

CHOW

CULINARY HOSPITALITY OUTREACH WELLNESS

Introducing:

SCRIPTS FOR CHALLENGING CONVERSATIONS

A document to support you in navigating challenging conversations in the food/beverage/hospitality industry.

CHOW's mission is to support the lives of the food/beverage/hospitality community with shared stories, skills and resources.

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FOR EMPLOYERS

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Introduction

Conflicts arise in every relationship. The industry is no different. It is necessary to have the tools to communicate your needs. Which is why CHOW has created scripts to give you a starting point for challenging conversations. We want to recognize that these conversations will be challenging for both people involved and let you know that we are here to help if you want to talk through a situation. **(Email community@chowco.org for more support!)**

We also want to help you shift your mindset from thinking about these as hard conversations and thinking of them instead as Educational/Learning Conversations. Think of these conversations as a team effort where all involved parties can be the best version of themselves.

The best environment for navigating these conversations is a workplace that fosters empathy and compassion. One way to prepare is to start using and encouraging assertive communication in your workplace.

How to use assertive communication to solve problems and create boundaries

Here's a formula you can practice to help communicate your needs and set boundaries :

Acknowledge what you feel
Describe the behavior
State your needs



"I feel _____
(name the feeling only).

when you _____
(state another person's behavior).

I need _____
(clearly state the need)."

Example: I feel nervous when when I say "behind" and you don't move or call back. I need you to acknowledge you heard me.

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Here's the template:

I feel ___ (name the emotion only)

When you ___ (state the behavior)

I need you to ___ (clearly state the need)

For example: *I feel unsafe when I say "behind" and you don't acknowledge me. I need you to communicate that you've heard me.* This is how the formula works - it helps others relate to the emotions we're experiencing. They may not have felt unsafe in the same situation, but they do know what it's like to feel unsafe. By relating to others, we have a better chance of creating understanding and supportive connections. It also - and perhaps more importantly - allows you to practice acknowledging and stating your needs.

We suggest that you role play or write out something you'd like to address with someone in your life using the formula. We know role playing seems lame, but we know it helps. If you're going into a challenging conversation, it's nice to have practiced it so you can be clear and assertive.

A workplace that cares about psychological safety is another way to prepare for conflict. Psychological safety is a shared belief held by members of a team that it's OK to take risks, to express their ideas and concerns, to speak up with questions, and to admit mistakes — all without fear of negative consequences.

It isn't: feeling scared to ask your boss for a day off for a wedding.

It isn't: using super glue on a large cut because you're worried you'll get in trouble if they find out you're injured.

It isn't: being told that everyone is replaceable.

It looks like folks being able to share their needs and being heard and listened to. This is the foundation of healthy relationship building. These conversations will have more power if your team members feel safe to speak openly about what they're going through. It's also about following through and upholding your values. If throwing something at a person isn't in alignment with your values, you should part ways with or take action to correct the behavior of an employee that throws things. Your workplace culture is defined by the worst behavior you accept/tolerate.

CHOW acknowledges that many organizations do not yet have a workplace culture that embodies safety and empathy. That's okay. We're here to help and meet you where you are.

The following scripts are intended to help you start conversations and move toward a healthier workplace.

TIPS FOR A CONVERSATION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH AND SUD

Traditionally, the hospitality industry has been a place where we leave emotions at the door.

Folks were encouraged to be “strong” and push through the pain.

There's growing awareness of the importance of mental well being, and a push to fight stigma by addressing mental health and substance use topics with normalcy and respect. Just like it's normal to say when you're feeling under the weather, it should feel completely normal to say you're experiencing mental health challenges. We should also consider that mental health is on a continuum. On one end folks are flourishing and at the other they are severely struggling with daily activities. Just like physical health, it will change.

Having open conversations about mental health is one of the most beneficial things that owners, operators, and managers can do to show their support and encourage their team to seek help. It's important that you create a safe environment where your team members feel comfortable sharing and asking for what they need.

How to give Feedback/How to listen–TACOS



T **Take in what your peer is saying.**
(Listen without distraction/judgement)

A **Accept that it is their experience**
(Even if you see it differently)

C **Condense... listen for the cues.**
(You feel _____. Am I right?)

O **Offer support how they requested it.**
(I'll give you some space... get you some water, etc)

S **Seek opportunity to follow up.**
(“I don't only care about you in a crisis that affects dinner service.”)

