



R. U. OK? What to say?

T.A.L.K.

Part 2

R U OK is promoted as a very useful thing to ask those around you.

Checking in with someone regarding their health, mental or physical is a very useful and helpful thing to do.

The question, when asked, has 2 responses.

Yes or No, both of which a closed answers and easily dismissed.

The person says.....Yes.

Does that mean they are dismissing you. In other words, don't want to talk or are they actually OK?

The person says.....No.

Now what? What can you, or are prepared to, be able to offer in return?

You did ask after all.

The response from the other person will of course be dependant on the level of trust they have in you. That what they say will be meet with empathy, support and of course confidentially.

The response will be determined in the context the question is asked. It could be at home, work or in a social setting.

How do you prepare to reply to their initial answer?

Part of a psychological first aid course explores the options, however in the mean time you can use this simple tool... T.A.L.K;

Take you time

Acknowledge

Listen

Konnnect

Take your time – asking, R U OK requires time to be able to respond to the answer. If you are concerned about someone and are asking how are they, really, you will need to have time to enable them to feel like you are prepared to Listen and maybe help.

Acknowledge what is occurring is real. Assess what it is they are expressing to you. Remember, to take the conversation further they must at first trust you.

Listen intently to what is being said/expressed. Demonstrate by your actions, body language and tone that you are not only listening, but hearing what they have to say.

Konnnect with others who can provide more help if required. This might be other people at work, friends, family/Whanau and if necessary and agreed, clinical help.

A conversation may go something like this;

Q. *R U Ok?*

A. *No, not really*

Q. *Oh, that's no good, I have time to listen now if you like.*

A. *Really ? (of course) Ok.. the problem is.....*

Q. *That must be awful/sad/hard/?..... Tell me more.*

A. *Well.....*

Q. *What I heard you say was..... have I got it right?*

A. *Yes/No/Kind of.....*

Q. *How do you feel now we have talked? Is there someone else that can help?
How can I help?*

The conversation is of course built around trust. This trust may be individual or even organisational in nature.

Think about the context in which you asking .. R U Ok.

Do you or the organisation/workplace have the level of knowledge and understanding that a person can answer knowing that at least there is some level of understanding. In expressing an answer do they know that even if it is unusual/different or even confronting that you or those around them will be tolerant and accepting of them?

Without these trust factors, it may be difficult for someone who may need support answering NO to being OK.