

1

STEP 1:

Look

When you observe that normal patterns of behaviour or their physical appearance is different, it could be an early signal that your staff member may need assistance.

Healthy Life Means...

Looking

Identifying

Facing

Empowering

Do this first

Ask yourself - What is different about the staff member's behaviour or appearance?

Have they:

- ☐ suddenly gained/lost weight, been bingeing/had a lack of appetite
- ☐ had increased bouts of energy/over activity
- ☐ withdrawn from normal activities

Are they:

- ☐ out of character e.g. untidy, unpleasant odour, unwashed hair
- ☐ appearing tired or lethargic most days
- ☐ suddenly taking more sick days or constantly late for work
- ☐ complaining regularly of headaches and other pains
- ☐ constantly sweating, short of breath, shaking
- ☐ making regular visits to the toilet or being absent from their normal place of work without explanation
- ☐ having frequent conflict with work colleagues
- ☐ having difficulty concentrating on tasks, recalling information, remembering activities
- ☐ suddenly making a lot of errors
- ☐ avoiding a particular activity/place
- ☐ demonstrating obsessive, repetitive or controlling behaviour
- ☐ having difficulty communicating (written or verbal)
- ☐ distorting conversations, situations
- ☐ frequently breaking down, crying
- ☐ appearing agitated, quick to get angry, regular outbursts.

Ask yourself – Are you aware of any of the following inside or outside of work?

Has there been:

- ☐ recent family or workplace conflict
- ☐ recent divorce or separation
- ☐ involvement in a serious incident/accident (recently or the past)
- ☐ a recent death of a friend, family member, or colleague
- ☐ financial difficulty.

Have they:

- ☐ witnessed a serious incident/accident
- ☐ started to work longer/shorter hours
- ☐ got elderly parents or are they a full time carer
- ☐ constantly stressed about, or been overwhelmed, with their role, workload, or an upcoming event
- ☐ had an addiction to a substance (alcohol, drugs or medication)
- ☐ informed you that they have a diagnosed mental illness or not coping with life (have you been advised of any of these from a reliable source?)

Do this first

Ask yourself – Could their behaviour be stress related?

- ☐ Could the staff member have a heavy workload?
- ☐ Could the staff member be trying to meet a number of deadlines?
- ☐ Is the staff member required to give a presentation or undertake some form of public speaking?
- ☐ Is the staff member's behaviour, anger, meltdown as a result of a conversation where they are required to take on more work or take them out of their comfort zone?
- ☐ If one of the above stressors is removed, could the staff member's behaviour return to normal?



There may be a simple solution. Remove the stressor.

Don't do this

Jump into actions or conclusions until you've gathered the facts. Make assumptions about the staff member and then discuss this assumption with other staff or work colleagues. Treat the person differently or make an example of them in front of others. Assume that the problem or their uncharacteristic behaviour will go away.

2

STEP 2: *Identify*

Gather the facts: It is often difficult to distinguish normal mental health from mental illness because there is no simple test to show you. Gather information to help you to make an informed decision.

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Assess the information you have about the staff member

- ☐ Check how many of the boxes you have ticked in Step 1 and the issues that they raise.
- ☐ Start documenting and collating a chronological record on the [Notes](#) page.
- ☐ Ensure your notes are saved/held in a secure location (e.g. U:\)
- ☐ Identify if there are other indicators which may highlight that there are issues:
 - ☐ increased/high numbers of sick leave reports
 - ☐ formal complaints
 - ☐ feedback from clients or colleagues
 - ☐ specific incident reports.
 - ☐ other _____
 - ☐ other _____

Ask yourself

- ☐ Is what you are identifying above, repeated patterns of behaviour?

Have you tried other strategies?

Could you change/modify their behaviour by:

- ☐ Altering their work environment.
- ☐ Increasing predictability and scheduling i.e. routine.
- ☐ Increasing opportunities for choice, flexibility and control.
- ☐ Adapting and/or modifying workload.
- ☐ Acknowledging positive behaviour.
- ☐ Minimising triggers which could lead to stress related behaviours.

Ask yourself:

- ☐ Do you have a clear and consistent approach with all your staff and haven't developed any biases toward this staff member due to an event in the past?
- ☐ Have you created a work environment that may create or exacerbate mental health problems?
- ☐ Have you inadvertently contributed to the problem?
- ☐ Do you have the skills to manage the situation or do you require additional advice (see contacts below)?

