

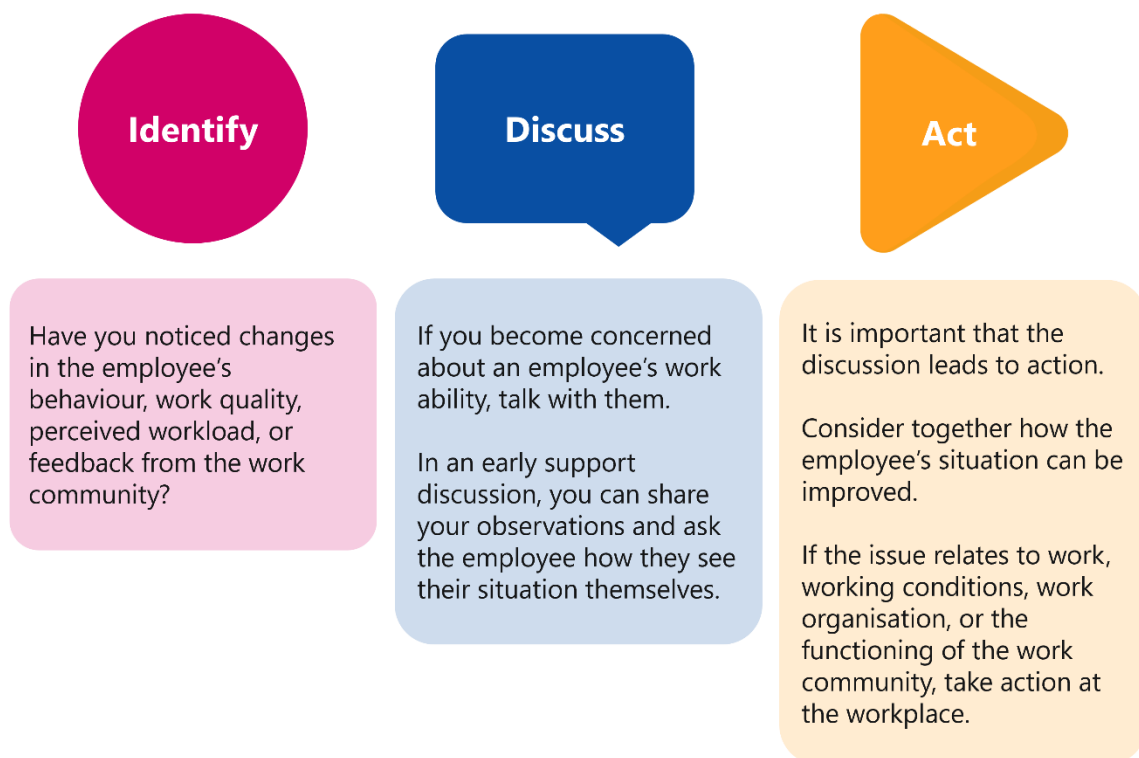
Part 6

Bring things up and look for solutions together

All of us have bad days sometimes. If some work task, e.g. is not going well, you can ask about it politely. Often just bringing it up in a friendly manner is enough to change the situation. Try to spot the warning signs that indicate problems and boldly bring the matter up for discussion.

What signs indicate that there are work or health problems?

- changed behaviour
- withdrawal, irritability, impoliteness
- difficulty concentrating, absent-mindedness, forgetfulness
- increased tardiness
- lack of motivation, indifference, carelessness, neglecting work
- weakened work performance, decline in the quality of work
- showing up intoxicated or hung-over
- repeated or prolonged absences due to illness
- general concern for the assistant's situation



What should you do, then, if you spot warning signs in your assistant's performance or resilience?

Work- or performance-related challenges as the underlying reason:

- Specify the expectations and work tasks.
- Clarify your needs, work goals and responsibilities.
- Clarify expectations, tasks and the daily rhythm.
- Ensure the assistant's competence, knowledge and skills to handle the tasks.
- Repeat the work orientation and instructions.
- Make sure the tools as well as the allocation and organisation of the work are in order.
- Find out about the assistant's motivation for this job.
- Agree with the assistant on what measures to take and on the future.

Interaction problems as the underlying reason:

- Develop joint ways of operating and interaction.
- Discuss how work is going and conduct at work. Draw up an action plan if necessary.
- Address inappropriate conduct right away.
- Agree on or update the ground rules. The employee and the employer are each responsible for how they conduct themselves.
- Adopt a zero-tolerance policy towards bullying and harassment.
- If necessary, seek help to address problem situations.

Health issues or life management challenges as the underlying reason:

- Bring problems up for discussion and examine the options.
- Agree on follow-up measures.
- Arrange work ability support through occupational health care and/or a health clinic.
- Address substance abuse issues right away.
- If necessary, contact an occupational health nurse after your discussion with your assistant.
- Guide the assistant to make an appointment with an occupational health nurse, who will help bring clarity to their thoughts and possibly refer them to basic health care services.
- Be sure to also take advantage of the support of an occupational health nurse for yourself, e.g. to deal with crisis situations.

Holding a discussion

Prepare for the discussion. Allocate enough time and ensure a quiet space for the discussion, consider what information or parties are needed to resolve the matter.

- **Discuss** your concerns and challenges at work **directly and openly**, but with respect for your employee.
- **Discuss the work and how it is going.** Make smoothly flowing work the goal and ask what would help the employee.
- **Focus on finding solutions.** What solutions and support measures may have already been implemented, what will be done in future, and how will the measures will be monitored?
- **Draw up a plan together.** Clearly write down the issues raised in the discussion, the actions taken, and the agreed actions (e.g., a visit to occupational health care, temporary work arrangements) as well as how you will monitor the situation.