

The background of the entire page is a photograph showing the silhouettes of several people holding hands in a circle on a wooden deck. The scene is captured during sunset or sunrise, with a warm, golden light from the sky. The shadows of the people are cast long and dark onto the wooden planks of the deck. A bright yellow rectangular box is overlaid on the right side of the image, containing the title and subtitle text.

We Care guide

Putting caring into action

The EY logo consists of the letters 'EY' in a bold, white, sans-serif font. Above the 'Y' is a yellow chevron shape pointing to the right. The logo is positioned in the bottom right corner of the page.

EY

Building a better
working world





Why use this booklet?

One of the ways we support our culture of caring is by putting caring into action. To help you manage conversations with individuals who are struggling with work or personal issues, we offer this practical guide. We want to support you to ask, “Are you okay?” of any individual who might be struggling, and then respond appropriately and safely to anyone who might say that they are not okay. Empathy and active listening are keys to success. Together, we can build on our culture of caring to create a trusting atmosphere where people feel confident asking and answering this most important question.

To address mental illness and addictions in the workplace, it is important to look for the signs and do something about it. You need to Notice, Ask, Listen and Act.

Notice signs of change that may impact individuals or teams.

Ask “Are you okay?” to start the conversation and see if this opens up the topic for further discussion.

Listen for key information that helps you gain perspective about the situation. This includes what is not being said.

Act to remedy matters by involving your Employee Assistance Program, Human Resources or others to get the individual/team the help they require.

How do you know if someone needs support?

Have you noticed ...

Changes in physical appearance

- ▶ Unusually tired
- ▶ Flat or drained of energy
- ▶ Frequent complaints of headaches or stomachaches
- ▶ Weight gain or loss
- ▶ Poorly groomed or dressed to get attention
- ▶ Fidgety or nervous movements

Changes in behavior

- ▶ More withdrawn than usual
- ▶ Not enjoying usual hobbies or interests
- ▶ Difficulty concentrating or constantly distracted
- ▶ Avoiding social situations by taking on more work than usual
- ▶ Frequently taking prescription medication
- ▶ Not performing to usual standard

Changes in mood

- ▶ Irritable, complaining to or about others
- ▶ Anxious and worried about everything
- ▶ Reacting more emotionally than the situation warrants
- ▶ Prone to anger or tearfulness
- ▶ Overwhelmed by tasks that were previously manageable

Changes in expression

- ▶ Believing everything is terrible
- ▶ Interpreting situations negatively
- ▶ Personalizing situations
- ▶ Confused, irrational or pressured speech
- ▶ Distracted by intrusive thoughts



Simple steps for asking “Are you okay?”

Getting ready to ask

Determine the right person to ask the question

- ▶ Who in leadership (partner, manager, supervisor or counselor) has the best relationship with the individual?
- ▶ Should a People Consultant join the team?
- ▶ Should your Employee Assistance Program or Human Resources team be consulted to help plan for the discussion?

Be in the right mood to help others; ask yourself:

- ▶ Am I in a good frame of mind – focused and calm?
- ▶ Am I able to really listen?
- ▶ Can I give the time needed?

Be prepared

- ▶ Remember that you don't need to have all the answers and you don't need to solve anything.
- ▶ Listening is the most important role for you.
- ▶ If someone is talking about personal struggles, they may get emotional, embarrassed or angry. Don't interrupt them.
- ▶ Keep an open mind; don't begin the discussion with assumptions.

Pick your moment

- ▶ Choose somewhere relatively private and informal.
- ▶ Pick a time that is convenient for both of you and allows ample time to talk.
- ▶ If they can't talk when you approach them, pick another time.

Having the conversation

Ask “Are you okay?”

- ▶ Be relaxed.
- ▶ Help them to open up by asking questions such as, “How's it going?”; “What's happening?”; and “I've noticed that you are not yourself lately. How are you doing?”
- ▶ Mention specific things that make you concerned, such as seeing them less chatty or more tired recently.

Listen without judgment

- ▶ Take what is said seriously.
- ▶ Don't interrupt them or rush the conversation.
- ▶ If time is needed to think, sit patiently with the silence.
- ▶ Encourage explanation.
- ▶ Stay calm and don't take any angry reaction personally.
- ▶ Reiterate that you are asking because you are concerned.
- ▶ Invite future discussion if someone refuses to engage in a conversation now.

Encourage action

- ▶ Ask “Where do you think we can go from here?”
- ▶ Ask “What would be a good first step for you to take?”
- ▶ Ask “What do you need from me? How can I help?”
- ▶ Good options might include:
 - ▶ Talk with family, a trusted friend or other resources.
 - ▶ Contact the NAMI Helpline at +1 800 950 6264 or via its website: www.nami.org.
 - ▶ If in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at +1 800 273 8255 or 911 if in imminent danger.
 - ▶ Call your Employee Assistance Program (if available).

Addressing concerns

Ask “Are you okay?”

- ▶ Offer privacy and confidentiality limited to those who need to know.
- ▶ Limit information sharing to those involved in the solution.

Impact to career

- ▶ Bringing your whole self to the job is encouraged in our diverse workplace.
- ▶ Problem solving is best done by consulting with others, not handling the matter alone.
- ▶ Getting help protects your professional reputation and brand from the consequences of untreated conditions.

Coverage of their work

- ▶ We are a large organization with the ability to change and adapt to our people’s health and personal needs.

Follow-up

Ask “Are you okay?”

- ▶ Follow up in a few days to see how the person is doing.
- ▶ Ask if they have found a better way to manage the situation.
- ▶ If they haven’t done anything, just listen without judgment.
- ▶ Ask if it would be useful to find some professional or other support.
- ▶ Understand that it may take someone a while to seek a professional.
- ▶ Remain optimistic about the benefits of getting help.

Congratulations

You have done an awesome job!

When *We Care* enough to Notice, Ask, Listen and Act, we can make a difference.

About EY

EY is a global leader in assurance, tax, transaction and advisory services. The insights and quality services we deliver help build trust and confidence in the capital markets and in economies the world over. We develop outstanding leaders who team to deliver on our promises to all of our stakeholders. In so doing, we play a critical role in building a better working world for our people, for our clients and for our communities.

EY refers to the global organization, and may refer to one or more, of the member firms of Ernst & Young Global Limited, each of which is a separate legal entity. Ernst & Young Global Limited, a UK company limited by guarantee, does not provide services to clients. For more information about our organization, please visit ey.com.

Ernst & Young LLP is a client-serving member firm of Ernst & Young Global Limited operating in the US.

© 2018 Ernst & Young LLP.
All Rights Reserved.

SCORE no. 04139-181US

1807-2828805
ED None.

ey.com

