



SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

A Practical Guide for Leaders

Leadership provides opportunities to positively influence the wellbeing of others. This guide provides practical guidance for recognising concerns, responding with care, understanding the boundaries of your role, and connecting people with appropriate supports.



1 RECOGNISING SIGNS OF CONCERN

Pay attention to patterns or noticeable changes over time.

Possible signs may include changes in:



Work quality
or
concentration



Mood or
emotional
responses



Attendance
or
punctuality



Energy
levels or
fatigue

REFLECTION

What changes
have I noticed?

Is this
behaviour
unusual for this
person?

Have I
observed a
pattern over
time?



Relationships
with
colleagues



Engagement,
motivation or
participation



Communication
patterns or
behaviour



Signs may suggest that someone could benefit from a supportive conversation.

Focus on noticing, listening and supporting, rather than making assumptions.

2 HAVING SUPPORTIVE WELLBEING CONVERSATIONS

NOTICE

Share your observations without making assumptions.

"I've noticed you have seemed more overwhelmed recently and wanted to check in."

ASK

Create an opportunity for the staff member to share.

"How are things going for you at the moment?"

LISTEN

Listen with empathy and without judgement.

- Give your full attention.
- Avoid interrupting.
- Focus on understanding rather than solving.

SUPPORT

Explore what may be helpful.

"What support would be most helpful right now?"

WALK WITH

Agree on next steps and follow up.

"Let's check in again next week and see how things are progressing."

3 UNDERSTANDING LEADERSHIP BOUNDARIES

LEADERS CAN

- Notice signs of concern
- Initiate supportive conversations
- Listen with empathy
- Consider reasonable adjustments where appropriate
- Connect staff with available supports
- Follow up and maintain appropriate support

LEADERS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO

- Diagnose mental health conditions
- Provide counselling or therapy
- Manage complex personal issues independently
- Promise absolute confidentiality, noting limits where safety or duty-of-care concerns arise.
- Carry sole responsibility for a staff member's wellbeing

AVOID

- Making assumptions or drawing conclusions
- Minimising concerns
- Rushing to solve the problem
- Promising confidentiality you cannot keep
- Taking responsibility for issues beyond your role



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4 REFERRAL PATHWAYS AND SUPPORTS

Additional support may be appropriate when concerns persist, intensify, or require expertise beyond the workplace.

DOBCEL RESOURCES

Access to wellbeing resources, leadership supports, professional learning opportunities, and guidance materials.

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP) CONVERGE

Provides confidential, free counselling and wellbeing support for employees. Available 24/7.

HEALTH PROFESSIONALS

Encourage staff to seek support from their GP, psychologist, counsellor, or other relevant health professional where appropriate.

IMMEDIATE CONCERNS



If there are concerns about a staff member's safety or risk of harm, immediately engage school leadership.

6 A FINAL REFLECTION

Supporting wellbeing is about noticing and asking, listening with care, encouraging appropriate support, and checking in regularly over time.

Small acts of attention, compassion, and follow-up can make a meaningful difference to individuals and our school communities.

Supporting wellbeing does not mean solving every problem. Often, the most valuable contribution a leader can make is encouraging access to appropriate support and following up.

"How am I creating a culture where people feel seen, valued, and supported?"

5 DOCUMENTS AND WELLBEING CONVERSATIONS

WHY FILE NOTES MATTER

- Support follow-up and continuity
- Record agreed actions and adjustments
- Provide clarity if further support is needed
- Support duty of care responsibilities

WHAT GOOD DOCUMENTATION LOOKS LIKE

INCLUDE

- Date, time, and people involved
- Key concerns discussed
- Agreed actions and supports
- Follow-up arrangements

AVOID

- Personal opinions or assumptions
- Diagnoses or speculation
- Unnecessary personal detail

WELLBEING CONVERSATION REMINDER

Before the conversation

- Choose an appropriate time and place
- Focus on observations, not assumptions

During the conversation

- Listen with curiosity and care
- Avoid rushing to solutions

After the conversation

- Agree on next steps
- Follow up