

# 1

STEP 1:

# Look

When you observe that normal patterns of behaviour or their physical appearance is different, it could be an early signal that your staff member may need assistance.

Healthy Life Means...

*Looking*

*Identifying*

*Facing*

*Empowering*

## Do this first

**Ask yourself - What is different about the staff member's behaviour or appearance?**

Have they:

- suddenly gained/lost weight, been bingeing/had a lack of appetite
- had increased bouts of energy/over activity
- withdrawn from normal activities

Are they:

- out of character e.g. untidy, unpleasant odour, unwashed hair appearing tired or lethargic most days
- suddenly taking more sick days or constantly late for work
- complaining regularly of headaches and other pains
- constantly sweating, short of breath, shaking
- making regular visits to the toilet or being absent from their normal place of work without explanation
- having frequent conflict with work colleagues
- having difficulty concentrating on tasks, recalling information, remembering activities
- suddenly making a lot of errors
- avoiding a particular activity/place
- demonstrating obsessive, repetitive or controlling behaviour
- having difficulty communicating (written or verbal)
- distorting conversations, situations
- frequently breaking down, crying
- appearing agitated, quick to get angry, regular outbursts.

**Ask yourself – Are you aware of any of the following inside or outside of work?**

Has there been:

- recent family or workplace conflict
- recent divorce or separation
- involvement in a serious incident/accident (recently or the past)
- a recent death of a friend, family member, or colleague
- financial difficulty.

Have they:

- witnessed a serious incident/accident
- started to work longer/shorter hours
- got elderly parents or are they a full time carer
- constantly stressed about, or been overwhelmed, with their role, workload, or an upcoming event
- had an addiction to a substance (alcohol, drugs or medication)
- informed you that they have a diagnosed mental illness or not coping with life (have you been advised of any of these from a reliable source?)

## Do this first

**Ask yourself – Could their behaviour be stress related?**

- Could the staff member have a heavy workload?
- Could the staff member be trying to meet a number of deadlines?
- Is the staff member required to give a presentation or undertake some form of public speaking?
- Is the staff member's behaviour, anger, meltdown as a result of a conversation where they are required to take on more work or take them out of their comfort zone?
- If one of the above stressors is removed, could the staff member's behaviour return to normal?



**There may be a simple solution. Remove the stressor.**

## Don't do this

Jump into actions or conclusions until you've gathered the facts. Make assumptions about the staff member and then discuss this assumption with other staff or work colleagues. Treat the person differently or make an example of them in front of others. Assume that the problem or their uncharacteristic behaviour will go away.