Do this first

Identify if the University has other policies and processes that need to be considered

- ☐ Have you checked the [HR website](#) to identify what Policies and Procedures relate to the issues identified and that could also provide you with assistance/guidance (e.g. Enterprise Agreement, Unsatisfactory performance, Fair treatment, Injury Management, Non-work related rehabilitation)?
- ☐ Does the policy/process require you to inform other Managers or HR Branch?

Be satisfied before you take the next step that you have identified the issues and have the facts to back it up



Don't do this

Dismiss the fact that they:

- May be afraid that their disability will provoke unnecessary concern and affect job opportunity.
- May not have come to terms with their mental illness.
- May have been discriminated against in the past.
- May be afraid that they will lose their job.
- Procrastinate and avoid taking the next step.

3

STEP 3: *Face*

A conversation can be difficult, but needs to occur to help the person and help you at work.

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Facing

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Do this first

Continue documenting and collating records on the [Notes](#) page.

Have you reviewed your findings and considered an appropriate setting?

PLANNING

- ☐ How will you inform the person of why you're having the meeting?
 - ☐ Phone Call ☐ Face to face
- ☐ Have you planned for different scenarios – e.g.
 - ☐ performance management
 - ☐ does the person want support at the meeting
 - ☐ the person doesn't want to meet
 - ☐ the person gets emotional?
- ☐ Have you allowed enough time? Allow more than less. Maybe have a meeting late morning. Record time _____
- ☐ Is the setting a private quiet space and at a time that suits? Review both your and the persons' commitments. Maybe meet in a coffee shop. Record Location _____

Initiate the Meeting

- ☐ Have all of your information ready.
- ☐ Remember open posture, good eye contact and body language is important.
- ☐ Explain why you are having the meeting – you are concerned about them – their physical or behavioural changes using examples:

e.g. "I'm concerned about you. You are a very competent worker but I have noticed lately you are having trouble with".

"You don't seem yourself and I'm wondering if you're OK? Is there anything that is contributing?"

"I don't want to intrude on your privacy, but something is impacting on you at work and I'm concerned/I have a duty of care to you and others". "I want you to know what help is available".

Continuing the Conversation

- ☐ Guide the conversation with questions that help explore – you want the person to do most of the talking – silence is not necessarily bad.
- ☐ Listen without judgement. Ask open-ended questions.

Do this first

If the person appears uncomfortable or unwilling to talk:

- ☐ Encourage the conversation along with examples of the behaviour that has changed in recent times "How has that made you feel?", "How long have you felt this way?", "What do you think may have caused this reaction?", "Are you getting any assistance, support from others, medical assistance?"
- ☐ Give the person time to reply – silence is not necessarily bad.

Acknowledge there is an issue

- ☐ Don't rush to solve problems, but let the person know solutions are available when they are ready to start exploring them.
- ☐ Paraphrase or reflect back to the person the main concerns to show you understand.
- ☐ Use clarifying questions if there is something missing/wrong e.g. "It seems to me that you're saying..."; "What have I missed...?"
- ☐ Reassure the person and ask them what they would like to do from here.



Don't do this

- Schedule too little time to have the conversation, or schedule in-between back-to-back meetings.
- Try to diagnose a medical condition.
- Agree with thoughts or beliefs that are out of context.
- Speak down to the person or use derogatory terms (e.g. schizo or crazy).
- Don't treat the person as an invalid.
- Don't assume that you will be able to 'cure' the person of their mental illness.
- Don't assume that a single conversation will be all that is required.

4

STEP 4: Empower

Empowering will enable open communication; improve trust; encourage the person to take responsibility and control; and provide a positive work environment and clear pathway.

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Do this first

Determine the best path forward based on information you have collected and through discussion with the staff member in Step 3.

Choose

- ☐ **Option 1** - Agree on reasonable adjustments.
- ☐ **Option 2** - Person to self-manage with monitoring.
- ☐ **Option 3** - Commence performance management.
- ☐ **Option 4** - Crisis care – referral and immediate intervention.
- ☐ **Option 5** - Workers Compensation (Person is claiming that their illness is caused by work).

Continue documenting and collating records on the [Notes](#) page.

Option 1: Reasonable adjustments

- ☐ Identify changes to a job which can be made to enable a worker to perform their duties more effectively in the workplace, while still meeting the inherent requirements of the job.

