

# Talking About Trauma With Someone You Don't Know (For General Public)

Blue Knot Foundation fact sheet for members of the general public on how to have a conversation with someone you don't know but who you know or suspect may experience interpersonal trauma.

## Tips for talking with 'a friend of a friend' who you know or suspect might have experiences of interpersonal trauma

- 'Not knowing someone well' can mean passing up opportunities for much-needed conversations.
- Being a 'friend of a friend' can provide us an entry point to start a conversation, on the basis of our mutual friendship.
- If we approach the person in a trauma-informed way, we are unlikely to offend them, especially if we are a 'friend of a friend'.
- Engaging with your mutual friend around concerns about the well-being of a third person – especially if your friend alerted your concerns can sometimes be preferable.

**Tips for engaging with a distressed stranger around interpersonal trauma if and when it is safe to do so**

- Ask a simple direct question: 'Are you okay?'
- If the person indicates they are okay in a dismissive way, gently 'ask a second time'. Their first response may be automatic and may not reflect their true state.
- If the first or second response indicates they are not okay, ask them to think about who could support them.
- If they don't know how to access support, offer them the contact details of appropriate support services or let them know where to find their details.
- Reassure the person that many people engage with support services at different points in their lives.

To read the full paper: [Talking About Trauma - Guide to Everyday Conversations for the General Public](#)

You might also find our other fact sheets in this series helpful as they provide tips around talking about trauma with different people (family, friends, colleagues).

**For general information please see:**

- Fact Sheet: [Talking about Trauma – Having Safe Conversations \(For General Public\)](#)
- Fact Sheet: [Talking about Trauma – Applying Trauma-Informed Principles \(For General Public\)](#)

