



HOW ARE YOU, REALLY?



GDIT is committed to supporting its team members. As a manager you play an important role. Below are tips for recognizing signs a member of your team may need extra support and simple steps to start the conversation.

What are the signs someone might need some extra support?

When thinking about your team members have you noticed two or more of the below?

CHANGES IN THEIR PHYSICAL APPEARANCE?

- Look more tired than usual
- Seem “flat” or drained of energy
- Have had a pattern of illness or being constantly run down
- Are complaining of physical health issues such as headaches/migraines
- Are eating much more or much less than usual
- Are drinking more alcohol than usual

- Seem more fidgety and nervous than usual

CHANGES IN MOOD?

- Seem more irritable, snappy, or fly off the handle when they normally wouldn't
- Appear more anxious and worried about everything i.e., work and personal life
- React more emotionally than the situation warrants
- Are quick to anger
- Appear to be overwhelmed by tasks that they had previously found manageable

CHANGES IN BEHAVIOR?

- Seem more withdrawn than usual
- Don't seem to enjoy their work, hobbies/interests they once did
- Seem to have difficulty concentrating or seem constantly distracted
- Are taking on more work to avoid being in social situations with others
- Are not performing to their usual standard

CHANGES IN HOW THOUGHTS ARE EXPRESSED?

- Struggles to see a positive side: "It's always terrible..."
- Seem to think the worst: they might conclude that two people in a meeting are discussing their performance or future in the workplace
- Personalizes situations: "I knew I'd get the toughest assignment – they've got it in for me"
- Saying things that sound more confused or irrational
- Complain they have difficulty switching off

If you have noticed two or more of these changes, your team member might need some extra support. It may be time for you to start a conversation.

Simple steps to talk to a team member who's not ok

Getting Ready to Ask

BE READY

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

BE PREPARED

- Remember that you won't have all the answers (which is OK)
- Listening is one of the most important things you can do
- If someone is talking about personal struggles this can be difficult and they might get emotional, embarrassed, or upset

PICK YOUR MOMENT

- Have you chosen somewhere relatively private and informal?
- What time will be good for them to chat? Try and put aside ample time to have a meaningful conversation
- If they can't talk when you approach them, ask them for a better time to come back

Starting a Conversation

ASK "ARE YOU OK, REALLY?"

- Be relaxed
- Help them open up by asking questions like "How are you doing?" or "What's been happening?" or "I've noticed that you're not quite yourself lately."
- Make an observation. Mention specific things that have made you concerned for them, like "I've noticed that you seem really tired recently" or "You seem less chatty than usual." How are you doing?

LISTEN

- Take what they say seriously
- Don't interrupt or rush the conversation
- If they need time to think, try and sit patiently and listen silently
- Encourage them to explain
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally
- Let them know you're asking because you're concerned

ENCOURAGE ACTION

- ASK THEM: “Where do you think we can go from here?”
- ASK: “What would be a good first step we can take?”
- ASK: “What do you need from me? How can I help?”

Good options for action they might take include talking to family, a trusted friend, their doctor or our Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) below:



RESOLVE 365
(Stateside GDIT Employees)

CIGNA GLOBAL INTERNATIONAL
EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAMME
(GDIT Expatriate Employees)

OPTUM EAP
(Eagle Alliance Employees)

CHECK IN

- Remember to check in and see how the person is doing in a few days' time
- Ask if they've found a better way to manage the situation
- If they haven't done anything, keep encouraging them and remind them you're always here if they need to chat
- Understand that sometimes it can take a long time for someone to be ready to see a professional
- Try to reinforce the benefits of seeking professional help and trying different avenues
- You could ask, “Do you think it would be useful if we looked into finding some professional or other support?”



THINK I AM OKAY BUT MAYBE NOT
Connect Page

How to Manage Emotional Reactions in a Conversation

From time to time, we can all be faced with strong reactions from our team members, particularly if we're supporting someone who is struggling.

Here are some things you can do to minimize awkwardness and reduce the pressure in these situations:

- Be prepared
- Recognize their reaction may be in response to a range of circumstances - both personal and work related - many of which you might not know about
- Allow the person to express their emotions fully (let off steam) and show them that you're interested by actively listening to all they say
- Deal with the emotions first, you can then discuss the issues more rationally once emotions have been addressed
- Being a good listener is one of the best things you can do for someone when they are distressed
- Manage your own emotions by staying calm and not taking things personally
- Validate their response but keep the focus on the issue at hand

HOW DO I DEAL WITH ANGER?

- If someone is visibly hostile you can respond with: “I can see that this has upset you. Why don't you start at the beginning and tell me what I need to know...”
- Allow them to identify all the factors they feel are contributing to their anger
- You might encourage them by adding “Right, I understand that...is also a problem. What else is causing you concern?”
- Be patient and prepared to listen to them itemize all the points
- Use active listening to keep the conversation on track and to reassure them that you are interested in all they say
- If they feel they have been wronged or treated unfairly you are unlikely to persuade them otherwise in this conversation. It's more constructive to listen to all they have to say and provide resources and formal channels or specific complaints to be heard

HOW DO I DEAL WITH ANXIETY?

- Speak in short, concise sentences but still showing concern and care

- If you anticipate an anxious response, use your preparation time to construct your message in clear, brief sentences
- Make sure you appear calm. This is best displayed through deep, slow breathing, a lower tone of voice and evenly paced speech

HOW DO I DEAL WITH SADNESS?

- Sad or tragic stories are often difficult to deal with because we empathize with the person and feel helpless as we cannot take away their sadness or pain
- Use lots of empathetic phrases, such as “It sounds like you’re juggling a few things at the moment” or “I understand this must be challenging for you right now”
- Ensure that the best internal GDIT support programs are available, such as the EAP
- Make sure you’re comfortable with any silence in the conversation
- Know that silence gives them permission to add more and to tell you everything
- If someone begins to cry, sit quietly, and allow them to

cry. Lowering your eyes can minimize their discomfort. You could add, “I’m going to sit here with you and when you’re ready we can keep talking”

- If you anticipate this response, make sure you have tissues handy

WHAT IF THEY DON’T WANT TO TALK TO ME?

- Try not to take it personally. It may take them time to process what you’re saying and respond.
- Focus on the things they’re comfortable talking about like, “I know you’ve had trouble sleeping and concentrating lately. Can we talk about that?”
- Suggest they talk to someone they trust, like a family member or friend. You could say, “You can always call me if you ever want to chat. But is there someone else you’d rather talk to?”

USEFUL CONTACTS FOR SOMEONE WHO’S NOT OK



I AM NOT OKAY
Connect Page