Yellow Bench

Helping someone find further support

A practical guide for family, friends and other everyday supporters

Support from someone trusted can make a meaningful difference. This guide can help you recognise when further support may be useful, begin the conversation and help someone explore their options without taking over. This guide provides general information. It is not counselling, clinical advice or crisis support.



1 Signs additional support may help

There is no single point when someone should seek professional or specialist support.

Further support may be helpful when:

- everyday activities and responsibilities are becoming harder to manage
- the person seems increasingly overwhelmed, exhausted or unable to cope
- work, study, relationships or self-care are being affected
- they have withdrawn from important people, activities or supports
- difficult feelings are continuing, becoming more intense or not improving
- the strategies that helped before no longer seem to be enough
- their way of coping is creating additional concerns
- they ask for help or say they need someone to talk to

These signs do not tell you exactly what the person is experiencing. They may simply mean that additional support could help.



2 Questions you can ask

You do not need to ask every question. Choose one or two that feel natural and appropriate.

To understand what they need

- "What has been most difficult lately?"
- "What would feel helpful right now?"
- "What kind of support do you think might help?"
- "Is there someone you already trust?"
- "What has helped you during difficult times before?"

To explore options

- "Would you like to look at some options together?"
- "Would you prefer support in person, by phone or online?"
- "Would talking to a GP or another trusted person feel like a possible first step?"
- "What would make contacting someone feel easier?"
- "Would you like me to be with you while you make contact?"

To understand hesitation

- "What concerns you most about seeking support?"
- "Have you had an experience in the past that is making this feel difficult?"
- "Is there something practical getting in the way?"
- "Would a different kind of support feel more comfortable?"

3 Conversation examples

There is no perfect script. Use language that feels genuine to you and appropriate for your relationship.

Raising the idea

- "It sounds like things have been really difficult. Have you thought about talking to someone?"
- "You do not have to work through this alone."
- "I wonder whether some extra support might help."
- "Would you be open to looking at some options together?"

Offering practical help

- "I can help look for some services if you would like."
- "Would it help if I sat with you while you made the call?"
- "I can come with you if you would find that useful."
- "We can write down what you want to ask before you contact them."

Respecting choice

- "You can decide what feels right for you."
- "What would you like me to help with?"
- "You do not have to decide everything today."
- "We can take one step at a time."

Keeping the door open

- "That is okay if you are not ready."
- "The offer is still here if you want help later."
- "I will keep checking in."
- "You do not have to tell me everything for me to care."



4 Common reasons people hesitate

Someone may hesitate because they:

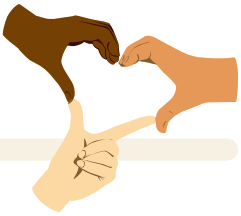
- feel embarrassed or worry about judgement
- believe they should manage alone
- do not know where to begin
- feel overwhelmed by too many options
- have had an unhelpful experience in the past
- are concerned about privacy
- are worried about cost, travel or waiting times
- do not feel ready to talk
- are unsure what a service will ask or what will happen
- feel that their difficulty is not serious enough
- do not want to burden other people

Try to listen before offering a solution.

Acknowledge the concern and ask what might make support feel safer or easier.

Avoid arguing, pressuring or making promises you cannot keep.

5 Different types of support



Different needs may call for different kinds of support.

Personal support
- family
- friends
- colleagues
- mentors
- Elders
- trusted community members

Health and mental health support
- a GP
- a counsellor
- a psychologist
- a social worker
- a mental health service
- another health professional

Peer support
Peer support connects people with someone who has relevant lived experience and can offer understanding, encouragement and practical insight.

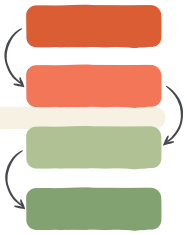
Cultural, community or spiritual support
This may include:
- Aboriginal Community Controlled Organisations
- Elders or cultural leaders
- multicultural community organisations
- faith or spiritual leaders
- community groups

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Practical support
Mental wellbeing can also be affected by practical pressures. Support may be available for:
- housing
- money and debt
- work or study
- relationships
- caring responsibilities
- legal matters
- alcohol or other drug concerns

Telephone and online support
Phone, text, chat and online services may provide an accessible first step, particularly when someone wants privacy or is not ready for face-to-face support.

6 Practical steps to help someone make contact



Step 1: Ask permission
Ask whether the person would like help.
"Would you like me to help you look at some options?"

Step 2: Clarify what they want
Ask what type of support, contact method and level of involvement would feel comfortable.

Step 3: Choose a manageable number of options
Begin with one to three possibilities rather than a long list.

Step 4: Check practical information

Look for:

- who the service supports
- whether a referral is needed
- cost
- location
- availability
- phone, online or in-person options
- accessibility or language support

Step 5: Prepare

Help the person write down:

- what they would like support with
- questions they want to ask
- relevant information they may need
- what they hope will happen next

Step 6: Offer practical assistance

With their agreement, you could:

- sit with them while they call
- help complete an enquiry form
- attend an appointment
- provide transport
- help arrange practical responsibilities

Step 7: Follow up

Check in afterwards:
"How did that feel?"
"Would you like help with the next step?"

Step 8: Try another option if needed

If the service is not suitable, acknowledge the disappointment and explore another option when the person is ready.



7 What to do in a crisis

If there is an immediate risk to life or safety, **call 000**.

Urgent help may be needed when:

- the person says they want to die or seriously harm themselves
- the person has already harmed themselves
- the person says they intend to seriously harm someone else
- the person appears severely confused or disoriented
- distress is escalating quickly and feels unmanageable
- urgent medical care may be required

Stay with the person if it is safe and appropriate. Speak calmly and clearly. Let the person know that you are seeking help.

Do not place yourself or anyone else at further risk. You are not expected to manage an urgent or unsafe situation on your own.