

# SUPPORTING SOMEONE THROUGH A CHALLENGE

It's difficult to know what to do when someone close to you is going through a challenging period in their life. However, support from family, friends or a significant other has been shown to be a major factor in making a positive difference in the health outcome of that person. When trying to support someone people can get caught up in the details, when all we need to do is be there. Being available, present and showing care can be all that is needed. When the situation calls for more than that we can offer advice, options or resources but ultimately the solution needs to come from the individual in need of help. Knowing the most effective way to provide support relieves much of the worry about saying and doing the right thing. **Here are our tips for providing support to others;**

**1> SET TIME ASIDE WITH NO DISTRACTIONS:** Provide an open and non-judgemental space with no distractions. Going for a walk can be very beneficial to opening up first conversations.

**2> LET THEM SHARE AS MUCH OR AS LITTLE AS THEY WANT TO:** Let them lead the discussion at their own pace: Don't put pressure on them to tell you anything they aren't ready to talk about. Talking can take a lot of trust and courage.

**3> DON'T TRY TO DIAGNOSE OR SECOND GUESS THEIR FEELINGS:** Try not to make assumptions. Take time to just listen.

**4> KEEP QUESTIONS OPEN ENDED:** Say "How you are feeling?" rather than "I can see you are feeling very low". Try to keep your language neutral.

**5> TALK ABOUT WELLBEING:** Exercise, having a healthy diet and taking a break can help protect mental health and sustain wellbeing. Talk about self-care and how this is critical part of their wellbeing.

## IF IT'S ALL GETTING A BIT MUCH...

If you are worried about someone who is facing a challenge, try not to overcomplicate things. Keep your messaging simple focusing on your worries and wanting to help support them through, whatever that looks like. For more information or support please visit [lovemeloveyou.org.au](http://lovemeloveyou.org.au)



**6> LISTEN CAREFULLY TO WHAT THEY TELL YOU:** Repeat what they have said back to them to ensure you have understood it. You don't have to agree with what they are saying, but show you understand and respect their feelings.

**7> OFFER THEM HELP IN SEEKING SUPPORT:** You may want to offer to go the GP with them, or help them talk to a friend or family member. Alternatively directing them to forums, resources and online services can be a less confronting option.

**8> KNOW YOUR LIMITS:** Ask for help if the problem is outside your skillset. If you believe they are in immediate danger, you need to take action to make sure they are safe. Contact the Love Me Love You Support Pathway via our website. Alternatively, services such as Lifeline, BeyondBlue or emergency services for extra support.