



**Let's talk.  
Let's act.**

Guide for Managers - Time to Talk Day 2020

# Empowering managers this Time to Talk day.



**Thursday 6 February** is **Time To Talk Day 2020**, an awareness day created by social movement **Time to Change**, in order to end mental health discrimination.

This year we are encouraging everyone to take the opportunity to start the conversation about mental health- and in particular, **supporting managers** to **talk and take action** to tackle mental ill-health in their workplaces.

# Empowering managers this Time to Talk day.



Managers play a crucial role in the culture and processes of our workplaces, and therefore have an important part to play in addressing the challenge that mental ill-health in work poses.

This [Let's talk. Let's act. Manager's guide](#) is aimed at managers but can be shared with your entire workforce, and enable them to begin crucial conversations about mental health in the workplace, as well as to take action to improve it.



Sometimes talking about mental health with someone you are worried about can **seem daunting.**

So, knowing how to **spot the signs** and how to **begin these important conversations** is essential to empowering Managers to take action and support their workforces.

“Yeah fine all good.”

# Spot the signs. Start the conversation.

“You can talk to me.”



Not replying to messages as usual or being distant



New pattern of unexplained lateness or absences



Not being their usual self, possibly snapping or shouting



Not wanting to do things or hobbies they would usually enjoy



Avoid talking, engaging or wanting to be with people



Inability to concentrate on their work or a conversation



# Beginning a conversation with someone who is struggling



## 1. Encourage them to talk and actively listen

Enabling individuals to speak about what they are struggling with and giving them someone who wants to listen can be one of the best ways of supporting them in what they're going through.

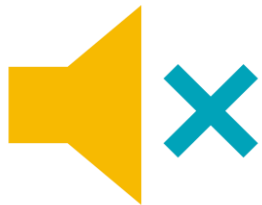
## 2. Encourage them to seek help for what they are struggling with

Remind the person, there is always someone to listen and support them with whatever they are struggling with. You can suggest they talk with the Employee Assistance Programme, HR representative or GP.

## 3. Follow up

When you are supporting someone always follow up with them where possible to ensure that action has been taken. Don't act differently around them, just keep being your friendly self.

# How to actively listen



## Show you care:

Focus on the other person, make eye contact, put away your phone.

## Have patience:

It may take time and several attempts before a person is ready to open up.

## Use questions:

Use open questions that need more than a yes/no answer, and follow up with questions like 'Tell me more'.

## Say it back:

Check you've understood, but don't interrupt or offer a solution.

## Have courage:

Don't be put off by a negative response and, most importantly, don't feel you have to fill a silence.



# Encouraging help seeking

**Remind the person, there is always someone to listen and support them. They are not alone.**

If you are supporting someone in the workplace, suggest they seek further support and perhaps talk to one of following:

- An HR representative
- A manager
- A Health and safety representative
- A Mental health first aider or champion if your workforce has these
- Call your Employee Assistance Programme

They can also speak with other health professionals, such as occupational health, or external to their organisation, such as their GP.

## What is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)?

An EAP is a benefit programme offered by some employers.

They support employees deal with personal problems that might be impacting their work.

They can support with general health and wellbeing, counselling, referral services and more.





# Signpost additional support

You can also signpost the person other **confidential services** if they are not comfortable with talking to someone directly related to their organisation.

Here are some free, confidential helplines:

Samaritans: [116 123](tel:116123)

Construction Industry Helpline: [0345 605 1956](tel:03456051956)

Mind Infoline: [0300 123 3393](tel:03001233393) (or text [86463](tel:86463))

Prevention of Young Suicide (Papyrus): [0800 068 41 41](tel:08000684141)

Cruse Bereavement Care Helpline: [0808 808 1677](tel:08088081677)



## Don't forget- you can't pour from an empty cup

Supporting someone in distress can be distressing in itself.

If you're helping someone who's struggling, make sure you take care of yourself as well.

For example:

- Talk to someone you trust about how you're feeling
- Set aside time for yourself
- Keep healthy

# Take care of yourself





Supporting  
someone who feels suicidal  
starts with **talking.**



# Supporting someone who feels suicidal

## Take them seriously.

It's a common misconception to assume their attention-seeking. Even if they don't act on their feelings, there is something there.

