



MOVEMBER®

LEAN ON ME

LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT A MATE
WHO'S STRUGGLING



WE DON'T ALWAYS KNOW WHEN A FRIEND IS STRUGGLING.

They might not talk about it, they might distance themselves, they might go quiet. But even these are important signs that something might be wrong. It's up to us, as friends and loved ones, to spot the signs and know how to respond.

In this guide you'll find practical tips and resources to help guide your approach when reaching out to a friend who's struggling.



SPOT THE SIGNS

Show your mates that you're there for them. Because it's not always obvious. In fact, 70% of men say their friends can count on them, yet only 48% of men say they can rely on their close friends for emotional support. In other words, guys are there for their mates, but their mates might not know it. We can all upskill ourselves as friends by learning how to spot the signs of someone who's struggling, and how to offer support.

The signs aren't always clear cut. But if your friend's behaviour has changed, don't ignore it. Start a conversation.

Changes in behaviour

Which could look like...

They don't seem their usual self

They're irritable, sad, aggressive, overreact to situations, have emotional outbursts.

They avoid activities they once enjoyed

They've stopped coming to football training or weekend catchups with friends.

They're uncharacteristically quiet and withdrawn

They've gone quiet on the group chat, they're not answering calls or texts, they've isolated themselves from friends and family.

Drinking/partying/recklessness

They're drinking or partying to excess and demonstrating impaired judgement/ reduced inhibitions, they're speeding when driving.

Trouble sleeping

They've mentioned that they're not sleeping, they look tired, drained and sad.

Weight gain/weight loss

Their appetite and weight are fluctuating dramatically.

REACH OUT WITH ALEC

A

ASK:

Start by asking how they're feeling. It's worth mentioning any changes you've picked up on: have they stopped replying to texts? Do they sound different on the phone? Have they gone quiet on the group chat?

Use a prompt like, "**You haven't seemed yourself lately – are you feeling OK?**"

Trust your instinct. Remember, people often say "I'm fine" when they're not, so don't be afraid to ask twice.

You can use something specific you've noticed, like: "**It's just that you haven't been replying to my texts, and that's not like you.**"

L

LISTEN:

Give them your full attention. Let them know you're hearing what they're saying and you're not judging. You don't have to diagnose problems or offer solutions, but asking questions lets them know you're listening.

Ask a question like: "**That can't be easy – how long have you felt this way?**"

E

ENCOURAGE ACTION:

Help them focus on simple things that might improve how they feel. Are they getting enough sleep? Are they exercising and eating well? Maybe there's something that's helped them in the past – it's worth asking.

Suggest that they share how they're feeling with others they trust. This will make things easier for both of you. And if they've felt low for more than two weeks, suggest they chat to their doctor.

C

CHECK IN:

Follow up your conversation with a phone call, FaceTime, or in person if you can. This helps to show that you care; plus, you'll get a vibe for whether they're feeling any better.

If you're worried that somebody's life is in immediate danger, go directly to emergency services.

Huge thanks to R U OK? for developing the ALEC model.



TAKE OUR WORDS FOR IT

Sometimes, we're not sure what to say when chatting to a mate about the serious stuff. We might default to offering solutions or asking closed questions. We created Movember Conversations to give you the skills to hold hard conversations with confidence, to be a good listener, to help you with the words, questions and responses that aren't always obvious. Take our words for it.

conversations.movember.com



I really should check on the kids.

I'm so busy with work. But I need to get them away from screens for a while.

Good plan. Your family is more important than work.

Yeah. My youngest is glued to my phone. He doesn't understand why he can't play with his friends so much.

Just concentrate on your work. The kids can take care of themselves.

What would you say next?



**THANK
YOU.**

Find out more at [movember.com/mentalhealth](https://www.movember.com/mentalhealth)