

26TEN Chat Starters

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 has prepared some handy chat starters you could use at work, at home, or out and about in your community.

The chat starters give you a springboard – a way to dive into a conversation that could refer a person to get some support. Having an opening line may give you the confidence you need to get started. Use our chat starters as they are, or adjust them to suit you.

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 it's a good idea to check first. 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 headspace for this chat? If not, perhaps schedule a meeting or coffee catch-up 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 are difficult for people. The person may become emotional when talking about these. Remain as supportive and calm as you can. Offer tissues, listen and encourage, depending on what information they are sharing. If you feel out of your depth, you can mention that a number of helplines offer free counselling (organisations like Lifeline offer crisis counselling 24hrs).

What if they become defensive?

It is OK if they turn down your offer of any information or cut the conversation short. They may not be ready or see the need. You haven't failed by raising the topic.

If appropriate, you may like to mention that 'my door is always open' or offer information to look at in their own time. This may be the first time someone has asked them about whether they would be interested in some learning support. It can be very confronting. Remember that you have taken an important step by bringing it up.

What happens when someone calls 26TEN's 1300 number?

The call will be answered by a trained educator.

The educator will ask a few questions about the sort of help the caller would like and ask which area they live in. They may offer to link the caller with:

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

*Many support options are free for Tasmanians

What do I do after my 26TEN Chat?

Sometimes a bit of encouragement is all somebody needs to ask for help. However, it can take weeks, months, even years for someone to take 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.

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?"

26TEN Chat Starters

For a Client, Patient or Customer

- // Can I assist with [relevant task, for example filling in a patient record]? May I ask, do you often avoid things like this? If you ever want to work on that, I can give you some information.
- // Have you heard of 26TEN? It's been around in Tasmania for years now, and a lot 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 ringing them. Nearly half of Tasmanians have trouble with reading, writing and maths. Here's the number in case you want to have a think about it...
- // If you ever need a hand with your reading, writing or maths, you can sign up for help through 26TEN. Would you be interested in doing this? If you are, I have the number here.
- // I know of this great program called 26TEN. Have you heard about it? It's designed to help adults improve their skills so they feel confident. Would you like to know some more about it?
- // 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 [relevant task/question/answer]. I'm wondering if you found it a bit hard? Am I on the right track?
- // How did you get on with understanding all the handouts we gave you the other day about the [relevant health condition or hospital paperwork]? Sometimes it can be hard to wade through it all. Especially when you aren't feeling well. May I ask, do you ever have a bit of trouble reading?
- // You've been my patient for [number of months/years]. Can I talk to you about something I think may interest you? It might help. Especially with [relevant task related to health condition or procedure].
- // 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.
- // They don't make it easy for us to fill out forms, do they? Do you feel like you could use some help?
- // I notice you appear frustrated when you have to fill in forms. I know I do, as I struggle with spelling at times. Is there a particular part that you don't like?

26TEN Chat Starters

For a Friend or Family Member

- // 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.

- // Do you feel like you are missing out on what's going on at [relevant primary or high 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?

- // I know you've been thinking of completing your [senior secondary schooling or other relevant qualification]. 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 take the next step?

- // Have you heard of 26TEN? About half of adult Tasmanians need help with their reading, writing or 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? It's confidential. I've heard it's really good.

- // 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?

- // 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 Chat Starters

For a Work Colleague or Employee

- // You mentioned you were interested in applying for [a job/promotion]. You will need some extra skills for the new job, especially [relevant skill/s]. 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. That must make things a bit hard. 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. Did you know 26TEN can help get your reading and writing up to the standard you might need to make that easier?
- // 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 number?
- // You are a great [employee type]. Lately I've noticed you aren't getting [job] done as well as you usually do. I've realised it's been like this since [changed process, eg we moved to using emails for setting up jobs]. Is there something about this change that isn't working for you?
- // It's good you were willing to step up and take on the supervisor role for your team. How's it going? I've noticed that some of the messages from management are getting a bit confused by the time they reach the guys on the floor. I'm concerned we haven't given you enough support to take on this new role. It is a big change.
- // 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 offers some free services that are confidential. They can help build your confidence for writing this kind of document. This skill would really benefit you in your career.
- // I've been thinking about how much we all assume, especially about how we 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?

continued...

// I've been thinking about how much we all assume, especially about how we 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?

// It may have 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. 26TEN offers some free services that are confidential. They can help build your confidence for [appropriate skill].

You could use a recent problem at work. For example:

// Did you hear about Joe, and how he got the food order for Mrs Frank wrong? Boy, did she give him an earful. It turns out he didn't know the words for very many foods and her writing was poor on the order, so he guessed. Bad move. I'm going to check out 26TEN. Did you know they can help with reading, writing and maths?



visit **26TEN**.tas.gov.au
Get the tools for life
or call **1300 00 2610**