

Managers and Mental Health – how to have conversations around Mental Health.

As a manager, it is important to think about how to support your staff, particularly those struggling with stress and life events.

However, it is important to remember that Managers may also become distressed when dealing with the experiences of others, and this is completely normal.

Taking care of your own mental health is just as vital as caring for the mental health of your staff members around you. Acknowledging the importance of prioritising your own recovery actions and self-care is essential.

“It’s okay to take care of you. Remember, you can’t pour from an empty cup.”

Managing your own Mental Health

Remember your mental health is just as valuable as your staff members. Therefore, it’s important you practice your own recovery actions and self-care strategies.

- Take some time out for yourself.
- Balance the time supporting your team and yourself.
- Manage your workflow to ensure it meets your current capacity.
- Debrief with other colleagues after difficult conversations with your staff.
- Manager Assist

To arrange an appointment today please call us on
1300 130 130
E: enquiries@daccordoas.au

Warning Signs to look out for:

Managers are often the first to notice ‘problems’ in their staff members. Some warning signs to look out for in staff are:

- Being constantly on edge or irritable
- Having difficulty performing tasks at work
- Changes in motivation and energy towards tasks
- Significant swings in emotional display
- Being unusually busy in an obvious attempt to avoid issues.
- Talk of using alcohol, drugs or gambling to cope.
- Sleep disturbance, insomnia, nightmares, or other sleep difficulties
- Continued revisiting and discussion of the event.
- Appears disengaged, withdrawn, or unable to focus.
- Exhibits changed behaviour compared to before the trauma.
- Having thoughts of self-harm

More Specifically:

High Risk

- Overt expression and threat to harm oneself and/or others.
- Openly speaking of hopelessness and helplessness.
- Has a plan and sounds adamant about putting plan to action.
- Catastrophic thinking.
- Feelings of despair.
- Pessimistic outlook on life.
- Excessively negative about self or others.

Action

- Listen for strong language of self-harm.
- Keep person on phone / keep contact open.
- If person is onsite, keep them onsite and you can call EAP to assist either onsite or over the phone for immediate intervention.
- Do not let them leave without professional assessment.
- Ask if they are alone, if they have been drinking or taking drugs and if they harmed themselves or others.
- Ask if there are others present i.e. children

Things to Consider:

If they are refusing assistance and all the above are present, dial 000 immediately and if the person has hung up, simultaneously call EAP to facilitate crisis intervention.

If you cannot determine location, address, or contact information, EAP can assist.

In this situation, there is no confidentiality.

Moderate Risk

Person expressing despair and hopelessness and feelings of no longer wanting to be around, but not have a plan and has expressed some collaboration to seek assistance but is very negative and/or unresponsive.

Action

- Call EAP for immediate assistance, clinician support and/or onsite response.
- Link them by calling EAP and facilitating a clinical conversation.
- You may leave the room, but do not let them leave the site without ensuring their safety.

Low Risk

- Highlighting feelings of emotional depressive feelings, worthlessness, helplessness, and hopelessness.
- Listen for language that may be expressing self-harm. If they have no plan and are not overtly expressing self-harm or suicide but you can clearly see the emotional torment the person is going through, call and link them to EAP for immediate triage, the person may be receptive to clinical support.

Support for Managers:

Know that you can only assist the person to receive the assistance they need at the time you are with them. You are not there to be the psychologist or the therapist or delve deeply into their personal affairs. Debrief and talk to EAP about the process that has taken place and what to do next. Avoid alcohol and excessive caffeine. Maintain and continue to do activities that you have regularly planned. Talking about your experience is 9/10ths of your recovery.

Managers assist support:

The Manager Assist Hotline provided by D'Accord is designed to assist managers that are dealing with difficult employee or management issues. Immediate telephone assistance can be provided, or if required, face-to-face sessions can be arranged.

As part of our overall EAP strategy, D'Accord provides manager support services which provide access for managers, supervisors, team leaders and other senior personnel to our most experienced consultants for immediate support.

Concerned about Employee:

In the event something has not actually transpired, but you may be concerned about an employee because their language or behaviour changes. Call the *manager assist* line on 1300 130 130 for immediate clinical triage to verify what you may be experiencing and what to do.

How to have conversations around mental health, suicide, & self-harm with employees:

De-stigmatising mental health:

It is not a weakness to feel pressure, stress, and despair.

"You don't need to tell me the nitty gritty, but there is help available to you, let me get the number for you or let's make the call together and I can leave the room."

Advise, it is confidential, and they will be able to help professionally with techniques strategies and solutions where you may not be able to see them right now.

It is natural for you to feel pressured or overwhelmed to have these conversations around mental health. Remind yourself, you are not alone in supporting your employees, there is help available through EAP and do not feel you need to be the fixer, you are the linker.

Look → Listen → Link

Look for changes in behaviour, that you would usually expect from that employee.

Listen for changes in their usually speak that may be more negative and have a poor outlook on the future.

Link them to support.

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