

Worried about someone? Start a conversation

Through open, honest and supportive conversations, we can ensure no one has to choose between their career and their wellbeing.

Here is some advice and some conversation starters to help you open up a gentle, supportive dialogue with someone who might be struggling.

1 Ask open questions to help identify what could help them

How have you dealt with similar feelings in the past?

What do you think you need most right now?

2 Validate their position if it's truthful for you to do so:

It makes sense to me why you feel/see things this way.

3 Try to avoid sharing experiences back that might minimise what they're feeling

4 Avoid the temptation to prescribe solutions. Sometimes listening is enough.

5 Don't feel pressure to commit to actions to help that you aren't able to fulfil

Whether you start the conversation about a friend or colleague's mental health, or they confide in you, you don't need to have all the answers. Sometimes listening, and allowing someone to feel heard and accepted, can be enough.

Practicing active listening

1 Give your full attention to the person and their message - not overlaying what you think they mean

2 Refrain from quick judgements and jumping in to defend

3 Reflect back to them what you have heard in your own words and, as needed, clarify that your understanding is correct

4 Maintain focus if they introduce topics that feel off-topic for you, as they might be relevant to them

5 Listen fully before responding - and take time to reflect and digest before responding if you need to