Refer to examples on the [following pages](#).

Option 2: Self manage & monitor

- ☐ Ensure the person knows that their behaviour needs to change.
- ☐ Allow the person to self-manage and rectify their behaviour without workplace intervention.
- ☐ Encourage the person to seek other assistance. This might include:
 - ☐ Speaking to their GP, or if they don't have one, providing information about [Adelaide Unicare](#) practices.
 - ☐ Speaking to a counsellor (see contact numbers below).
 - ☐ Accessing information.
- ☐ Clarify expectations around performance and that if work issues continue there may be no choice but to commence the performance management process (**Option 3**).
- ☐ Agree on times to catch up.
- ☐ Maintain contact.

Option 3: Performance management

- Seek advice from [HR Advisors](#) for your Division/Faculty.
- ☐ Follow the HR process and their advice.

Option 4: Crisis care

Immediate Intervention

The person may have reached the point where a staged and planned approach is no longer an option. If you think that they are in immediate risk to themselves or others then you will need to determine who to contact.

- ☐ Violent, aggressive behaviour – Security and/or Police
- ☐ Incoherent, irrational – Contact someone they trust/a family member to ensure that they are accompanied and supported. If their behaviour becomes uncontrollable, then contact Security and/or Police. Stay with the person until assistance arrives. Arrange for them to get professional assistance as soon as possible e.g. Doctor, Counsellor.
- ☐ Physical symptoms that indicate that emergency medical treatment is required (e.g. chest pain) – Ring 000 if necessary.
- ☐ Threat of suicide - reach out and talk to them. Listen and let them talk. Express care and concern. Do not leave them. Contact an organisation such as [Lifeline](#) or phone Lifeline on 13 11 14. Ring 000 if necessary. Contact someone they trust/a family member or friend. Do not take responsibility on your own.

Refer to the links on the [Mental Health Toolkit home page](#) which provides further information

Option 5: Workers Compensation

If the person believes their condition is related to work, and wishes to lodge a workers compensation claim, advise them to contact the Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor ext 35904 or access the [HSW Webpage](#) for further information.

Don't do this

Make assumptions about someone's ability to do their job based solely on the fact that they have a mental illness.
 Agree to something that is not sustainable or reasonable from an operational perspective.
 Wait until the end of an agreed timeframe to provide feedback regarding progress. This needs to be an ongoing conversation.
 Forget to gain assistance for yourself in managing the situation.
 Forget to remind the person that they can have a support person with any of the options.
 Do nothing.

4

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Facing

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Reasonable Adjustments

Inherent Requirements

- ☐ Identify and record the inherent requirements of the job, including key operational needs of the area.
- ☐ Ensure that the staff member understands the core requirements of their job and explore ways that they can meet these.

Reasonable Adjustments

As the person's supervisor, you are best placed and should feel empowered to provide support and monitoring on a day to day basis. However, if it is identified during the process that reasonable adjustments will (whether temporary or permanent):

- ☐ change the inherent requirements of the person's job; or
- ☐ include changes that will exceed a three month period; or
- ☐ require any advice or assistance.

Contact the Injury Management and Wellbeing Advisor (ext 35904) who will work with you to develop a formalised Rehabilitation and Return to Work Plan (see Information Sheet '[Rehabilitation for Non Work Related Injuries and illnesses](#)').

The types of adjustments will depend on the individual and their symptoms. Encourage the person to think about their own solutions as well as offering some of your own.

They can include:

- ☐ Increasing the frequency of one-on-one meetings to prioritise tasks and review deadlines.
- ☐ Review how tasks are allocated.
For example:
 - ☐ Ensure that a staff member who is finding the pressure of meetings very difficult arranges their diary to allow appropriate time to prepare.
 - ☐ Consider whether a temporary change to some duties is appropriate and can be supported (e.g. reduced contact with the public/students).
 - ☐ Appoint a buddy or mentor - someone on a similar grade and outside the usual management structure.

Reasonable Adjustments

- ☐ Offering flexible work arrangements:
 - ☐ Discuss some of the existing options for voluntary flexible work arrangements outlined in the [University's Enterprise Agreement](#). Options may include temporary reduction of fraction, purchased leave and compressed weeks.
 - ☐ Investigate variable start/finish times and/or structure work and work hours to match the persons most productive time of day.
 - ☐ Plan the use of annual or sick leave (with the support of a medical certificate) to temporarily reduce hours, or allow appointment attendance.
 - ☐ Change usual shift patterns to longer periods of day/afternoon/night shifts to allow for changing schedules of medication which can be difficult.
 - ☐ Support the use of a flexible work arrangement to allow the person to gradually transition back to work following a period of time off.

