



If you know an expectant or new parent who does not seem like themselves, you may want to check in. It can be hard to know what to say, especially if you are worried about getting it wrong. A simple, caring conversation can help someone feel less alone and more supported.

Pregnancy and early parenthood can be a very vulnerable time. Some people may find it hard to recognise how they are feeling, or may feel ashamed about opening up. If you notice changes in someone you care about, checking in gently can be a helpful first step.

Simple Ways To Start The Conversation

You do not need to have the perfect words. What matters most is being calm, kind and genuine. You could say:

- "It's totally normal to feel overwhelmed. How are you coping day to day?"
- "There's no right or wrong way to feel during this time. How has it really been for you?"
- "I've noticed that you don't seem like yourself. How have you been feeling lately?"
- "You have a lot on your plate right now. What's been feeling hardest lately?"
- "Thank you for telling me. That sounds really hard."
- "It's okay if you don't have the words. I'm here for you."
- "What kind of support would feel most helpful right now?"
- "I'm here for you if you want to talk, vent, cry, or simply have company"
- "Would it be okay if I checked in again in a few days?"

How To Have A Supportive Conversation With A Partner, Friend, or Family Member

Having a supportive conversation is not about having the right answers. It is about creating a calm, safe space where someone feels heard, respected and supported.

- Choose a quiet time with few interruptions. Even short, regular check-ins can help someone feel connected.
- Sometimes talking feels easier when you are doing something together, like going for a walk or having a cup of tea.
- Put phones away and give them your full attention.
- Listen without rushing to fix things or offer solutions.
- Focus on understanding how they are feeling, without judgement or criticism.
- Give them time to respond, even if there are pauses or silence.
- Validate their feelings and let them know you are glad they shared.
- Try not to give advice or problem-solve unless they ask as this can sometimes feel like criticism, even when it is well-intended.
- If it feels appropriate, you might gently share that you have struggled with something similar, but only if it feels helpful and they are open to it.
- Ask what kind of support would help most right now. This could be practical help, company, reassurance, or simply a hug.

If They Don't Want To Talk

Not everyone will be ready to open up straight away. They may feel embarrassed, unsure of what they are feeling, or worried about being judged. Try to go at their pace and let them know you are there to chat when they are ready. Gentle, ongoing support can be more helpful than pushing for a conversation. Alternatively, you can ask if they have someone else they feel comfortable speaking with and perhaps share some contacts for support services (see below).

When Extra Support May Help

If someone seems very withdrawn, highly anxious, overwhelmed, or is struggling to cope day to day, extra support may be needed. You could encourage them to speak with a trusted health professional, such as their regular GP, midwife or mental health clinician. Reaching out for help is a sign of strength, not failure.

fact sheet

How To 'Check-In' With An Expectant Or New Parent



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Checking in does not need to be perfect to be meaningful. A calm, compassionate conversation can help an expectant or new parent feel seen, supported and less alone. There are many support services and resources available, and help is available when it is needed most. 🌸

- Gidget Foundation Australia
- Beyond Blue
- Lifeline
- PANDA (Perinatal Anxiety & Depression Australia)