

Getting comfortable talking

A beginners guide to talking

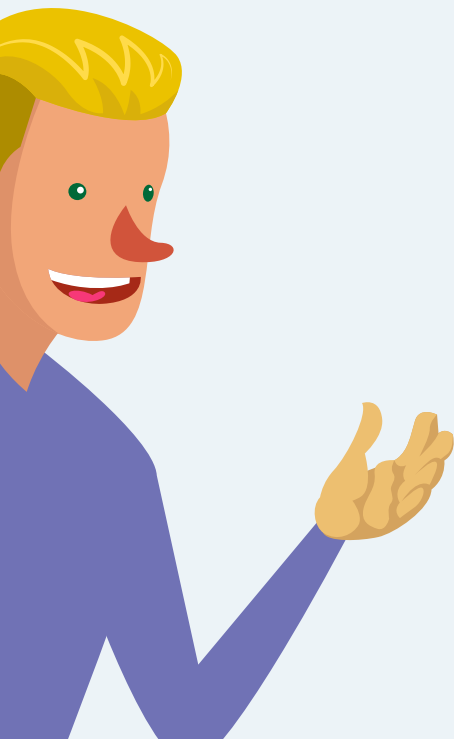
There is a lot you can't do right now but one thing you can do is talk.

As people feel increasingly isolated and alone it can be easy to stop talking and shut off. This is dangerous, we at The Male Hug know that talking helps, a problem shared really is a problem halved.

However starting the conversation with someone you care about can be tough and this guide is designed to help the conversation.

You might not want to call the person out of the blue, it might be a good idea to pre-empt with a text message:

- **Hello it`s been a while, how are you?**
- **Hey I just thought I`d check in and see how you are have you got time to chat?**
- **I miss our catch ups, thought I would say hello and see how you`re going?**
- **I`m bored how are you?**
- **It`s been a long time since I`ve seen you so I thought I`d see how you are?**



For the conversation

- If you want someone to open up it really helps if you share your own feelings and experience. **Help the person see they're not alone.** If you or someone you know is struggling with lockdown talking about you own or their experiences might be a good way of starting a dialogue. Be open and authentic about yourself.
- **Be Positive.** Talk about wellbeing, maybe how you are exercising or any positive distractions and hobbies. How much Fall Guys / COD can you play while working from home.
- Try to have a laugh and remember happier times.
- The most important part of a conversation is listening, yes that's right. A conversation is a two way street and by saying nothing you are listening and this lets your friend know they are heard. When you have a conversation **listen with an open mind.**
- You are there to listen and not judge or give answers, resist the temptation to jump to solutions. Ask open ended questions about what they are doing and how they are feeling.
- **Let them lead the discussion at their own pace.** Don't put pressure on them to tell you anything, don't try to second guess their feelings and certainly don't say *you know how they feel* as you probably don't.
- If you know the person, make plans for the future, even if they are not concrete as it's a nice idea to pencil in a game of golf or a couple of beers.
- **Be consistent and available,** always offer another time to chat.

Ideas for opening conversation phrases

- How are you going / How are you finding lockdown?
- How are you feeling about lockdown?
- What are you most looking forward to after this?
- What's been happening, have you caught up with anyone else?



Other resources

When we need to refer people you will need to use your judgment to assess where is the most appropriate place.

In the most serious of cases is could be 000 or LifeLine (13 11 14).

However there are other more bespoke services that have specialist people, often peers who have been through situations related to their specialist area of support.

Also if you have access the following link uses Google maps to fine local specialist mental health support <https://www.healthdirect.gov.au/australian-health-services>

Service name	Description	Phone
St Vincent's Psychiatric Triage	Melbourne hospital offering emergency mental health support	1300 558 862
Suicide Call Back	Suicide call back 24-hour crisis support and counselling	1300 659 467
The Line	For Young people with relationship problems	1800 695 463
Ageing	Information for older people and their carers	1800 500 853
The Butterfly Foundation	Peer support for those with eating disorders	1800 33 4673
Gambling helpline	Expert support for those with gambling problems	1800 858 858
Open Arms	Support for Veterans and Military personnel	1800 011 046
Bush support line	Peer practical support for those people in rural and remote areas	1800 805 391
Directline	Support for people impacted by drug use	1800 888 236
Safe Steps	Family violence support	1800 015 188
Kids Helpline	Support for the under 25s	1800 551800
Sane	Professional counsellors for complex mental health issues . NOT a crisis line	1800 18 7263
Dads In Distress	For dads with parenting or access problems	1300 853 437
Panda	Perinatal Anxiety & Depression	1300 726 306
Parentline	Parents and carers with children from birth to 18 years	13 22 89
Sands	Still life and miscarriage	1300 072 637
Gay and Lesbian Switchboard	Gay, lesbian, bisexual, transgender and intersex (GLBTI)	9663 2939 or 1800 184 527
QLife	LGBTI	1800 184 527
Sexual Assault Crisis Line Victoria	For Victims of sexual assault	1800 806 292
Blue Knot Foundation	Sexual Abuse survivors	1300 657 380



We are The Male Hug, a not for profit organisation that is committed to raising awareness of men's mental health for professional males. We provide support and a platform for professional males to talk and engage openly in a safe and friendly environment that is free of judgement.

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