



Conversation guide for managers:

# Supporting mental health in the workplace

Talking about mental health at work can feel tricky, but it's one of the most important things you can do as a manager to create a supportive, thriving workplace. **That's why we've created this checklist.**

Packed with practical tips, it's designed for managers who want to encourage open, empathetic conversations with their teams – whether it's knowing how to check in with someone, what to avoid saying or how to build a culture where mental health discussions feel normal and safe, this guide is your go-to for creating a workplace that truly cares.



## Prompts for effective one-to-one check-ins

**Start casually to help your people feel at ease:**

"How are things going with you lately?"

**Be specific if you've noticed changes in behaviour:**

"I've noticed you've been a bit quieter, is everything okay?"

**Keep it open-ended to encourage sharing:**

"What's been on your mind recently at work or outside of it?"

**Focus on listening first and give them space to speak:**

"I'm here to listen, take your time."

**Follow up on previous conversation to show that you care:**

"Last time we spoke, you mentioned [specific issue]. How's that been going?"

**Ask how they'd like to be supported:**

"What do you feel you need from me or the team right now?"





## What not to say when discussing mental health

### Avoid minimising their feelings:

"It's just a phase." or "Everyone feels stressed out."

### Don't problem-solve prematurely – focus on understanding first:

"Have you tried getting more sleep?"

### Don't use dismissive, stereotypical phrases:

"Cheer up", "man up" or "other people have it worse"

### Steer clear of assumptions about why they might feel this way:

"Is this because of project deadlines?"

### Don't interrupt or fill silences:

Give them time and space to process their thoughts.

## How to normalise mental health discussions at work

Encourage team leaders to be open about their own experiences when appropriate and if they're happy to

Integrate mental health into team discussions without overemphasising

"By the way, our Employee Assistance Programme has some great resources if anyone's feeling a bit overwhelmed."

Educate the team by inviting mental health speakers or offering talks on topics like stress management

Create spaces where employees can recharge, such as quiet rooms or flexible working area

Avoid token gestures like overly forced campaigns – offer simple, meaningful options that employees actually find helpful. You could even carry out an anonymous survey to find out what your employees want to see more of.



## Want to start making meaningful mental health conversations the norm in your team?

Listen to our latest podcast episode with Luke Ambler from Ambler Training and Andy's Man Club for more valuable insights, or, if you'd like more support, get in touch with Citation at **0345 844 1111** to find out more.

