



Respond

Mental ill-health can be short or long term. It can be caused and maintained by a range of factors. So, it is important you know how to respond if this happens to you or someone you work with.

Click here to read the complete guide



Key takeaways



There are many signs and symptoms of mental ill-health and distress, and they can present differently in everyone. If you notice changes in anyone, the best response is to talk to them and offer your support.



Having conversations about mental ill-health can be difficult, but you can follow some steps to make it easier. Start by focusing on behaviours you have noticed, listen, do not be judgemental, offer support, or encourage the person to speak to a professional.



Stigma is one of the biggest barriers to help seeking for those with mental ill-health. By reducing stigma in your business, you create an environment where people feel safe and supported to seek help when needed.



► Signs of mental ill-health or distress



You may have noticed something in yourself or a team member that does not feel quite right.

To the right are some indicators associated with mental ill-health. No one single indicator means someone is experiencing mental ill-health. However, if you notice many of these together, or an increasing number over time, it may be a sign that someone may need some additional support.

Behaviour

- Not getting things done at work
- Making more mistakes than usual
- Withdrawing from colleagues, customers, clients, family and friends

Feelings

- Overwhelmed, indecisive
- Irritable, frustrated
- Lacking confidence
- Worried
- Unhappy

Thoughts

- 'I'm a failure'
- 'It's not good enough'
- 'Nothing good ever happens to me'
- Often thinking about worst case scenarios

Physical

- Tired all the time
- Headaches and muscle pains
- Significant weight loss or gain
- Panic attacks, hot and cold flushes, racing heart

► What to do if you are experiencing mental ill-health

Talk to someone:

Chat with a friend or family member about how you feel.

Talk to a health professional:

Check in with your GP and let them know how you feel. This will be very helpful in figuring out your next steps.

Online resources:

Many online resources provide helpful information about mental health.

Helplines:

If you would like to chat about how you feel, try calling a free and confidential support service.

Act:

Do things to look after yourself physically and emotionally.

► What to do if you are concerned about someone else

For many people, talking about mental ill-health may feel awkward. But if you think something seems a little off, it is always worth asking the person about it.







Remember, you do not need to have all the answers.

The guide outlines some simple tips that can help.

► Making reasonable adjustments

Helping people stay at work or return to work can help their recovery. It can also help you retain important knowledge and skills that people have. There are also legal obligations related to helping people return to work through reasonable adjustments and making sure they do not experience any discrimination at work.

Options for reasonable adjustments:

-  Flexible working hours
-  Working from home
-  Adjusted workload
-  Modified tasks
-  Time management tips
-  Regular check-ins

And remember, if you are experiencing mental ill-health as a sole trader or small business owner, you should also consider what reasonable adjustments you may need.

Performance management and employment termination:

You cannot dismiss a worker only on the basis of mental ill-health or mental illness. This is against the law and employers could be charged with unfair dismissal if this occurs. You must have a valid reason to dismiss a worker, such as poor performance, conduct or changes to your operational requirements. The guide outlines steps to follow if a worker with a mental illness is not meeting workplace expectations.

► Reducing stigma

Stigma is one of the biggest barriers to help seeking for those with mental ill-health. So, reducing stigma in your workplace will help your team feel safe and confident to get help when they need it.

Here are some ways to reduce stigma in the workplace:

- Learn the basics of mental health and encourage your employees to do as well.
- Equip yourself with the skills to respond to mental ill-health in the workplace.
- Use appropriate language and terminology when talking about mental ill-health.

- Actively protect and promote mental health in the workplace.
- Challenge other people's false beliefs or incorrect language when you hear it.
- Normalise mental ill-health in your workplace by talking about it openly, providing information and participating in mental health campaigns.