

SPEAK LIKE A BOSS LIBRARY REFERRING A DISTRESSED TEAM MEMBER TO A PROFESSIONAL HELPER



Managers and others in leadership positions should always take the mental health of employees seriously. Mental health issues lead to absenteeism and lost productivity, along with decreasing the quality of life of the sufferer.

When a team member appears distressed, you have the opportunity to get them the help that they need before the problem worsens. However, discussing mental health issues in the workplace can be tricky. Here are several simple tips for raising concerns and arranging help.

Tip 1: Pay Attention to Warning Signs of Mental or Physical Distress

Employers should prioritise the mental health of their employees. Along with absenteeism and lower productivity, mental health struggles can lead to unhealthy workplace relationships.

Some of the signs of mental health issues include physical changes. An employee may look fatigued. You may notice that they smile less, seem distracted, or become tired easily.

Someone suffering from depression or other mental health issues may also become impatient and grow angry easily. Social withdrawal, confusion, and missed deadlines are also signs of mental health struggles.

Tip 2: Review Available Resources for the Team Member

Work with your human resources department to find resources that can help the employee. You should also determine what steps your organisation can take to support the team member. This may include providing time off, reducing their workload, or developing a flexible work schedule.

Tip 3: Open a Line of Dialogue with the Team Member

Talk to the team member to let him or her know that you care about their well-being. You do not need to immediately address the problem.

Start by opening a line of communication. Forming a stronger connection with the employee may make it easier for him or her to open up about their struggles. Arrange a private conversation in an office or meeting room instead of a common area, such as the breakroom.

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Tip 4: Avoid Overstepping Your Boundaries

There are certain things that employers can, can't, and shouldn't discuss with employees. You may want to review the rights and responsibilities of employers in your jurisdiction before getting into a detailed conversation about mental health with an employee. Your human resources department should be able to provide more insight into what topics and questions you can discuss.

Tip 5: Inform the Team Member of Available Resources

The main goal of talking to a team member about their mental health is to provide them with the help that they need. Let the team member know which resources are available to help them through their current situation. This may include mental health services covered by employer-sponsored health insurance.

10 Phrases for Addressing a Distressed Team Member

1. As your manager, I can help you deal with work problems. This falls outside my expertise but it is important for you to get help with it. There are professionals out there who can help with this sort of issue. For example, the Employee Assistance Service provides free counselling to members of our staff.
2. Have you heard about the counselling service? Here's a brochure on their services.
3. It's normal to need help dealing with issues like this. Options include coaching or counselling.
4. If you talk to a professional about what you're experiencing, they might be able to give you some tools to handle this situation.
5. It's important that you get support that you're comfortable with here. We do have an Employee Assistance Program that might help.
6. I can offer you my office if you'd like to call the counselling unit now.
7. Would you like to call and make an appointment with the Employee Assistance Service now?
8. If you need somewhere to confidentially make a call, you can use my office.
9. The Human Resources team has some information about services that might help here.
10. It's normal to need professional help sorting out complex problems like this. The Counselling Service is a good place to start.

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Planner: referring a distressed staff member to professional support

We want you to know that we are aware that you're going through some difficulties right now. We also want you to know that you have our support in dealing with summarise the issues that the team member is facing.

If there is anything that we can do to make this easier, let us know. In the meantime, we recommend provide your recommended referral, such as counselling services or an employee assistance program.