

26TEN Chat: Getting Ready

Want to raise the subject but don't know what to say?

It can be hard to raise the subject with someone you know. 26TEN have prepared some handy chat starters you could use at work, at home or out and about.

The chat starters give you a springboard. A way to dive into a conversation that could refer a person to support. Having an opening line, may give you the confidence you need to get started. You may wish to adjust these to suit or you may like to use them as written.

Is now a good time to talk?

It is important to ask the person if they would like to have a chat with you. This sounds formal, but really it is a polite way you can ask if they have the time or interest in speaking. They may be having a bad day, or be in a rush, or not feeling well. You may not know this unless you ask.

Are **you** feeling up to starting this conversation today? Do you have the time and head space for this chat? If not, perhaps schedule a coffee catch-up, a meeting or upcoming appointment so it's in your diary for a later time. It is a conversation worth having in person.

Are you feeling calm?

Being calm will help the other person feel comfortable. It is normal to feel nervous. Remember that all you are doing is introducing a service they may be interested in. There is no rush.

What if they get upset?

There are many reasons why reading, writing or maths is difficult for people. Some conversations may lead to an emotional response. Remain as supportive and calm as you can. Offer tissues, listen, and encourage depending on what is being shared. If you feel out of your depth, you can mention that a number of helplines offer free counselling support (organisations like Lifeline offer crisis counselling 24hrs).

What if they become defensive?

It is OK if they say no to any information or cut the conversation short. They may not be ready or may simply not see the need for it. You haven't failed by raising the topic. Offer tissues, listen, and encourage depending on what they are sharing. Avoid confrontation.

If appropriate, you may like to mention that 'my door is always open' if appropriate or offer information to look at in their own time.

There are many reasons that people struggle with their reading, writing or maths. What they may raise is more complex than just that, it may be appropriate to also know where else they can get help, e.g. lifeline.

What happens when you call?

The 1300 call will be answered by a trained educator.

The educator will ask a few questions about the sort of help you might be after and the area you live. They may offer to link you with:

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- Local ~~individual~~ one-on-one support or group classes
- Help by mail or computer
- Teachers and others that can help
- Websites and books to help you learn

*Most options are free for all Tasmanians.

What do I do after my 26TEN Chat?

Sometimes a bit of encouragement is all somebody needs to ask for help. It can take weeks, months, even years for someone to make the courageous step of seeking help with their reading, writing or maths. Don't be disappointed if the person doesn't take up the offer of information immediately.

Here are a few encouraging follow-up Chat Starters:

"How did you go with contacting 26TEN?"

"If you need that number for 26TEN again let me know? Happy to give them a ring on your behalf if that would be easier? Happy to help."

"How are you feeling after our chat the other day? If you wanted someone to go along with you to meet the tutor, I'm happy to. I know it's daunting, but at least you won't be on your own. Or we can meet afterwards if you like?"

Do we need some encouraging chat starters here? Or is this too prescriptive??

For a Friend or Family Member

"Lots of people have trouble reading these instructions. Can I give you a hand? Did you know there are lots of tricks that people use to write and spell? You can learn them too."

"I've noticed that form gave you a bit of trouble the other day. I find them hard sometimes. Particularly the online ones. Do you often have trouble with them?"

"Reading the bus timetable is really tricky. 26TEN helped someone with that same problem and she can now catch the bus to town."

"They don't make it easy for us to fill out forms, do they? Do you feel like you could use some help?"

"Do you feel like you are missing out on what's going on at your children's school because the information that gets sent home is hard to understand? You'd be great at helping out, maybe someone could help you feel more confident with the reading side of things? So you can get involved?"

"Have you heard about 26TEN? About half of adult Tasmanians need help with their reading, writing and maths, but they don't all have the courage to do something about it. It does take courage, but you won't regret it, and you won't be alone."

"Have you heard of 26TEN? Perhaps you know some people who could benefit. There is some free support available locally. We should get everyone using it more."

"So many people find maths hard. What about you?"

"Computers do so much for us these days but did you know you can get help locally for reading, writing and maths?"

["I know you've been frustrated without work. I heard about 26TEN. You just call the number and they have someone line you up with the right help. Even if it's getting someone to check your job applications and work on your writing. Should we call and see what they say?"](#)

For a Work Colleague or Employee

"There are so many people that need a hand with reading and writing. That's why we have 26TEN, where you can get some help."

"You mentioned you were interested in applying for a promotion. Have you heard about 26TEN? They can line you up with someone to help get your writing up to speed. You'd be great at that job."

"Looks like writing's a bit tough for you, mate. That must make things a bit hard, 'cos it seems like we have to fill in more and more forms these days..."

"There's a fair bit of study involved in getting that licence. That can be tough. Did you know 26TEN can help get your reading and writing up to the standard you might need to make that easier?"

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"I feel like 26TEN could really assist you to get where you would like to be. I have their details if you would like them?"

"I notice you appear frustrated when you have to fill in forms, why do you feel this? I know I do, as I struggle with spelling at times."

"I noticed the other day, when we worked on writing the (insert appropriate item) together you were a bit reluctant to take the lead. How do you feel about your writing? If you were interested, 26TEN offer some free services that are confidential. They can help build your confidence for writing these kind of documents. This skill would really benefit you in your career."

"I've been thinking about how much we all assume, about how people understand information, read or write. And I've been wondering whether you have ever thought about getting a bit of help with your reading, writing or maths? I know my maths is shocking!"

"It's been a long time since you studied. It can be difficult to know how to get started learning something new. We can help you get a bit of support, just to get started if you are interested?"

For a Client, Patient or Customer

"If you ever need a hand with your reading, writing or numbers, you can sign up for some help through 26TEN. Would you be interested in doing this? If you are, I have the number here."

"You mentioned the other day that you would be interested in doing a bit of study. There's this really supportive group of people that help with reading, writing or maths. Would you like me to help you give them a call?"

"26TEN's been around in Tasmania for ~~6~~ years now, and lots of people have been able to get better at reading and writing, and make life easier for themselves. You certainly won't be the only one if you get in touch and see how they could help you. Here's the number in case you want to have a think about it..."

"I know of this great program called 26TEN and it is designed to help adults improve their skills so they feel confident. Would you like to know some more about it?"

"Can I assist? May I ask, do you often avoid things like this? If you ever want to work on that, I can give you some information."

"I've always found 26TEN helpful. Would you like their contact details or can we contact them together?"

"As you might know, our workload will be increasing soon. I just want to let you know that if you wanted to get help with the maths side of things, it may make this period easier. I'm offering this to all our staff. There's no shame in it. We are going to be so busy and I want you to know we can support you to do this. Would you like the 26TEN details?"

"Are you much of a reader? (if the answer is no, allow time for them to elaborate if they wish) Have you ever heard of 26TEN?"

"I saw you weren't able to finish that (task/question/answer). I'm wondering if you found it a bit hard. Am I on the right track?"

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"I know you've been thinking of completing your senior secondary schooling. Why don't we call 26TEN and see if they can line you up with a tutor? Give you a bit of a leg up before you apply?"

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