

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS ON TALKING ABOUT WELLBEING DURING COVID-19

It's good to remember that no special skills are required to talk about wellbeing every day and check-in with your team. If you notice a team member is struggling with their wellbeing don't ignore it. Be aware that talking about personal struggles can be difficult and they might get emotional or upset. You just need to be empathetic, approachable, and willing to listen.

Before you approach the person ask yourself

- Am I in a good headspace?
- Am I willing to genuinely listen?
- Can I give as much time as needed?

Ways to start the conversation

Help them open up by asking questions like:

- "How are you doing?"
- "What's been happening for you lately?"
- "We haven't caught up, and wanted to check in about how you are feeling."
- "How's life? How are the family?"

Asking about wellbeing lets people know its ok to talk about how they are feeling and seek support when needed.

What venue/space should I select to help the team member feel comfortable and private? If you notice someone maybe struggling mention specific things that have made you concerned for them, for example:

- "You don't seem yourself lately, what's up?"
- "I noticed you've been quiet this week, are you okay?"

Ask are you ok twice; sometimes we say we are fine when we are not. This lets people know it's okay to talk about how they are feeling and seek support when needed.

 0800 SELF HELP (0800 735 343)

 info@eapworks.co.nz

 www.eapworks.co.nz

Head for Business Heart for People

What if the person doesn't want to talk?

- Be relaxed if the discussion doesn't go as you'd hoped
- If the person doesn't want to speak about it, respect their choice, but leave the door open for further dialogue
- Always try to listen non-judgmentally and see the issue from their perspective
- Let them know you're asking because you're concerned about them
- Acknowledge the person's feelings
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally

Ask questions to explore what's going on, for example:

- "Have you spoken to anyone else about this?"
- "What would help you manage the load?"
- "What else is happening for you at the moment?"
- "Is there anything further that I can do to support you?"

Encourage someone to talk to someone they trust and/or a service that can help such as their GP, EAPworks, or Need to Talk? – the 1737 National Telephone Counselling Service. 1737 is available 24/7 via text or phone call.

Adapted from Mental Health Foundation: A 'how-to' on having mental health conversation in the workplace
<https://www.mentalhealth.org.nz/home/our-work/category/40/open-minds>