

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 \(For General Public\)](#)

