



How to support a colleague with stress without overburdening yourself

No one can escape stress - it's a natural part of life and we all go through periods of dealing with it.

But statistics show there has been a significant increase in work-related stress, depression and anxiety.

In fact, of the **1.8 million** workers in the UK suffering a work-related illness, **stress, depression, and anxiety making up around half of the cases***.



With workplace stress becoming an all-too common experience for many employees, it's important to understand how we can support and care for one another's wellbeing. Knowing how to support a co-worker with stress could make a big difference to how they feel.

*The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) 2022 statistics on work-related ill health and workplace injuries.



Our corporate mental health experts have shared how you can offer your colleagues support with stress, without becoming overburdened yourself.



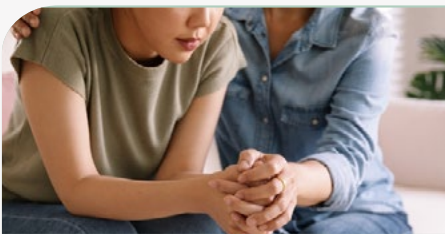
Express concern and empathy

Begin the conversation by expressing your genuine concern for their wellbeing. Use empathetic statements to let them know that you understand they are going through a challenging time.



Actively listen

Allow them to share their feelings and concerns without interruption. Demonstrate active listening by maintaining eye contact, nodding when appropriate and providing verbal cues to show you are engaged.



Validate their feelings

Acknowledge their emotions and validate their feelings. Let them know it's perfectly acceptable to feel like they do. Avoid dismissing their emotions and offering immediate solutions to their struggles.



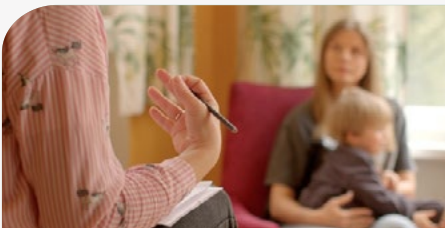
Encourage open communication

Create a safe and non-judgemental space for them to express themselves. Encourage them to share their thoughts and concerns openly and ensure them that their feelings are valid.



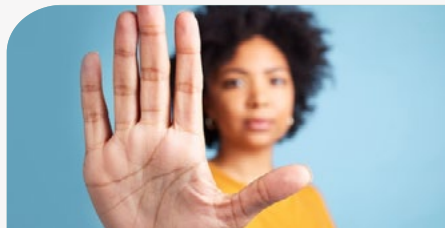
Offer practical assistance

Ask them if there is anything specific you can do to help alleviate their stress – help with tasks, share workload, and provide useful resources. Be specific in your offers of assistance to show your genuine commitment.



Suggest resources

Recommend resources that may help them to cope with their stress better, such as your company's employee assistance programme (EAP), a counselling service or a stress management workshop.



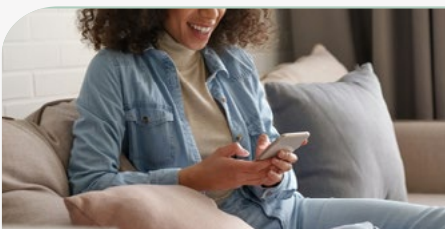
Respect boundaries

Be mindful of their comfort level and avoid pressuring them to share more than they are comfortable with. Respect their need for privacy and confidentiality.



Encourage self-care

Emphasise the importance of self-care and taking breaks. Suggest activities or strategies that promote well-being such as exercise or meditation.



Check in with them periodically

Follow up with them regularly to see how they are doing. Let them know that you are there for ongoing support and that they can reach out to you whenever needed.



Alert appropriate channels of support if necessary

If their stress levels seem to be very severe or you feel they may be at risk to themselves or others, consider informing management, HR, or OH or if necessary, the emergency services.



Be flexible and adaptive in your approach

Everyone responds to stress differently. Your goal is to create a supportive environment that encourages your colleagues to seek the help they need.