

SEPTEMBER 2020

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Happy Wednesday!

In today's edition we look at the key messages for '**R U OK? Day**', and the difference we can make by not only asking the question, but also continuing the conversation. In addition, an 'R U OK? Day' ['lunch and learn'](#) session is being held on reducing stigma associated with mental health and practical tips on supporting others.

Some great topics this week include:

- using positive psychology to flourish
- new 'lunch and learn' sessions
- **ZUMBA** joins our daily exercise schedule
- planning virtual coffee catch-ups.

And don't forget to check out the best lunch photos from our '**What's for lunch?**' photo challenge.

Stay well and have a great Wednesday.

'What's for lunch?' photo challenge

A huge thank you to all those who provided photos of their motivational lunches. A selection of photos have been included below for some lunchtime inspiration for you!

Looking for more recipes and tips for a healthy lunch? Check out these resources below to get you started.

- [Body + Soul mindful food techniques](#)
- [How to eat healthy food on a budget during lockdown](#)
- [Smart eating recipes from Dietitians Australia](#)

And, if you missed last week's '**Improving mental health through diet and nutrition**' 'lunch and learn' session, [click here to view the recording.](#)



R U OK? Day - Thursday, 10 September 2020

2020 has been a challenging year for everyone and circumstances have made it even more important for us all to stay connected and, for those who are able, be willing to support those around us.

The message for **R U OK? Day** on Thursday, 10 September 2020 is '**There's more to say after R U OK?**' Knowing what to say when someone says they're not OK, and guiding them through how they can continue a conversation, may change a life.

If you've noticed a change in someone, no matter how small, trust the signs and your instincts and ask *R U OK?* Studies show that many people don't feel confident about recognising the signs of when someone might be struggling. These may include:

- **What are they saying?** *Do they seem:* confused or irrational – moody – unable to switch off – concerned about the future – concerned they're a burden – lonely or lacking self-esteem – concerned they're trapped or in pain.
- **What are they doing?** *Are they:* experiencing mood swings – dismissive or defensive – self-medicating – becoming withdrawn – changing their online behaviour – behaving recklessly – unable to concentrate – losing interest in what they used to love – less interested in their appearance and personal hygiene – changing their sleep patterns – changing their appearance.

pressure from relocation or changed living arrangements – conflict at work or at home – relationship issues – becoming a parent – major health issues or an injury – constant stress – financial difficulty – loss of someone or something they care about.

You don't have to be an expert to **keep the conversation going** when someone says they're not OK. By knowing what to say you can help them feel supported and access appropriate assistance before they're in crisis, which can make a really positive difference to their life. Learn more about what you can say in this [Conversation Guide](#).

Do you need support?

If you feel you might benefit from professional support, you can contact our Employee Assistance Program (EAP) for free and confidential counselling. The service is available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week by phoning 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327) or 03 8681 2444.

'Lunch and learn' presentation

Join us for this important R U OK? Day presentation by *Tom Ruijs, expert in organisational psychology from AP Psychology and Consulting Services*. Tom will discuss how we reduce stigma associated with mental health as well as provide practical tips on supporting people through mental health challenges, and how to develop conversation starters whilst sharing stories from the COVID-19 environment.

[Click here to register for the R U OK? Day presentation.](#)



Positive psychology to feel good and flourish

Collectively we are experiencing grief for the toll that the pandemic has had on lives, health, relationships, jobs, and the economy. It is understandable that we can feel overwhelmed, anxious and stressed during these times. However, there is some light on the horizon with restrictions looking like they will begin to ease in the coming weeks. Using **positive psychology** strategies can help you manage how you feel at this time.

The Skill Collective, a Western Australian-based psychology service, says that drawing on positive psychology doesn't mean ignoring what's going on in the world and the changes and worries that we're experiencing. It's not pretending that there isn't pain and suffering, and instead painting an overly optimistic perspective. Rather, it's a way for us to flourish during these challenging times, particularly when global mental health is a concern.

