

RU OK?™ inTrucks&Sheds



meet Colin

Colin, 57, has been a linehaul truck driver for 18 years. After starting out as a mechanic, he decided to follow in his family's footsteps and become a truck driver. His typical day involves being at the wheel for up to 11 hours a day, covering 900km, carrying freight. After being involved in an accident at work, Colin knows first hand just how life changing conversations can be for someone going through a difficult time.

Colin: Talking isn't something that comes easily in our industry – There's very much a 'let's get on with it' attitude. It's a very lonely job and it's very easy to go into your own shell and keep things to yourself. But it's not healthy, especially given the fact that our job can be quite challenging, and we need people to talk to in order to stay mentally fit to work.

My shift is from 7pm to 7am, so when most are settling down at home to have their dinner, I'm just getting started. I'm lucky because after my shifts, I get to come home to my own bed and have a great sleep. Kudos to the long-haul truckies who travel further distances and sleep in their trucks where it's almost impossible to limit noise and feel comfortable. And I think we can all relate to how a bad night's sleep can affect us. Once you become tired, you start to lose focus, so most of us have strategies up our sleeves. Whether that's grabbing a bite to eat for energy, taking a short break or listening to podcasts that require attention.

I know I'm not alone when I say, people in our industry would have witnessed fatalities or experienced the loss of a colleague. The impact of those accidents is felt far and wide – not just the person directly involved, but family, friends, work mates and the company. The only way through is to talk with and get support from people around you. I know because I was involved in an accident and it was very traumatic.



People are very hesitant to ask 'are you ok?' because they're worried it will annoy or anger the person or they feel like it's not their business to ask or get involved but from my experience it made me realise people care and I didn't have to battle my mind alone.



When I returned to work, they were so supportive. They created new avenues for people to talk, for example if someone is involved in an incident at work, I can use my experience to talk to them about what they're going through and provide some strategies that helped me or even if it was simply to let them know they are not alone. Having a workplace that wraps support around their staff can actually be life saving – never underestimate it.

Let's face it, we're all human and with that comes the ups and downs of life. We must look out for one another in the best way we can. It doesn't matter if you're in the warehouse, office or in the trucks or whether you're part of big business or a small owner operator, if you're worried about someone, just ask them how they're doing. It might take a few times but keep at it and don't give up. I'm thankful the people in my life didn't stop asking.

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