










Noticing that someone may be struggling and intervening at an early stage can make a real difference. Aside from a duty to ensure that the workplace is both safe and healthy for all employees, approaching someone you suspect may be going through tough times demonstrates that you genuinely care and want to support your team.

This series of four tip sheets provides information and resources to help you feel confident approaching an employee that you are concerned may be experiencing mental health issues.

### Step 1: Identify concerns and plan for a meeting

Key points to consider when preparing for a meeting with an employee:

-  Identify the best place to meet with the employee; one that is quiet, private and non-threatening.
-  Be clear about the purpose of the conversation. Take the time to consider why you are concerned about them (define key behaviour/ observation), e.g. 'I am concerned about you. Recently I noticed that you are having difficulties completing some of your work duties'.
-  List examples of behaviours observed, and avoid labels or diagnosis, e.g. refer to observed lowered mood or concentration levels.
-  Assure the employee that you intend to work with them to help them address the issues at work and seek support they may need.
-  Familiarise yourself with the basics of mental health and the appropriate language to describe mental illness. This information may also benefit the employee.
-  Offer the employee the opportunity to bring a support person with them (when required).
-  Identify the employee's strengths and positive contributions they make to the organisation.
-  Establish what programs or resources can be made available to the employee if desired, e.g. Employee Assistance Program (EAP), Human Resources and other external or internal well-being services.
-  Establish what policies and processes are in place to assist employees experiencing mental health issues, e.g. reasonable adjustments, or return to work.




**One in five Australian employees report that they have taken time off work due to feeling mentally unwell in the past 12 months.**

#### FURTHER INFORMATION

If you require further assistance and support, consider seeking help from one of the below:

##### Human Resources

 (03) 5327 9530 or your Human Resources Business Partner

 [manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au](mailto:manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au)

##### Employee Assistance Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

##### Manager Assistance Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444













 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

Noticing that someone may be struggling and intervening at an early stage can make a real difference. Aside from the duty to ensure that the workplace is both safe and healthy for all employees, approaching someone you suspect may be going through tough times demonstrates that you genuinely care and want to support your team.

This series of four tip sheets provides information and resources to help you feel confident approaching an employee that you are concerned may be experiencing mental health issues.

### Step 2: Discuss and assess


This stage requires you to be mindful of privacy obligations and demonstrate effective communication with active listening

-  Adopt a calm and professional manner.
-  A good place to start is often simply asking about how they are.
-  Familiarise yourself with the key words that describe the issue and consider the language you use. Focus on the observable behaviour of concern and any observable symptoms. e.g. "I am concerned about you. Recently I have noticed that you are having difficulties completing some of your work duties."
-  Inform the employee, if and who disclosure will be made to and for what purpose.
-  Inform the employee that their information and what you discuss, with respect to health, will remain confidential.
-  Be clear about boundaries and limitations to help foster a relationship of trust. You are not a counsellor but you do have a responsibility to support the employee to ensure they are safe, healthy and able to effectively perform their duties.
-  Avoid appearing judgmental. Keep an open mind and do not jump to conclusions.
-  It is reasonable to ask questions and discuss an employee's mental health/illness with them for the purposes of identifying supports and reasonable adjustments. Ask open-ended questions that are simple and non-judgmental. Allow the employee the opportunity to explain.
-  Avoid interrupting. Listen to what the employee is saying and try to recognise any causes of unhappiness or stress.
-  Avoid pushing or continuing to question the employee if they do not want to openly discuss their situation. Let them know you are available to talk if and when they need to. Offer information on Mental Health and support mechanisms available. e.g. EAP, lifeline etc.
-  Consider your body language and select a comfortable, private place that is professional. Avoid any barriers and consider sitting opposite, not behind the desk.
-  Focus completely on the employee and show your interest – nod occasionally; maintain eye contact; smile at the person.

### FURTHER INFORMATION


If you require further assistance and support, consider seeking help from one of the below:


#### Human Resources

 (03) 5327 9530 or your Human Resources Business Partner

 [manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au](mailto:manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au)

#### Manager Support Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

#### Employee Assistance Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)








Noticing that someone may be struggling and intervening at an early stage can make a real difference. Aside from the duty to ensure that the workplace is both safe and healthy for all employees, approaching someone you suspect may be going through tough times demonstrates that you genuinely care and want to support your team.

