

# Wellbeing: A Practical Approach

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## Key Points:

- ▶ The presentation suggested ways to deal with a member of staff with a mental health problem from having that initial difficult conversation to managing sickness absence and supporting their return to work.
- ▶ Firstly, be aware of the signs to look out for that may indicate a problem – such as changes in mood, behaviour, attitude to colleagues, productivity, concentration, decision-making ability. – and know how and when to make your approach - in a non-judgemental way - to offer help. Ask open questions, listen carefully, don't make assumptions and assure the employee of confidentiality.
- ▶ Seek the advice of an Occupational Health practitioner who will have greater general knowledge of mental health issues and know how to access NHS or other support, if necessary. Be aware that more specific intervention from OH is a formal step and should not be undertaken lightly or be done without the employee's consent, as a referral can be seen as a punitive measure. However, in the case of stress, anxiety, depression - or worse - an organisation may have a policy to involve OH immediately to obtain their advice and recommendations.
- ▶ Keeping in regular contact with an absent employee will reassure them of your interest in their welfare and also establish what they want their colleagues to know.
- ▶ Remember that their absence will have an impact on other members of the team, so be clear about your expectations of them. They will also need to be informed when the employee is due back.
- ▶ Easing an employee back to work by initially reducing their hours or giving them lighter duties will be beneficial.
- ▶ Upon their return, have regular one-to-one meetings to check how things are going.
- ▶ Make sure that you document all actions agreed – at every stage.