

# Worried about an employee?

Your employees are your greatest asset. Research shows that if employees feel confident, supported and engaged, productivity can increase and your team can perform at its best.

There may be times when you notice that something isn't quite right with an employee or that their behaviour has changed. These can be early signs that an employee needs additional support.

If you're unsure about how to talk about mental health or worry that you're not the right person to do so, this resource can help you have these conversations. It also offers guidance about the free, confidential support available to your employees.

**Creating a workplace where it's okay to talk about mental health, and where people feel supported, has huge benefits for both your staff and your organisation.**

# How you can support your employees

As an employer, you can create a workplace culture where it's okay to talk about mental health.

**1 Notice changes** in someone's behaviour or when they're not themselves.

- **Take time to check in with your team.** Create regular opportunities to connect, such as during a team meeting or a coffee catch-up. Genuine connection helps people feel supported.
- **Pay attention to changing behaviour.** Notice if someone is taking a lot of leave, seems withdrawn or isn't as engaged as usual. It may be a signal that something is going on for them.
- **Listen to your team.** Colleagues may notice changes in others and share their concerns with you.
- **Notice changes in work performance.** These changes can be signs that someone is struggling.

**2 Start a supportive conversation.**

- listen carefully
- give them your time, without distractions
- ask open-ended questions
- mention specific things that have made you concerned
- respond supportively.

**Some good conversation starters:**

*"I've noticed that... [you seem really quiet, have had lots of sick leave, haven't been yourself lately, etc.]. I'm worried about you.*

- *How are you doing?*
- *Is there anything happening that we can support you with?*
- *How's life? How's the family?*

It can be hard to discuss personal struggles, as an employee may get embarrassed or upset. Being calm and approachable goes a long way.

**3 Connect your employee early with the support they need,** in a way that works for them, at the time.

Many people don't seek help because they're worried about costs or concerned about privacy.

Help your staff find free, confidential mental health support. There is no right or wrong option, it just depends on what support works best for them. The following are free, confidential mental health support options.

**You're not expected to be their counsellor. Your role is to make sure they know about the free tools and services available, and how to access them.**

## Someone to talk to

If an employee would like to connect with a trained counsellor, they can free call or text **1737** (24/7).

The team:

- offer brief emotional support
- provide self-care tips
- connect people with other services
- offer wellbeing tools.

NEED TO TALK?



free call or text  
any time

## Someone to see

If an employee would prefer meeting someone face-to-face with more time to talk, they can access free, confidential mental health support nationwide.

For more information, or to find the nearest free mental health provider, scan the QR Code or visit:

[wellbeingsupport.health.nz](https://wellbeingsupport.health.nz)



## Something to download

A free, confidential mental health tool or resource can help your employee understand how they're feeling and develop skills to look after their wellbeing. You could suggest:

### Download the Groov App

Practical, science-based guidance. Instant answers to everyday questions, from managing pressure, to handling tough conversations or resetting after a big day. Private. Secure. Easy to use. Download at:

[groovnow.com/groov-app](https://groovnow.com/groov-app)

### Top Up

Paying attention to what keeps our mental health meter topped up, helps us adapt to challenges and fully enjoy the good times too. Learn ways to top up your wellbeing at:

[topupwellbeing.nz](https://topupwellbeing.nz)

### The Mental Health Foundation

For information on everyday actions that lift mental wellbeing and tools and resources that support people through tough times, visit:

[mentalhealth.org.nz](https://mentalhealth.org.nz)

## Looking after yourself

It's important to look after your own mental health, so you can continue to show up well for your team. Practise self-care and aim to:

- set your own boundaries and recognise your limits
- encourage other trusted people to offer support in the workplace
- build and develop a network of people you can turn to for support.

Visit [mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/workplaces) for more guidance and tools to help you and your employees' mental wellbeing.

### If urgent help is needed

If an employee shares information or acts in a way that could put themselves or another person at risk of harm, or you are worried about their safety, stay with them and:

- Call **111**, if you or someone else is in immediate danger.

OR

- Go to the emergency department at your nearest hospital.
- Call your local mental health crisis assessment team.  
To find your nearest team visit [mentalhealth.org.nz/help](https://mentalhealth.org.nz/help)