



# HELPING YOUR MEN. IN TURN HELPING YOU.

Are you looking after yourself?  
Are you feeling capable of providing support?  
Do you have time to listen?  
Have you got your own self-care and supports in place?  
If so, carry on.



Warning signs –  
“Something is not  
right here”



Act early, with curiosity  
and compassion. Keep it  
simple and direct.



Self-support, social  
support, and professional  
support options.



Check-In. Nudge  
instead of Nag.

#MEN CHAT STARTER.

MANAGE WHAT MATTERS.

MANTLE



# RECOGNISE

Warning signs – “Something is not right here”

- Overt distress
- Emotion suppression (bottling things up, avoidance, feeling numb)
- Increased alcohol and/or drug use
- Anger, aggression, irritability (often used to mask underlying vulnerability)
- Somatic symptoms (disrupted sleep, aches, and pains, declining physical health, loss of libido)
- Risk-taking and impulsivity
- Challenging life events (separation and divorce, parenting difficulties, work-related pressures, job insecurity, physical illness, social isolation, and loneliness)

**ANY CHANGE IN BEHAVIOUR or ACTING OUT OF CHARACTER**

Plan for the conversation before you RESPOND – what are the observable behaviour changes? What are the environments/locations that may be less confrontational? Have you thought about additional support options?

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## RESPOND

Act early, with curiosity and compassion. Keep it simple and direct. Take the pressure off yourself to have all the answers

- Remind yourself to LISTEN first, even if a solution seems obvious.
- Limit throwing out advice or solutions too soon. Avoid using “shoulds and musts” – “you should go to the gym”, “you shouldn’t drink”, “you must speak about how you’re feeling” – these imply no grey area, no room for negotiation; you “should”, and you “must”, or you will fail.
- Avoid minimising, generalising and blaming, sounding judgemental or overly critical. While often not people’s intentions, this approach can trigger feelings of failure, hopelessness, and weakness.

Try a gentle start, so they have warning: “Is now a good time to talk?” Then you can use something specific you’ve noticed: “You haven’t been as playful with the kids lately, and that’s not like you”; “I haven’t seen much of you lately, how are you doing?”

Or something a little more general if you’re unsure what’s going on: “You haven’t seemed yourself lately, how are you going? No, how are you really going?”

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## REFER

Self-support, social support, and professional support options. Think about coaching questions (who, what, how) and working with them to identify solutions.

- Don't underestimate the power of social support. "Who's been a good support for you in the past?"; "How can I best support you right now?"
- Even if he doesn't seem receptive to your support, simply being there for him is likely extremely valuable. "It sounds like you're not ready to talk, but I'm here for you when you are. Can we try again in a few days?"
- Remind him of some of his strengths (leverage his masculinities) or the things that might have helped him cope in the past (increases a sense of self-efficacy): "What has worked for you previously?"; "When you've been stressed in the past you've mentioned that a gym session or going for a walk helps you out a bit."
- Empower him for change – explain how help-seeking will make him stronger; could help him to be a better partner, father, son, brother, friend, or colleague. "I know you like to hit challenges head on, but how about we look at some additional support to help you tackle this one."
- Explore referral options together and explicitly ask him what you can do to best support him. "I'm aware of some good support options, how can I best help you to link in with one? Let's do this together."

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## REFER – SUPPORT OPTIONS

- Lifeline – 13 11 14 – free crisis support 24/7.
- MensLine – 1300 78 99 78 – free crisis-oriented phone and online counselling.
- Relationships Australia – 1300 364 277 – relationship support for individuals, families, and communities.
- Mr Perfect – men’s health and well-being resources [www.mrperfect.org.au/pages/mens-health-directory](http://www.mrperfect.org.au/pages/mens-health-directory)
- Trusted GP for a chat, Mental Health Care Plan and referral to Mantle or another psychology practice.
- Mantle Health – 1300 646 753;  
[www.mantlehealth.com.au](http://www.mantlehealth.com.au)

Options for boys and teenagers:

- ReachOut  
[www.au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues](http://www.au.reachout.com/mental-health-issues)
- Head to Health Chatstarter  
[www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter](http://www.headtohealth.gov.au/covid-19-support/chatstarter)

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## RECONNECT

Check-In (we are not talking QR codes here), to nudge him towards support options.

- Concern over criticism (e.g., “I’m worried about you and want to help”)
- Follow-up your conversation to show that you genuinely care (remember the power of social support) and to determine whether he’s feeling any better and is on the right track. If he isn’t, re-explore some of the referral options outlined above.
- There is no one size fits all when it comes to improved mental health and well-being, so trying a few different things is important.
- “Care don’t carry” – you can care deeply about something, but you need to remain mindful of not carrying the emotions and weight of your man’s struggle. If you get stuck in emotional contagion, your ability to help is reduced.

To learn more about what to say and how you can help a man in your life, check-out <https://conversations.movember.com/en-us/>

For some inspiration and stories from other people about how they manage their mental health and what matters to them, check-out <https://mantlehealth.com.au/manage-what-matters/>

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