Concentrating on or remembering tasks

- ☐ Provide workers with daily to do lists and scheduling regular breaks to accommodate a reduced concentration span.
- ☐ Write work instructions down rather than verbalising what to do.
- ☐ Break down job tasks into small steps and use prompts for each step in order to assist workers to refocus and continue with tasks if they forget what comes next e.g. step tasks out in an email or develop a checklist.
- ☐ Allow extra time to complete tasks or swap complex tasks until the worker gains confidence. Enable rotation between tasks.
- ☐ Discuss progress at agreed time-frames.
- ☐ Use colour coding, or other methods, to help prioritise tasks.
- ☐ Minimise potential distractions by partitioning off the workspace or having a workstation away from other colleagues.

Avoiding social interactions/colleagues

- ☐ Identify what areas of the role/interactions the staff member is having difficulty with.
- ☐ Swap or minimise those tasks/interactions e.g. where the worker is required to regularly meet with colleagues/others can they provide a summary in an email or report?
- ☐ Position the work in an area where they feel more comfortable or can work alone.

4

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Reasonable Adjustments

What if they can't be met?

When planned arrangements/reasonable adjustments aren't being met it may be for a variety of reasons:

- ☐ Go back to Step 2 and identify and document the issues. If there is a formal agreed arrangement or documented RTW plan, what hasn't been met?
 - ☐ Has the staff member been compliant?
 - ☐ Was support offered as outlined, were the goals and planned arrangements SMART (Specific, Measured, Achievable, Realistic, Timed) e.g. an agreement was made to start at 10am but staff member is having difficulty waking up in time because of medication side effects?
- ☐ Consider if there are any other reasonable strategies which would address the issues identified.
- ☐ Go to Step 3 and plan to have the conversation with the staff member and follow the prompts. This may be in consultation with the Injury Management and Wellbeing Specialist where required.
- ☐ Identify what the staff member considers that they need in order to resolve the issues.
- ☐ Ensure that there is a balance between the options put forward and what is appropriate for the School/Branch/area.
- ☐ Acknowledge and agree on a plan of action (e.g. a review by the doctor to determine capacity to complete duties, a period of leave, a revised RTW Plan).
- ☐ Allow them some time to consider the options if required.
- ☐ Document the agreed actions and provide a copy to the staff member (email or hard copy).

Where there is a disagreement in a course of action between the staff member and yourself don't let it drag on. A problem won't necessarily go away if you don't talk about it and you may be making things worse in the longer term.

- ☐ Consider engaging a third party to facilitate the process. This allows for professional and independent advice to both the Supervisor and the staff member. Contact the HSW Specialist (Injury Management and Wellbeing) who will facilitate this process and/or provide advice.
- ☐ Where the inherent requirements of the job are not being met and reasonable adjustments are no longer an option then seek advice from HR Advisors.

Reasonable Adjustments

Remember the inherent requirements.

Where a worker is unable to perform the inherent requirements of the job and no adjustment can reasonably be made to allow them to perform the core work requirements then it may be necessary to explore alternative work options.

It is not unlawful discrimination to terminate a worker's employment where they cannot perform the role after reasonable adjustments have been made.

Assistance should be sought from Human Resources to ensure obligations under the Enterprise Agreement and legal obligations are met and to provide you with guidance on the next steps.



What can you say to other staff?

When you make changes to someone's working arrangements (temporary or permanent) make sure you inform other staff who need to know about it.

This does not mean that you need to tell other staff about the person's health condition, in fact this would be breaching confidentiality. You just need to ensure they know about the arrangement, so that they do not prevent reasonable adjustments from working in practice.

For example: "..... will be working part-time for the next three months. He/She will continue to perform the finance functions of his/her role, so please continue to forward accounts for payment. However, student enquiries should be directed to the front counter. If you have any questions regarding this arrangement please come and see me"

Consult with the person regarding any formal communications to staff – you must have evidence of their consent.

Remember that the person is free to disclose as much or as little information as they like to colleagues about their health condition.