

Manager Response Toolkit – Employee Mental or Emotional Health Issues

Remember Resilience Principles

- ▶ Connection and relationships are paramount
- ▶ Mantra: COMMON AND TREATABLE
- ▶ Don't catastrophize
- ▶ Encourage self-care
- ▶ Seek the guidance and support you need to handle tough situations

Mindset: Normalize Situation - Treat like Physical Condition

- ▶ If broken bone, go to an orthopedist, etc.
- ▶ If grief, perhaps a grief counselor, etc.
- ▶ Help mobilize resources with employee while maintaining boundaries

What do I as manager have control over?

- ▶ Deciding to initiate a conversation early, before a crisis occurs
- ▶ How I respond: support and respect; problem solve; quickly remove barriers to performing essential functions; use list of management tools, work supports, and accommodations; maintain confidentiality; if necessary, quickly obtain actionable info from doctor and try accommodations; encourage self-care; prepare team
- ▶ I can get help from other managers and HR while preserving confidentiality
- ▶ I cannot control whether the employee gets the help they need; I cannot solve their problem (unless it involves a work relationship, bullying, harassment, etc.)

Talking to the Employee:

DO

- ✓ Say, "You don't seem like yourself. Do you want to talk about it?"
- ✓ Say, "How can I help and support you to do your job?"
- ✓ Say, "It's always okay to ask for help" "It's a sign of strength, not weakness"
- ✓ Say, "I may not understand what you are going through, but I can see that it is distressing for you"
- ✓ Support employees when they seek assistance
- ✓ Assure employee all medical information is confidential

DON'T

- Ignore or avoid the person or the issue
- Say, "You seem depressed" or "How is your health?" or "Are you depressed?"
- Ask, "What medications are you taking?"
- Say, "Snap out of it" "Toughen up"
- Say, "I know exactly what you're going through."
- Say, "You're overreacting"

- Try to fix the problem

More Tips on Having the Conversation

- ▶ Be open and genuine
- ▶ You do not have to know what to say
- ▶ Listen carefully
 - Let them tell their story
 - Repeat back what you think that they said
 - Be aware of body language
- ▶ Your response
 - Show appreciation that they were open
 - Acknowledge it was probably very stressful to share the information
 - ALWAYS REASSURE PRIVACY AND MAINTAIN CONFIDENTIALITY
 - If they were not willing to share, emphasize that the door will remain open
 - State that you will keep checking in, and do so

Helping the employee continue to perform essential functions of position if no disclosure of condition:

- ▶ Open the door for employees to say: this is hard for me and I'd like to overcome my functional limitations
- ▶ No need to share diagnosis
- ▶ Review list of work supports and accommodations and discuss
- ▶ Explore creative possibilities
- ▶ Be open to trying things
- ▶ Document what you tried

Helping employee continue to perform essential functions of position if there is a disclosure of a condition:

- ▶ Same as above, plus:
- ▶ Quickly mobilize with HR:
 - i. Make doctor do his or her job right!
 - ii. Give Job Description to doctor immediately
 - iii. Learn specific impairments to help focus accommodate
 - iv. Push to get accurate information
- ▶ Get HIPAA release signed by employee
- ▶ If a complex case, try to get a case manager involved

Prepare the team to adjust if necessary

- ▶ Everyone needs to lean in and rally
- ▶ Someday it may be your turn