MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS
ASSISTING FACULTY AND STAFF IN DISTRESS

Everyone plays an important role in creating healthy and respectful work environments.

STEP 1
RECOGNIZE

Recognize visible changes in behaviour
If you see any behaviour that may be out of character or unusual for your colleagues, know that early intervention plays a key role in recovery from mental health challenges.

Reflect on any visible changes in behaviour that might be uncharacteristic:
- What have I seen?
- What have I heard from the individual?
- How long have I noticed these behaviours?

STEP 2
RESPOND

Respond with concern and empathy
Often we may notice changes in behaviour, but are unsure how to approach a person having difficulties. Reaching out to a colleague shows care and concern, and opens a dialogue to check how they are doing. Think about the best way to approach your colleague about your concerns.

Are you the right person to have this conversation?
- Have you chosen a discrete and appropriate time and environment?
- Asking for support from another colleague or a supervisor might be helpful.

Non-judgmental and supportive language includes:
- “I have noticed…”
- “I am concerned…”
- “I hear what you are saying…”
- “How can I help you to…”

It’s okay to be uncertain about how to respond. You don’t need to have all the answers. Being there to support your colleagues is often the most valuable thing that you can do.

STEP 3
REFER

Refer your colleague to available resources
Staff and faculty may not be aware of the wide range of support services available to them, or may be hesitant to ask for help. There are ways to connect your colleagues to resources, or to learn about them together.

Non-judgmental and supportive language includes:
- “What do you need in order to…”
- “Can I suggest…”
- “uOttawa has a great resource to help with…”

Use the examples on the following page to help you determine your next steps and the best resources to use or to share.

Find this guide and more helpful tips at: www.uOttawa.ca/wellness
HIGH RISK OF HARM

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

HOW TO REFER
On campus, call Protection Services, 24/7: 613-562-5411
Off campus, call Emergency Services: 911

“I am concerned about my colleague's immediate safety, or the safety of others.”

MODERATE RISK OF HARM

• Changes in personal appearance and hygiene
• Low mood or affect for several weeks
• Avoidance (of students or colleagues)
• Substance use concerns
• Disorganized thinking
• Expressions of hopelessness, helplessness or references to suicide

HOW TO REFER
First, encourage your colleague to contact their Employee and Family Assistance (EFAP) Program:
Shepell: 1-844-880-9142
• Confidential
• 24/7
• Free

Then, suggest that they follow up with some of the additional resources listed below.

“I am concerned about some recent behaviour that is out of character for one of my colleagues.”

LOW RISK OF HARM

• Family or relationship problems
• Chronic health conditions
• Difficulty concentrating or learning new tasks
• Difficulty sleeping
• Increased interpersonal conflict

HOW TO REFER
Employee and Family Assistance Program: Shepell: 1-844-880-9142
Mental health concerns and/or difficulty coping please email Health and Wellness: hrhealth@uOttawa.ca or visit www.uOttawa.ca/wellness
Work, health, and life support: www.workhealthlife.com
Workplace accommodations for disabilities, including mental health conditions, please email Health and Wellness: hrhealth@uOttawa.ca
Health and Wellness information, programing, training and support: www.uOttawa.ca/wellness

“I am concerned about the general wellbeing of one of my colleagues. I’m not sure if it is serious but I would like to offer them some support.”

NEXT STEP

Based on your role and your relationships 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 you as well. Check in with yourself and ensure that your personal and emotional needs are looked after.

For managers and supervisors: If you have observed concerning changes in behavior in the 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, contact Health and Wellness in Human Resources for support in managing workplace-related health issues.

THANK YOU FOR PLAYING A VERY VITAL ROLE IN CREATING HEALTHY AND RESPECTFUL WORKPLACES AT uOttawa.

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