



# Managing Mental Health

every connection matters™



## Goals of Managing Mental Health for Managers

The goal of managing mental health is not to solve other peoples' problems. While managers will use helping skills to support staff, it is important to distinguish their role from that of qualified counsellors. A manager's role is to:

- Talk about problems confidentially
- Find other resources that will assist the other person
- Attempt to help resolve their problems quickly
- Avoid giving personal advice
- Separate their personal issues from others peoples
- Help others clarify their issues
- Help and encourage others to deal with strong feelings and crises in an effective/logical manner
- Identify, define, and manage issues within a work context
- Help others to take responsibility for and actively solve their own problem situations
- Make appropriate referrals according to specific situations and personal needs.

## The Helping Framework

In the event you notice an issue, the following tips and focus areas will help you plan a mental health conversation.

### Seek Support

- Have you spoken to your manager about the issue?
- What role will you play? Who will you team up with?
- What other resources are available to help plan your approach?

### Approach and Discuss

- Think about timing, location, and the words you will use
- What are you going to say if they deny the issues and reject your help?
- What are you going to say if they admit there is a problem?
- How will you balance the need for confidentiality with the transparency, collaboration, openness, and risk management?

## Follow up

- Consider the reasonable timeframes and how you will objectively measure their progress towards the ultimate goal of recovery
- Are there any issues that may need to be escalated such as industrial relations risk, safety risks, or other problems associated with the person you have been speaking with?

## Debrief

- Have you arranged for someone to debrief with you?
- Should you be receiving external assistance to debrief this issue?

## Beyond Blue Action Plan

The following items will help you to develop a personal and/or organisational action plan to help effectively manage mental health. For each action item, ask yourself what specific action you will take, the date you want to complete it by, and how you will know when you are successful:

- **Action Item 1:** make workplace mental health an organisational value and goal
- **Action Item 2:** speak about mental illness in the workplace, including any personal experience you may have, to reduce stigma
- **Action Item 3:** allocate necessary resources and set the measurement framework you want to use in your organisation
- **Action Item 4:** hold managers accountable to maintaining a mentally healthy workplace (and reward them for facilitating this)
- **Action Item 5:** develop your leadership and people management skills.

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