

OCTOBER 2024

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA

MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING STUDENT NEWSLETTER

Hi Students,

Congratulations on making it through the first half of semester 2.
We hope you are keeping safe and warm through this breezy spring weather.

In this edition we will cover:

- The R U OK? organisation and their tips for checking in
- Medical and Counselling's R U OK? picnic!
- Our 'Feel-Good Favourites' Group playlist



CONTENT WARNING:

This edition addresses
themes related to suicide.
Remember to take regular breaks
and check in with yourself after
reading. If this is triggering for
you, skip to page 4 to avoid
this content.

RU OK?



R U OK? is a national suicide prevention charity and public health promotion that aims to foster awareness and reduce the stigma surrounding mental health. The R U OK? organisation encourages people to learn how to identify the warning signs and reach out to others through meaningful conversations.

By asking the simple yet profound question, “R U OK?” we can create a supportive environment where individuals feel comfortable discussing their mental health. This approach can significantly impact someone’s wellbeing and create a culture of openness and support.

The theme for 2024, “Ask R U OK? Any Day,” emphasizes the importance of checking in on those around us throughout the year, not just on R U OK? Day. By regularly asking “R U OK?” we can make a difference in someone’s life, reinforcing the idea that conversations around mental health should be frequent. This theme highlights that a simple question can have a lasting impact and encourages everyone to be proactive in looking out for one another.¹





Checking In

Do they seem:

- Irrational or moody
- Unable to switch off
- Concerned about the future
- Worried they are a burden
- Lacking in self-esteem

Are they:

- Experiencing mood swings
- Withdrawing from friends and family
- Changing their online behaviour
- Losing interest in what they used to love
- Unable to concentrate
- Less interested in their appearance and personal hygiene
- Behaving recklessly
- Changing their sleep patterns

Are they experiencing:

- Relationship issues
- Major health issues
- Work pressure or constant stress
- Financial difficulty
- Loss of someone/something they care about¹

It's also important to consider the effects that a conversation about someone's mental state could have on you.

Before you check in with someone, make sure you ask yourself:

Am I prepared?

- Am I in a positive mindset?
- Am I ready to listen attentively?
- Can I dedicate the necessary time?
- Can I relax myself?
- Am I ready for their response?
- Do I understand that asking if someone is okay might result in a response like, "No, I'm not"?
- Do I recognize that I cannot 'fix' someone's problems?
- Am I prepared for the possibility that they may not be ready to talk, or may not want to talk to me?
- Have I chosen the right time?
- Have I chosen a relatively private and comfortable spot to talk?
- Have I identified a time that suits them for a conversation?

- Have I ensured that I have sufficient time for a thorough discussion? Even 5 minutes can make a difference, you can dedicate more time later.²

When having a conversation with someone you are concerned about, it's important to remember the following:

- **Listen with an open mind.** Try not to interrupt or rush them. Give them space and allow them to think if necessary. Acknowledge that what they're experiencing is hard.
- **Encourage action.** Ask them how they would like you to support them. Remind them that professional help is available.
- **Check back in.** Try to follow up regularly to ensure they know you are thinking of them and available if they need support.

¹ ruok.org.au/signs

² ruok.org.au/how-to-ask

SUPPORT SERVICES

UC MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING CENTRE

(02) 6201 2351

HotDoc Booking App

Location: Building 1, Level B (near Student Centre)

Monday to Friday (9:00am–5:00pm)

Closed on public holidays and the University shut down period.

EMERGENCY CONTACT

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Ambulance (life threatening emergency only)

13 11 14

Lifeline (24-hour telephone counselling service
Mental health Support)

1300 224 636

Beyond Blue

1300 78 99 78

MensLine Australia

1800 184 527

QLife (LGBTQIA+ support)

**UC Medical and Counselling delivers
Mental Health First Aid for UC students and staff**

Mental Health First Aid is a practical, skills-based education program that equips students with the skills and confidence needed to recognise and respond to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. This training is free for UC students and offered regularly throughout the year.

Register [here](#) or contact UC Medical and Counselling for more information.



MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING PLAYLIST

At UC, R U OK? Day is a special opportunity for our community to come together.

This year, Medical and Counselling hosted a picnic on the concourse in collaboration with UCLife and UCThrive. Despite the typical Canberra spring weather, we had a fantastic turnout of students enjoying a sausage sizzle, playing lawn games, and soaking in the live music. We even had some surprise appearances from our amazing GPs, Psychologists, and Interim VC, Lucy!

Music is a powerful influencer of mood and emotional state, and we all have that one track that always makes us feel better. On R U OK? Day we invited students to share their favourite uplifting song to help us curate the ultimate "Feel-Good Favourites" playlist.

The top selections were featured on the Uni Canberra Instagram, and we're excited to announce that the crowd-pleaser "Don't Stop Me Now" by Queen was voted as number one, winning its submitter a free double pass to UC's Stonefest music festival in October! If you want to add to our playlist, submit your song [here](#).

Thank you to everyone who joined us and contributed to making R U OK? Day a memorable celebration of community and wellbeing!

