

# EARLY INTERVENTION CONVERSATIONS



## NOTICE

- Familiarity with your colleagues 'baseline' is useful for noticing deviations in behaviour / mental health
- Neurologically speaking, signs and signals of poor mental health may show up as a heightened fight/flight/freeze/fawn response. For example, fight mode may show up as increased aggression, impatience, short-temperedness. Freeze mode can look like overwhelm, procrastination or indecisiveness
- Other red flags may include a noticeable decline in performance and productivity, erratic work patterns
- Remember, you are not there to diagnose

## APPROACH

- Are you the best person to have this conversation? Consider your personal capacity, your relationship dynamic with the person and the potential nature of issue
- Consider the importance of confidentiality and timing
- Are you aware of your firm's protocols (record-keeping, disclosure policies etc.)?
- If needs be, calibrate your energy before initiating the conversation

## ASK

- Remember the 'ask twice' method, starting with a gentle 'how are you?' and following up with some context-setting
- Know your limits - you cannot force people to speak with you, instead it may be a case of you reporting your concerns to the relevant person in HR / management
- Consider modelling vulnerability to encourage the person to open up

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## LISTEN

- Your main role here is to hold the space. You do not necessarily need to fix or solve everything
- Be mindful of your own frame of reference and the importance of non-judgemental listening
- Using open-ended questions and safe/open body language can encourage someone to engage more openly with you
- Don't be afraid of awkward silences!
- Follow your firm's protocol with regards to keeping records etc

## OFFER SUPPORT

- Seek permission - ask the person if you can offer support
- Ensure you are familiar with signposting pathways at your firm
- If the situation is specifically related to your working relationship, it may be useful to refer to the supervision/management framework to identify touchpoints to make reasonable adjustments
- Be mindful of boundaries - they are important to protect all parties involved

# USEFUL RESOURCES

- Take 10 together campaign by MHFA England
- [mentalhealth.org.uk](https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)
- Relax & Release technique by Michael Singer
- Brené Brown TED Talk on empathy