

MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING

A Guide for Assisting Faculty and Staff in Distress

Faculty and staff play a vital role in supporting and promoting positive mental health and maintaining a healthy, caring community on campus.



Recognize

Recognize changes in behaviour.

Have you noticed changes to a colleagues behaviour or uncharacteristic reactions to situations?

Early recognition can play a key role in maintaining and restoring positive mental health.

Take note of the behaviours you have observed.

- How long have you noticed the change in behavior or patterns of behavior?
- What have I heard from the individual?
- What is the impact of the behaviours? (i.e. negatively affecting relationships, workload, increased absences etc.)



Respond

Respond with empathy, care and concern.

It can be difficult to approach a colleague you think might be experiencing challenges. Checking in with the individual with a sense of care, concern and empathy will help start the dialogue.

Before initiating a conversation, consider the following;

- Are you the right person to have the conversation?
- Where can you have the conversation? Have you chosen a discrete and appropriate time and environment?
- Asking for support and guidance from a supervisor, the EFAP Workplace Advice Line, your HR Partner, or colleague.

Non-judgmental and supportive language includes:

"I have noticed..."

"I am concerned..."

"I hear what you are saying..."

"How can I help you to..."

Supporting the individual is one of the most valuable things you can do. It is okay not to know all of the answers.



Refer

Refer to appropriate resources. (Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP), Health Recovery/Stay at Work Services)

There are a wide range of resources available to assist faculty and staff. However, a staff or faculty member might not be aware of the services available to them or they may be hesitant to access them. Supporting them by connecting them to resources or suggesting you find them together might be helpful. An HR partner or HIAR can help you determine which resources are available to assist in managing the situation.

Non-judgmental and supportive language includes:

"Are you familiar with..."

"Can I suggest..."

"The U of A has some great supportive resources. We could have a look together..."

We gratefully acknowledge the University of British Columbia for sharing the original concept and content for this document.

High Risk of Harm

Behaviour that is violent, destructive, harmful, aggressive or threatening to self or others.

- Threats of suicide or suicide attempt
- Threats or plans to inflict injury or harm to others.

You are concerned about your colleague's immediate safety, or safety of others.

How to refer:

On campus—call University Protective Services
780.492.5050, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week

Off campus—**Call 911**

Moderate Risk of Harm

- Changes in personal appearance and hygiene
- Low mood or affect for a period of time
- Avoidance (of students or colleagues) or isolating behaviours
- Substance use concerns
- Disorganized thinking
- Expressions of hopelessness or reference to suicide
- Self-harming behavior such as self-injury or disordered eating

You are concerned about some recent behavior that is out of character for one of your colleagues.

How to refer:

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP).
780.428.7587 Confidential counseling, 24 /7

Workplace accommodations, stay at work services and illness leave: 780.492.0636

Workplace health promotion: 780.492.2249

Workplace concerns: contact your HR Partner

apps.hrs.ualberta.ca/HRContactForm

How to Report:

Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR)

780.492.4372 email: hiarua@ualberta.ca

Low Risk of Harm

- Family or relationship problems
 - Chronic health problems
 - Difficulty concentrating or learning new tasks
 - Difficulty sleeping
 - Increased interpersonal conflict
- You are concerned about the general wellbeing of one of your colleagues. You are not sure if it is serious but would like to offer them some support.*

How to refer:

Mental health concerns /difficulty coping:

Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP)
780.428.7587 Confidential counseling, 24 /7

Workplace health promotion: 780.492.2249

Workplace accommodations, stay at work services and illness leave: 780.492.0636

Workplace concerns: contact your HR Partner

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NEXT STEP – Based on your role and your relationship in the workplace, following up may look different for each person.

For individuals: After you have had a conversation with your colleague, and if you feel that it's appropriate, ask them if they would be okay with you checking back in with them soon. Take care of your own wellbeing. All of these resources are available to assist you as well. Check in with yourself and ensure your personal and emotional needs are looked after.

For managers and supervisors: If you have observed concerning changes in behavior in individuals you manage/supervise, you have a legal duty to inquire. Reach out and say something. If you need support when preparing for this conversation, you can contact the Employee and Family Assistance Program—Workplace Advice Line or Human Resources (HR Partner or Health Promotion). Have a check-in plan with your staff member, let them know you are genuinely concerned for their welfare.

Helping Individuals at Risk (HIAR) is a confidential, centralized resource for members of the campus community to report worrisome behaviours or concerns about individuals at risk of harming themselves or others. The HIAR program receives confidential reports and helps connect individuals to supports to assist them in managing their situation. If you observe troubling behaviour and are uncertain about what to do or how to help, contact HIAR for guidance.

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