## Give them time.

You might feel anxious to hear their answers, but it helps if you let them take the time they need. Silence is sometimes needed.

## Ask open questions.

These are questions that invite someone to say more than 'yes' or 'no', such as 'How have you been feeling?' or 'What happened next?'

## Try not to judge.

You might feel shocked or upset but it's important not to blame the person for how they are feeling. They may have taken a big step by telling you.



# Don't avoid the topic

*“How do I do it?”*

Asking simple, direct questions can encourage them to be honest about how they are feeling.

*“What if I put the idea in their head?”*

Professionals recommend asking direct questions about suicide. Many people feel relieved and less isolated when they are asked.

*“Is it safe?”*

Research has shown that speaking openly about suicide decreases the likelihood of the person acting on their feelings.

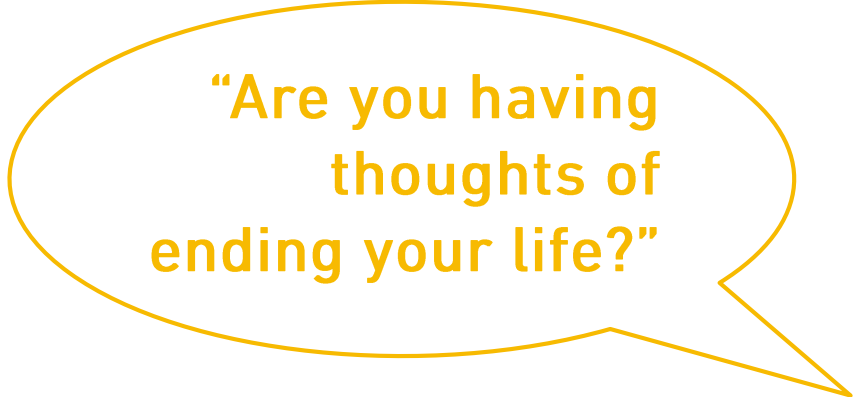
**'Are you having suicidal thoughts?'**

**If you are not sure that someone is feeling suicidal, ask:**

# **Ask direct questions**

A yellow-outlined speech bubble pointing to the left, containing the text "Are you thinking about suicide?".

**“Are you thinking about suicide?”**

A yellow-outlined speech bubble pointing to the right, containing the text "Are you having thoughts of ending your life?".

**“Are you having thoughts of ending your life?”**

These questions are direct. It is better to address the person’s feelings directly rather than avoiding the issue.

**Asking about suicide won’t make it more likely to happen.**

# What won't help someone who is feeling suicidal?



## When someone tells you that they are feeling suicidal your response may be to:

- try and find an easy solution,
- tell them to 'cheer up', 'pull themselves together', 'man up' or 'snap out of it,'
- change the subject,
- tell them that they have no reason to feel like that,
- tell them that they shouldn't feel like that
- tell them that they should be grateful for having a good life, or
- tell them that are being silly.

These responses are unlikely to be helpful.

They may make someone feel:

- rejected
- unheard
- alone
- like 'no one understands,'
- guilty
- patronised
- criticised
- analysed.

**Reassurance, respect and support can help someone to recover from a difficult time.**



**If you are struggling, remember you are  
not alone.**

**There is always someone there to support you.**

**You can call the **Samaritans** on **116 123** if you  
need to talk to someone.**



# How can Mates in Mind support your managers?



## Tailored training courses

As part of our wider programme, we offer Supporters access to a range of [awareness training courses](#) which educate and inform workforces, with tailored training for those across the business.



## Manage the Conversation training

A half-day training course for line managers and supervisors, which provides an excellent framework for leaders increasing their understanding and awareness of mental health, how to spot the signs, support their team and how to have conversations about mental health.

This course provides line managers with the **skills and confidence** to **listen to and talk** with someone who feels that they need to share a problem regarding their mental health, as well as how to **create a working culture** that can support staff to be more open about their mental health.



Want to book your [Manage the Conversation](#) course?

Or find out about [becoming a Supporter](#)?

Get in touch with our dedicated team on [support@matesinmind.org](mailto:support@matesinmind.org)

**Be a mate.**  
**Be the change.**

**Let's talk**

🖱 [www.matesinmind.org](http://www.matesinmind.org)

✉ [support@matesinmind.org](mailto:support@matesinmind.org)