Through a positive psychology lens, here are five practical handy tips to use right now:

- **Practice gratitude.** Gratitude is more important now than ever. Training our minds to focus on the positives in the world during these challenging times can help our wellbeing and mental health.
- **Be your own 'bestie' with self-compassion.** Be kind to yourself. Approach how you look after yourself in the way you would support a good friend or loved one.
- **Have fun (and a positive and pleasurable life).** Actively do things that make you happy and lift your mood during these tough times. Get active and get engaged!
- **Play to your strengths.** Positive psychology focuses heavily on building on strengths to boost wellbeing. Kindness, leadership, creativity? Identify your strength!
- **Connect with others.** The power of positive relationships and social connections cannot be underestimated at a time when physical distancing has become the norm. Shared experiences of the pandemic can bring us closer together.

Read the original article '[How positive psychology can help in coronavirus times](#)' for more information and strategies.

And if you're struggling to find the feel good factor at this point in time, reach out! If you're not coping be sure to speak to someone – whether that's to a loved one, a trusted friend, our [Employee Assistance Program](#) (EAP), your GP or a health professional.

Stay well, be positive and kind to yourself.



Lunch and learn sessions

With **new sessions** being added regularly, make sure you keep up-to-date with what's on offer.

The 'lunch and learn' sessions are designed to provide staff with information and assistance in a range of areas that support their personal and professional needs and interests.

[Click here to register](#) for your preferred session(s). A Microsoft Teams link will be sent following registration.

Upcoming sessions include:

9 September **Sleep - how it supports our health and strategies for sleeping well**
12:30pm - 1:15pm *Professor Gerard Kennedy, School of Science, Psychology and Sport*

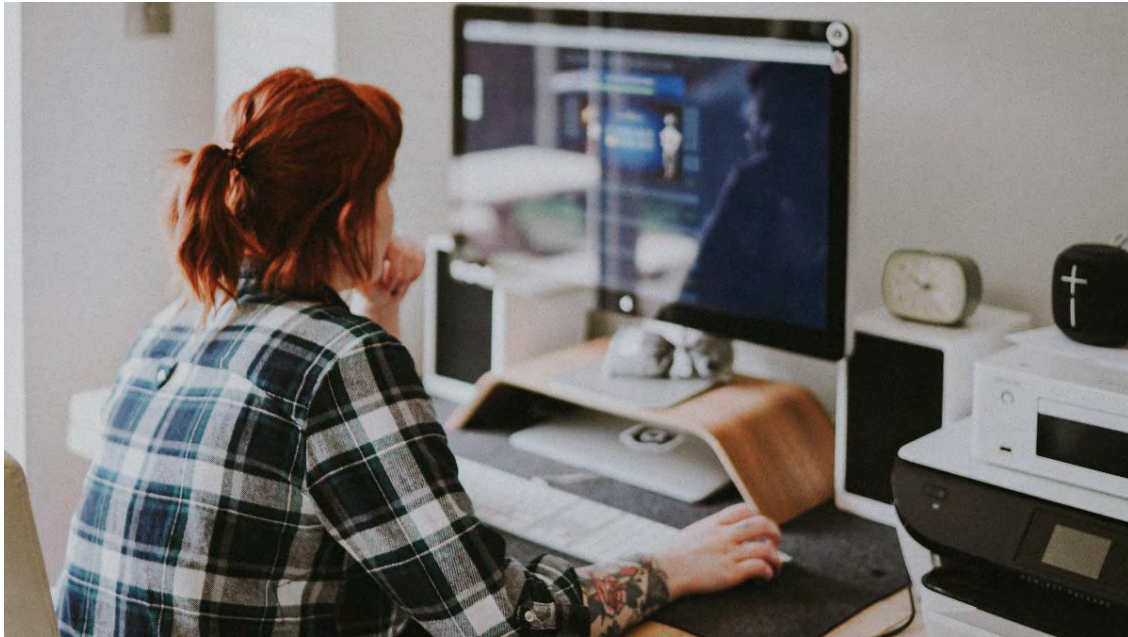
10 September **R U OK? Day presentation**
1:00pm - 1:45pm *Tom Ruijs, Consultant, AP Psychology and consulting services.*

15 September **Functional movement – creating long lasting change**

17 September Demystifying counselling and support services through EAP

12:30pm - 1:15pm Ms Marisa Parsons, Team Leader, People Assist at Converge International

new session



Get active, stay healthy

We are pleased to announce **ZUMBA** classes will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays for the next four weeks!

With daily sessions including ZUMBA, Pilates, yoga, meditation, body stretch, and HIIT, you have a great choice of activities to complement your daily routine!

