

Mental health is no different to vehicle maintenance. Regular, meaningful check-ins are preventative maintenance for the mind. Some days you feel unstoppable. Other days, getting out of bed is the win. Both days count.

Meet Phil

Phil is the Queensland Logistics Operations Manager at GPT Group, overseeing major industrial logistics assets across the state. Earlier in his career, while transitioning from a hands-on trade role into an office-based position overseas, he experienced severe depression. Opening up to a trusted mate became a turning point that led to professional support and recovery. Today, Phil advocates for empathetic leadership and psychologically safe workplaces where open conversations about mental health are part of everyday leadership.

As the Queensland Logistics Operations Manager at GPT Group, I oversee our industrial logistics portfolio across the state. GPT owns, manages and develops industrial, retail and office assets across Australia, and I work closely with contractors across fire services, electrical, mechanical, plumbing and other trades to ensure our assets remain safe, compliant and operational.


The way I lead today was shaped by my own experience. In 2016, while living overseas and transitioning from a hands-on trade role into an office-based position, I experienced severe depression. What I thought would be a straightforward career progression became one of the most isolating and overwhelming periods of my life. At my lowest point, even getting out of bed felt impossible.

The turning point came when I reached out to a mate and admitted, "I can't see any light at the end of the tunnel." That conversation led me to seek professional help, begin treatment and start the process of recovery. I'm open about the fact that I still use medication to maintain my wellbeing. I see it like having a screwdriver in the toolbox – just another tool that helps me function well.



That experience taught me the value of empathy, presence and genuine care. For me, leadership isn't just about performance: it's about people. I prioritise genuine check-ins, calling team members and contractors to ask how they're going - not about KPIs or contracts, but about life.

Last year, during what was meant to be a routine performance discussion, **I recognised that a contractor was in serious distress. I paused the meeting and checked in with him later, which created space for an honest conversation.** He shared that he had been thinking about taking his own life. Because I had lived through my own dark period, **I recognised the signs and stayed connected, encouraging him to seek professional support and keeping in touch regularly.**



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That experience reinforced something I strongly believe, **psychologically safe workplaces save more than productivity: they can save lives.** Later, I organised an informal catch-up with our service providers and trades. There was no agenda and no performance metrics, just connection. By sharing my own story openly, the tone of the room shifted, and people began having real conversations – the kind that don't usually happen in boardrooms, trucks or sheds.

To me, mental health is like vehicle maintenance. You can't skip every service and expect the engine to keep performing. **Regular, meaningful conversations are preventative maintenance for the mind.** Some days you feel unstoppable. Other days, getting out of bed is the win. Both days count.

You don't need to have all the answers to support someone. You just need to start the conversation and Ask R U OK? Any Day. Because from boardrooms to warehouses, from trucks to sheds, a simple conversation could genuinely change a life.



Scan the QR code or go to
healthyheads.org.au/ruok

Ask
RU OK?  **ANY DAY**
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