Check out our staff's top picks:



Dr Jenny Weekes

Three Little Birds
Bob Marley



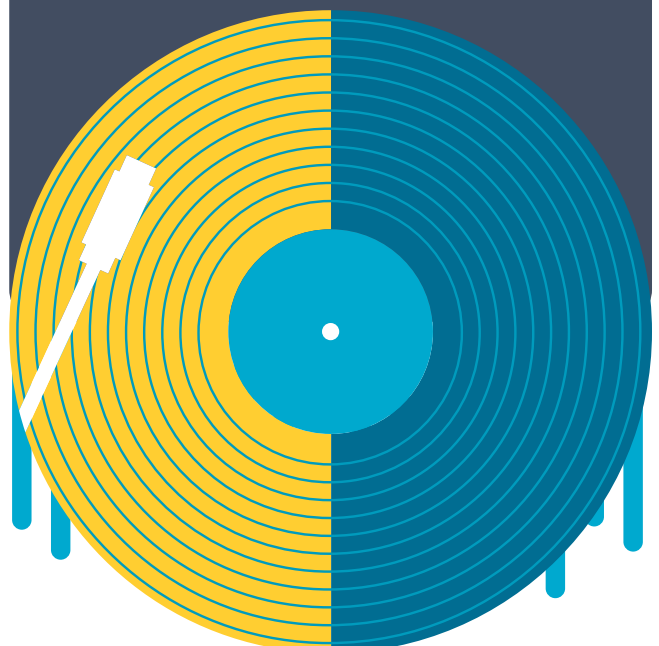
Sam Smith

Guy For That
Post Malone, Luke Combs

OVERALL WINNER!

Don't Stop Me Now – Queen

Listen to Medical and Counselling's
Feel-Good Favourites



STUDENT HEALTH AT THE UC MEDICAL AND COUNSELLING CENTRE

The UC Medical and Counselling Centre is committed to ensuring student physical and mental health remains a priority area throughout the year.

With a professional team of psychologists available from 9am–5pm Monday–Friday, Medical and Counselling is well equipped to assist any students requiring mental health support. Whether you are struggling with relationship breakups, workload, traumatic incidents or depression, our psychologists are here to help. Psychology services are confidential, FREE and available exclusively to all currently enrolled UC students with no referral required.

As well as psychologists, the Medical and Counselling team is made up of:

- Medical Practitioners
- Visiting Psychiatrist
- Registered Nurses

Appointments can be made by calling **02 6201 2351**, by booking through **HotDoc**, or visiting the centre and speaking to our reception staff.

Do you require more information about how to deal with specific mental or physical health concerns?

[Click here](#) to access specific resources from the Medical and Counselling Centre.

Emergency Contacts for mental health include:

- Lifeline Phone: **131 114**
- Mental Health Crisis Service Phone: **1800 629 354**
- University of Canberra 24-hour Crisis Line Phone: **1300 271 790** or Text: **0488 884 227**

24-hour contacts to keep in mind:

- **6201 2222**
UC Security
- **131 444**
Police assistance
- **1800 737 732**
National Sexual Assault Family and Domestic Violence Counselling Service
- **02 6280 0900**
Domestic Violence Crisis Service
- **02 5124 2185**
Forensic and Medical Sexual Assault Care
- **1300 224 636**
Beyond Blue
- **1300 78 99 78**
MensLine Australia
- **1800 184 527**
QLife
- **1800 629 354**
Access Mental Health

OTHER SUPPORTS

Citizen Centred Justice Clinic

Provides free legal advice on a variety of issues including:

- Housing
- Financial matters
- Addressing scams
- Dealing with domestic violence
- Handling divorce cases
- Addressing citizenship issues
- Managing employment situations within the community, such as addressing pay parity for international students.

Appointments are available every Wednesday and can be booked through the UC Medical and Counselling Centre: Building 1, Level B. Phone: 02 6201 2351.

Student Wellbeing and Support

Can assist with:

- Transition and first year support
- Accommodation and safe housing
- Financial Support
- Navigating Study

Contact: wellbeing@canberra.edu.au

International Student Support

Can assist with:

- Settling into life at UC and Canberra
- Programs that aim to enhance your study experience
- Understanding your student visa requirements and what is expected of you
- Tailored support for Australia Awards students
- Under-18 student welfare and accommodation needs
- Connections to other key services at UC and within the community
- Additional support for students

Contact: InternationalStudent@canberra.edu.au

UC Thrive and Student Mentor Program

Provides targeted and individualised peer-led support for commencing students through a scaffolded 8-week transition program.

Contact: ucthrive@canberra.edu.au

Multi-faith support

- Multi-faith and Chaplaincy

Contact: Chaplaincy@canberra.edu.au

Study Skills

Provides a range of face-to-face and online study help programs for UC students to assist with academic goals. These include:

- Drop in Study Help session
- Peer-Assisted Learning Sessions (PALS)
- The Maths and Stats Help Centre
- The ASK Advisors
- Study Skills English Language Support
- EndNote and Mahara support
- Referrals for Study Skills individual consultations etc.

Contact: studyskills@canberra.edu.au or by phone on 02 6201 2205.

For self-paced online resources and further information about Study Skills programs and services, visit the Study Help UCLearn (Canvas) site (log-in required).



TRAINING, COURSES AND GROUPS

BYSTANDER TRAINING

A free workshop on identifying safe and effective strategies to combat common bystander situations. Students will explore how challenging situations affect our perception and decision-making, and be offered techniques for taking clear action under pressure.

[Register here](#)

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

Join an early intervention training program on responding to someone experiencing a mental health problem or crisis. Led by a Licensed instructor, this is a practical skills-based program that equips people with the skills needed to face these situations with confidence.

[Register here](#)

ADHD MANAGEMENT GROUP

A free weekly support group for UC students to help them develop strategies and skills to manage ADHD.

No ADHD diagnosis required.

[Register here](#)

THE WEEKLY PSYCH SESSION

This is a free weekly psych skill workshop for UC students. Run in person and online, learn a new set of skills and tools to improve your wellbeing and coping skills.

[Register here](#)

CHECK OUT OUR UPCOMING EVENTS



Keep an eye out for our next issue.

On behalf of the UC Medical and Counselling Centre, **stay safe everyone!**