve been having a lot of anxiety lately too.”

**Check back in regularly.** Let them know they’re on your mind.

> “I’ve been thinking about you since we talked. How are you doing today?”

**Find ways to stay connected.** Social connection is critical for mental health.

> “I’m thinking of having a virtual watch party for our favorite series this week. What night works best for you?”