This series of four tip sheets provides information and resources to help you feel confident approaching an employee that you are concerned may be experiencing mental health issues.

### Step 3: Collaborate to develop solutions

In the event that the employee discloses a mental health issue, you may be required to explore solutions that enable the employee to remain a productive member of the workforce. This may include collaborative and effective performance management or making reasonable adjustments.

Here is a simple checklist to follow:

-  Discuss the options available. These may include flexible work hours, regular rest breaks, changing work-tasks, demands or timeframes, working from home or part time work or providing time off for appointments.
-  Ask the employee for proposals to resolve the issues. It can be helpful to ask:
  -  *“What supports or adjustments could we introduce to minimise triggers or help you to manage your symptoms at work? Is there anything we should try to avoid doing?”*
  -  *“Have a think about what would make things easier for you and we can discuss together.”*
-  Document any agreement and give a copy to the employee (where required).
-  Offer the employee resources such as written material about mental health and accessing support. Encourage them to speak to their doctor if they have not already, or to use organisational resources, such as the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or other mental health and wellbeing programs that are available.
-  Discuss and agree what (if anything) the employee wants to share with his/her colleagues. Respect their wishes if they do not want anyone else to know about their situation.



#### IMPORTANT INFORMATION


It is important to consider the impact that reasonable adjustment might have on others, including yourself (e.g. temporary increase in workload) and what support maybe needed during this time.



#### FURTHER INFORMATION


If you require further assistance and support, consider seeking help from one of the below:

##### Human Resources

 (03) 5327 9530 or your Human Resources Business Partner


 [manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au](mailto:manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au)

##### Manager Support Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

##### Employee Assistance Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

Noticing that someone may be struggling and intervening at an early stage can make a real difference. Aside from the duty to ensure that the workplace is both safe and healthy for all employees, approaching someone you suspect may be going through tough times demonstrates that you genuinely care and want to support your team.

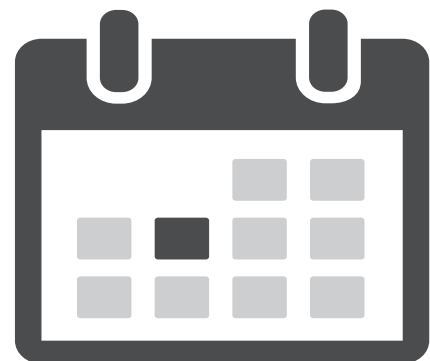
This series of four tip sheets provides information and resources to help you feel confident approaching an employee that you are concerned may be experiencing mental health issues.

### Step 4: Follow up

It is important to follow up with the employee and review any plans or adjustments made. This is to ensure adjustments remain appropriate, and sufficient resources and support remain available.

Here is a checklist to help you with this process:


- ✔ Arrange a follow up meeting, as these become integral to a successful and positive outcome. Follow up meetings allow you to monitor progress made, as well as provide the employee the opportunity to track their own improvements and disclose any issues that have arisen.
- ✔ Monitor and provide feedback on progress.
- ✔ Approach the concern as a workplace performance issue.
- ✔ Provide support where required.
- ✔ Use appropriate language and ask if they require assistance, before providing any.
- ✔ Raise the possibility of providing reasonable adjustments if needed.
- ✔ Provide access to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP), or referral to alternative support services.
- ✔ Assure the employee that meetings with an EAP provider are confidential.
- ✔ Set a time to meet again to review the employee's performance.
- ✔ Document the meeting, e.g. email actions or notes to the employee.



### FURTHER INFORMATION


If you require further assistance and support consider seeking help from one of the below:

#### Human Resources

 (03) 5327 9530 or your Human Resources Business Partner


 [manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au](mailto:manager.hrsupport@federation.edu.au)

#### Manager Support Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

#### Employee Assistance Program

 1300 687 327 or 03 8681 2444

 [www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)