

Time to talk

Every year one in four of us will experience a mental health problem.

We need to talk about it. It's easier than you might think - this leaflet will show you how.

- **How's it going?** Three words that can make a big difference.
- **Keep in touch more:** text or email if you can't meet up.
- **Doing stuff together is as good as a chat:** let your mate see that you know he's still the same person.
- **Talk. Swap stories:** don't ignore the difficult stuff if it comes up - you don't need to solve it, you just need ears.
- **Keep it real:** don't make a big deal of how your mate is feeling but don't make light of it either.
- **Be there:** ask if you can do anything.

How's it going, mate?



Every year
one in four of us
will experience
a mental health
problem

- Produced by Time to Change and the Men's Health Forum.
- Find out more about mental health and how to be there for someone at time-to-change.org.uk and menshealthforum.org.uk/howRU
- More about all aspects of mens' health at menshealthforum.org.uk.

Time to Change, led by Mind and Rethink Mental Illness, is England's biggest programme to challenge mental health stigma and discrimination.

The Men's Health Forum is the centre of excellence for men's health policy and practice.

All pictures posed by models.



Is your mate off his game?



Get on the ball about mental health

Get on the ball about mental health

Every year, one in four of us faces a mental health problem. That means the odds are 3/1 that at least one player on every five-a-side team is wrestling with a mental health problem right now. Or in every bus queue, at every tea-break or in every boy band.

Feeling miserable or pissed off puts you off your game. A mental health problem also:

- **reduces life-expectancy**
- **increases your chance of serious physical health problems**
- **damages your sex life.**

How do you know if you or someone you know has a mental health problem? You can't tell by looking.

But we can kick mental health problems into touch just by not ignoring them.

What if a mate has a problem?

Don't judge. Because we don't really understand mental health problems, sometimes we shy away from people who have them. We pretend we're different, that these things won't affect us. But they do. One person in four means that mental health problems are very common. They hit people just like us. In fact, they can hit you or me.

By being around for someone with a mental health problem, you're being a mate when they need you most. If you think a mate is bottling something up, there's a simple way to make a difference:

Do something together

Car, computer, exercise, garden, walk - even housework. Get him to give you a hand. Feeling wanted makes us all feel better. You don't have to talk but if you want to, doing something together makes it easier.

Keep it real: take it seriously but don't make it a big deal. Ask him how it's going. Simple. You don't need to be an expert, you just need ears.

Spot the warning signs

- **tired or problems sleeping**
- **thinking people are trying to harm you or are laughing at you**
- **losing interest in work, sex, eating or anything you normally enjoy**
- **self-harm or addiction.**

Watch out for extremes compared to typical behaviour. This includes mood swings or being unusually angry or aggressive, having no energy or way too much energy, wanting to be alone more and more or wanting to go out more and



more or refuelling too much with drink or drugs.

It can happen to anyone. You included.

If you're worried you're missing out on life because you're feeling crap, talk about it. Talk to family, friends, a helpline or other professionals. It doesn't have to be someone you know. Check out the contacts on the back of this leaflet.