Email Human Resources at hr@federation.edu.au with your preferred session(s) and we will forward you the relevant Zoom link(s).

- Mondays - 12:00pm - **Body Stretch** | 4:45pm - **Meditation**
- Tuesdays - 9:30am - **Meditation** | 12:00pm - **ZUMBA**
- Wednesdays - 9:15am - **Meditation** | 12:00pm - **HIIT** | 12:30pm - **Yoga**
- Thursdays - 9:15am - **Meditation** | 12:00pm - **ZUMBA** | 4:45pm - **Meditation**
- Fridays - 9:15am - **Yoga** | 12:00pm - **Pilates** | 12:30pm - **Meditation**

If you have any pre-existing conditions or are new to exercising, please follow the advice of your health professional. It is vital that we prioritise the health and safety of ourselves, family, friends and the community.



Virtual coffee catch-ups

When on campus or in the office, coffee breaks tended to be spontaneous—you swing by a colleague’s desk to see if they can catch-up for a quick coffee. It sets us up for a good day at work with that much-needed social interaction and coffee hit the perfect pairing.

But when we are working from home, there’s no such spontaneity. Instead, we have to make a deliberate effort to connect with colleagues. While the shift to online meetings has been a game-changer for some, there is a craft to mastering the art of virtual communication – and that goes for the humble coffee catch-up too.

Consider these tips when planning a virtual coffee catch-up:

- **Prepare before you meet.** It can be useful to establish why you're meeting and provide a topic of discussion in your meeting invitation. If it's more formal, it can be helpful to provide a short agenda to guide the discussion.
- **Make a connection.** Regardless of whether the meeting is for business purposes or a social catch-up, start by making a human connection to help engage everyone.
- **Follow the leader.** You have probably experienced the frustration of virtual meetings with people interrupting or talking over one another. Be clear on who is facilitating the discussion.

browser tabs.

- **K.I.S.S (Keep It Short and Slow).** With so much of our interaction occurring virtually, keep your meetings short and on point. It is also important to slow down – especially when communicating virtually. People need time to think and the social cues of who can talk when are much less obvious.
- **Bonus tip: Keep smiling.** Smiling releases endorphins and makes everyone feel better connected. This energy is a vital component to a successful – and memorable – coffee meeting.

For most of us, working remotely will be the reality for the near future. Make your coffee catch-ups as enjoyable and effective as you can by taking a few moments to prepare. **And remember to enjoy your coffee too!**



Health and wellbeing recordings now available

New '**lunch and learn**' recordings and **daily exercise sessions** are now available.

The sessions are available via the Human Resources website under the '[COVID-19 support for staff](#)' page in '[Health and wellbeing](#)'. You will find the recordings under the following headings:

Lunch and learn sessions

- [Finance: what choices can we make to best manage our money](#) (42 minute video, 73MB)
- [Keeping fit in isolation](#) (34 minute video, 215MB)
- [Mindfulness, movement and energy enhancing tips to support wellness during isolation](#) (47 minute video, 341MB)
- [Family violence - building awareness of controlling behaviour](#) (53 minute video, 425MB)
- [Psychological resilience - strategies for strengthening mental health during isolation](#) (31 minute video, 55MB)

- [Improving mental health through diet and nutrition](#) (44 minute video, 83MB)

Exercise and movement

- [Stream and enjoy a Meditation session](#) (18 minute video, 46MB)
- [Stream and enjoy a UniSports' Body Stretch session](#) (30 minute video, 90MB)
- [Stream and enjoy a UniSports' HIIT session](#) (30 minute video, 120MB)
- [Stream and enjoy a Yoga session](#) (34 minute video, 83MB)
- [Stream and enjoy a Yo-lates session](#) (30 minute video, 75MB)
- [Stream and enjoy a UniSports' Pilates session](#) (33 minute video, 132MB)

We continue to receive great feedback from staff on the value and impact of these sessions on their health and wellbeing. Make sure you take time to review the upcoming 'lunch and learn' schedule and daily meditation and exercise sessions.

Future session recordings will continue to be added and made available on the Human Resources website for staff access.



Quick Links

[COVID-19 support for staff](#)

[Mental health and wellbeing - information guide](#)

[Health and wellbeing resources](#)