

## Supporting Staff Through Challenging Times

As a manager, you play a vital role in your team's wellbeing. These tips can help you approach sensitive situations with confidence, compassion and clarity—while maintaining workplace performance.



**Respond Effectively:** Challenging conversations are part of every manager's role. Whether a staff member is struggling with personal or work-related issues, your approach can make a difference. Focus on what will support them to stay at work and maintain performance, rather than trying to solve their problems.

**Observe Changes:** Keep an eye out for changes in appearance, behaviour, productivity, attendance or interactions. If something feels off, ask if they're OK—in a private space where they won't be overheard.

**Step In Early:** Acting early shows you care and may prevent further performance issues or distress. Describe the behaviours you've noticed, avoid assumptions, and don't push for personal details if the employee isn't ready to share.

**Maintain Confidentiality:** Reassure employees that anything they share will be treated confidentially. While it's important to listen and show empathy, avoid offering personal advice—especially on topics like finances or relationships.

**Encourage Conversation:** Just having the chance to talk can make a big difference. Let your staff know you're available to chat and willing to listen without judgement.

**Listen to Understand:** If an employee is showing frustration, anger or avoidance, take time to understand their perspective before jumping into problem-solving. Sometimes, feeling heard is most important.

**Promote EAP Counselling:** Recognising early warning signs and knowing how to refer someone to the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is part of your leadership toolkit. Remind staff that EAP counselling is free and completely confidential—AWS will never share session content with anyone at work.

### Referring Staff to EAP Services

- **Manager Support Line:** Call AWS for confidential advice on how to refer employees, manage sensitive situations or talk through concerns.
- **Manager-Initiated Referral:** Formal referrals may be suitable for concerns like conduct, attendance or performance. Set clear goals for counselling, and note that while personal details remain private, you'll receive progress updates.
- **Encouraging EAP Access:** Employees can call EAP directly—it's entirely their choice. If they ask you to make the call, they must be present to confirm their identity.

To book an appointment with one of our counsellors, call or scan the QR Code



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