

# Check-In Chats: Supporting the People You Care About



Checking in with the people in your life is a helpful way to take action for mental health. Many people want to support their family and friends, but aren't sure how to bring up the subject of mental health. The good news is that it doesn't have to be hard!

## Here are some tips for having a Check-In Chat:

### WHO can you check in with?

- ✓ Family
- ✓ Friends
- ✓ Co-workers, fellow students, or other people you see often
- ✓ Neighbors
- ✓ Someone you think might be struggling with their mental health

### WHAT is a Check-In Chat?

- ✓ A conversation about how someone is feeling
- ✓ A way to ask if someone needs some support for their mental health
- ✓ A chance to show you care and are there for them

### WHY have a Check-In Chat?

- ✓ You can make a big difference in someone's life
- ✓ Connecting with someone makes them feel less isolated and supported
- ✓ Starting a conversation can lead to someone opening up about their situation and needs
- ✓ You can help someone find support or services when needed
- ✓ Talking about mental health gets easier the more you do it

### WHERE could you have a Check-In Chat?

- ✓ In person
- ✓ On the phone
- ✓ Through text messages or social media direct messages
- ✓ Online video
- ✓ Wherever you both can talk and feel comfortable



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## WHEN is the right time for a Check-In Chat?

- ✓ Whenever you have a chance to catch up with someone
- ✓ If you notice that someone might be having a hard time with their mental health ([takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources](https://takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources)) or think they may be at risk of suicide ([takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources](https://takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources))
- ✓ When you know someone is dealing with a stressful event in their life
- ✓ As often as you and the other person want to check in

## HOW do you do a Check-In Chat?

- ✓ A Check-In Chat doesn't have to focus only on mental health. You can start by talking about anything that connects you to that person.
- ✓ The conversation might be easier while you are doing something else together, like taking a walk or another activity you both enjoy.
- ✓ Ask them how they are or what's going on in their life. Even if they say they are fine, give them a chance to share more by saying something like "Last time we talked, you said you were under pressure at work. How's that going?" Or "Seems like something is bothering you. Do you want to talk about it?"
- ✓ If you have reason to think they are struggling, you can open with "I've noticed that..." with examples of behavior changes or other concerns. Let them know you care and want to help.
- ✓ If you are worried they might be thinking about suicide, ask them about it directly. You will not plant the idea in their head, but rather could bring them relief to have a conversation. Get help with how to talk about suicide and what to do if you think they might hurt themselves ([takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources](https://takeaction4mh.com/check-in-resources)).
- ✓ Listen to what they have to say without interrupting. Use eye contact and open body language to show you're listening. If you're not together in person, maintain focus while you chat, without looking at your phone, a computer, or the TV.
- ✓ Validate their feelings with responses like "That must be hard," or "It sounds like you're feeling really frustrated."
- ✓ Avoid giving advice or sharing your own experience unless they ask for it. Keep the Check-In Chat focused on the other person's mental health needs.
- ✓ Ask them "What can I do to support you?" and follow up on it.
- ✓ If the other person isn't interested in opening up, don't push them. Let them know you're there for them if they want to talk another time. Keep in touch with future check-ins.
- ✓ Check-in Chats don't have to be long talks. You can even text a question to someone who wants your support like "On a scale of 1-10, how do you feel today?" Depending on the answer, you can decide whether to follow up.
- ✓ If you could use some mental health support yourself, find a Check-In Buddy and make a plan to check in with each other on a regular basis. Or reach out to someone you trust to ask for support ([takeaction4mh.com/get-support-resources](https://takeaction4mh.com/get-support-resources)).

**Take action for mental health by having a Check-In Chat with someone you care about.** Think about someone in your life who might need some support and reach out to them today.



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