



When your employee is showing signs of poor well-being

As a manager, you play an important role when an employee is showing signs of poor well-being. You should always take action – ideally as early as possible. There is nothing to be gained from waiting. On the contrary – you can often prevent an employee being reported absent due to illness by reacting in a timely manner.

Many managers are uncertain about their role and how to react to employees showing signs of poor well-being. This guide explains how you can best support your employee.



Common signs of poor mental well-being

Poor mental well-being can manifest itself in many ways, the most common of which are:

- Low level of engagement
- Decrease in performance
- Withdrawal from social situations
- Indecisiveness
- Irritation
- Memory and concentration problems
- No sense of humour
- Weariness
- Depression
- Lack of focus

How can you help your employee?

Helping an employee who is suffering from poor mental well-being can be challenging for a manager. However, if an employee is going through a particularly difficult period, it is important for you to engage with the employee to find out what options there are to change the situation.

You may feel that you are overstepping your employee's boundaries by asking about his/her well-being and sharing your concern. Maybe you are not sure if you have read your employee's signals correctly, or maybe you are afraid to make matters worse. But all studies show that doing something is always better than doing nothing.

Invite your employee to a talk

Before the talk, it is a good idea to consider these questions:

- What observations have you made about your employee's behaviour and why do they make you concerned?
- Is the employee's performance affected by the changed behaviour?
- Is the employee's teamwork affected by the changed behaviour?
- Has the employee been through an unusually stressful period that is now over, or is the workload constantly heavy?
- Has the employee received sufficient support from you?
- How may you have contributed to the employee's lack of well-being?

During the talk

Suggested structure of your talk:

- 1 Why have you invited the employee to the meeting?**
Share your own observations with the employee. Stick to factual observations and ask if the employee has also noticed any changes.
- 2 Ask the employee about his/her mental well-being**
For example: How are you feeling? Have any specific situations affected your well-being? It is important that you relate to how the employee perceives the situation. Listen to understand, not to answer, and leave your pre-conceived ideas outside the door.
- 3 Talk about possible solutions**
For example: What would make your working day better? How can your working conditions be changed? Who needs to be involved to make any required changes? Note: If the employee is under severe pressure, it may be necessary for you to take more charge and responsibility during your talk. (Using the table below may help create an overview).
- 4 If you fail to reach a common understanding**
... Tell the employee that you will call a new meeting to continue the dialogue.
- 5 Make firm agreements**
For example, ask the employee: What should we agree? Who does what and when? Agree to follow up in a week's time. Make a note of what you agreed and send it to the employee right after the meeting, so you both have it in writing.

What should you do as a manager if the employee does not recognise that there is a problem?

If you have talked to your employee, you are already helping him/her. Talking to the employee is the first step of a process. If your employee is suffering from poor mental well-being, he or she may not be able to acknowledge it during your initial talk. But when others put it into words, it is often the first step towards the employee taking his/her situation seriously and doing something about it.

Table for dialogue on tasks

To prevent absence due to illness, it may be a good idea for you and your employee to review all the employee's tasks to get an overview of their extent.



How to get help for your employee

Encourage your employee to contact Danica. Use us – today rather than tomorrow. The sooner the employee gets help to address his/her lack of well-being, the more effective the treatment and the fewer the consequences.

How to get help for yourself

If you are still unsure about anything, you can get help and support from Danica Healthcare Business on **45 13 17 17**.

This table may useful:

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