

## Leader Talking Points

- Sometimes, we all run into circumstances that challenge us at work and in our personal lives (stress, relationship problems, depression, anxiety, financial problems, problems at work, health problems, etc.)
- By giving someone the opportunity and time to share what they're feeling, we're giving that person a sense of connection and perhaps support to find help.
- Emotional and social problems are common, high-impact, costly, disruptive, and **treatable**.
  - Unfortunately, only a small percentage of those in need receive the available care.
- **Mental health first aid** is the initial help offered to a person developing a mental health or substance-use problem or experiencing a mental health crisis.
  - Just like medical first aid, support is given until appropriate treatment is received or until the crisis resolves.
- Mental Health First Aid Action Plan:
  - Assess for risk of suicide or harm
  - Listen without judgment
  - Give reassurance and information
  - Encourage appropriate professional help
  - Encourage self-help and other support strategies
- **R U OK?** is an easy, memorable approach to mental health first aid that offers guidelines anyone can use to intervene early and help those around us.
- We can ask "R U OK?" to anyone who seems not-themselves.
  - You see much of the same people every day, and you hear about their stresses and know when things may not be going well.
  - You know what is "normal" for them and when they have changed from their usual appearance, so you are well-placed to notice the small changes that might suggest someone isn't coping or needs a bit of extra support.
- Signs someone is struggling:
  - **Changes in physical appearance** (more tired, pattern of illness, headaches/migraines, different eating habits, increased alcohol consumption, fidgety/nervous, etc.)
  - **Changes in mood** (more irritable, anxious/worried, more emotional, quick to anger, depressed, overwhelmed, etc.)



A conversation could change a life.

- **Changes in behavior** (more withdrawn, loss of interest, difficulty concentrating/distracted, avoiding social situations, not performing to usual standard, etc.)
- **Changes in how thoughts are expressed** (tendency to catastrophize everything, interpret situations negatively, personalize situations, thoughts sound more confused/irrational, complain about constant thoughts and difficulty switching them off, etc.)
- If you notice someone struggling, that is your opportunity to start a conversation. How to ask:
  - Be ready – Are you in the right frame of mind and able to give as much time as needed?
  - Be prepared – Remember you won't have all the answers, but listening is one of the most important things you can do.
  - Pick your moment – Choose somewhere private and informal when it's a good time for them.
- Starting the conversation:
  - Ask "R U OK" – Be relaxed in your approach; use casual language and tone.
  - Listen without judgment – Don't interrupt or rush the conversation, and take what they say seriously. Avoid saying things like, "I know what you're going through" and "Look on the bright side."
  - Encourage action – Ask "What do you think might help?" Help them think about one small step they might be able to take to improve their situation. Encourage them to speak with family, a trusted friend, doctor, or the Caterpillar Employee Assistance Program (EAP).
  - Check in – Make a joint decision to spend some time together soon and see how they're doing. When you check in, ask if anything is improving. Stay in touch and be there for them.
- If you run into resistance, don't push; just let them know you will be ready to talk if and when they are ready.
- When we begin to struggle with personal problems, being alone can make it harder to resolve our problems and lead to more significant emotional struggles.
  - R U OK? aims to give people a bit more confidence to be there for each other when things are a bit tough.
- Caterpillar Employee Assistance Program (EAP):
  - The EAP is a voluntary, **confidential**, and **free** benefit helping employees and their families resolve a variety of personal issues before they impact well-being, health, or productivity.
  - For 24/7 EAP support, call **1-866-228-0565**.
  - Outside the U.S., visit **[www.ChestnutGlobalPartners.org/Cat](http://www.ChestnutGlobalPartners.org/Cat)** to find EAP information.

Learn more about mental health first aid and how to ask  
**R U OK?** at **[benefits.cat.com](http://benefits.cat.com)** > **EAP**.