Yellow Bench



How to start a conversation

Reaching out to someone you're worried about can feel daunting. You might worry about saying the wrong thing, upsetting them, or making the situation worse. You may even wonder whether it's your place to say anything at all.

The truth is you don't need to be an expert to check in with someone. You don't need the perfect words, either. Often, what matters most is letting the person know you've noticed, you care, and you're willing to listen.

(You don't need the perfect words to start a conversation. Showing you care is often the most important first step.)

Start with what you've noticed

A good way to begin is by focusing on specific changes you've observed, rather than making assumptions about how someone is feeling.

For example:

- "I've noticed you seem a bit quieter than usual lately. How are things going?"
- "You don't seem quite yourself at the moment. I just wanted to check in."
- "You've been on my mind recently. How have you been?"

Keeping the conversation simple and genuine can help the other person feel less judged and more comfortable opening up.

Keep it natural

You don't need formal language or mental health terminology. People often respond best when conversations feel authentic.

Instead of:
"I'm concerned about your mental wellbeing."

You might say:

- "I've noticed you've had a lot on your plate lately."
- "You seem under a lot of pressure."
- "Things don't seem easy for you right now."

Use the words you would normally use in everyday conversation.

Choose the right time

Try to find a time and place where neither of you feels rushed or distracted. That might be:

- during a walk
- over a coffee
- driving together
- after work
- during a quiet moment at home

A private and relaxed setting can make it easier for someone to talk openly. **Give them space to respond.** Once you've asked a question, try to give the other person time to answer. Silence can feel uncomfortable, but it often gives people the space they need to gather their thoughts. You don't need to rush in with another question or try to fill every quiet moment.

If they don't want to talk

Not everyone will be ready to open up straight away.

If someone says they're fine or doesn't want to talk, try not to push.

Instead, you could say:

- "That's okay. I just wanted you to know I'm here if you ever want to chat."
- "No pressure. I just wanted to check in."
- Sometimes knowing that someone cares is enough. They may come back to the conversation later.

Remember

You don't need perfect words | You don't need all the answers | You don't need to fix anything | The most important thing is reaching out and showing you care | A simple conversation can help someone feel seen, valued and less alone

Quick tips

✅ Be genuine
✅ Keep it simple
✅ Use everyday language
✅ Focus on what you've noticed

✅ Listen more than you speak
✅ Be patient
✅ Let them know you're there for them

❌ Don't assume you know what's wrong
❌ Don't pressure them to open up
❌ Don't try to solve everything immediately
❌ Don't wait for a crisis before you check in



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