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Let's talk about active listening. This tool can be used when someone is bringing an issue to your attention or to improve overall communication in your workplace and relationships.

You can use the acronym TACOS:

Take it in - What this looks like is really listening to the person, “take it in”

Accept that this is their reality - You may see it differently. What is bothering them may not be something that bothers you. Or, the person they have an issue with may never have made you uncomfortable. This is their story, and how it feels to them.

Condense and listen for clues - Repeat what they say in a condensed version. “*Ok, so I heard you say...*” and confirm that you’re on the same page.

Offer Support the way they request it - “*Do you want help or do you just want me to listen?* If they want help, “*Would you like me to connect you or help you fill out any forms?*”

Seek the opportunity to follow up - In a few days or a week follow up to see how the person is doing and whether they need more support.

Seek ways to follow up - check on the person in the next few days or week.

Mental health awareness

Supporting mental health for your team members makes sense on multiple levels. We are in hospitality and in service to people. This includes our team members. It also makes sense for your business’s bottom line. The organizations that don’t focus on their people aren’t going to make it in this labor market.

Return On Assets

- Increase employee retention, reduce turnover, and it’s costs (\$5k/person for line level staff)
- Less absenteeism
- Foster creativity, innovation and diverse thought
- For every \$1 spent on mental health there’s an estimated return of \$4
- Improved health and improved productivity, via reduced absenteeism and presenteeism (productivity at work). Doing something has the potential to improve engagement, recruitment, and retention.

Early Warning Signs of Job Stress

- Headaches
- Difficulty concentrating
- Short temper
- Job dissatisfaction
- Low morale

Common Warning Signs for Mental Health Conditions

- Sleep or appetite changes — Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care.
- Mood changes — Rapid or dramatic shifts in emotions or depressed feelings, greater irritability.
- Withdrawal — Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
- Drop in functioning — Decrease in productivity at work or difficulty performing familiar tasks.
- Difficulty thinking — Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are hard to explain.
- Increased sensitivity — Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch; avoidance of over-stimulating situations.
- Apathy — Loss of initiative or desire to participate in any activity.
- Feeling disconnected — A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one’s surroundings; a sense of unreality.
- Illogical thinking — Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about personal powers to understand meanings or influence events; “magical” thinking (typical of childhood) [present] in an adult.
- Nervousness — Fear or suspiciousness of others or a strong nervous feeling.
- Unusual behavior — Odd, uncharacteristic, peculiar behavior.
- Changes in work — Increased absenteeism, worsening performance, difficulties in relationships with peers and co-workers.
- Substance use

Managers and supervisors should recognize signs of struggle, feel confident to check in, and know the resources and support available in order to point employees in the right direction — **not by serving as counselors or financial planners.**

It is your job to notice, it is not your job to diagnose/treat



IMPORTANT NOTE: Warning signs that point to urgent mental distress— including talk of suicide, warning signs of alcohol or drug misuse, signs of disordered eating or signs of domestic abuse—may signal the need for a more serious intervention and should be reported immediately to Human Resources (if you have one) or reach out to 988 for assistance.

For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

What is your responsibility?

Supporting team member's mental health is crucial, and sometimes they may require professional assistance beyond your expertise.

Your role is to connect them with appropriate support services and facilitate their access to necessary care. This may involve offering reasonable accommodations like providing flexible scheduling, allowing time off for therapy or counseling, or offering mental health days. If an employer knows or has reason to believe an employee is disabled under state and/or federal law, that employer is legally obligated to work with the employee to identify effective, reasonable accommodations that would allow them to do their job. But note: An accommodation is not considered "reasonable" if it is too expensive or difficult for the employer to implement. This is referred to as "undue hardship" or "undue burden." Integrating mental health support into a comprehensive program, like an EAP or CHOW, can make it more accessible and familiar to team members.

As an organization, it's essential to foster environments that prioritize well-being and recognize when team members are facing challenges. Guiding them towards supportive resources is part of this responsibility. Leading by example is equally vital. Supervisors can influence their team by demonstrating healthy habits like taking breaks, taking vacations, and prioritizing their mental health. Being authentic in promoting mental health means doing what you're talking about.

Concerned about their mental health

Before you try to help others ensure that you are healthy. You should 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?* Prepare yourself for the conversation. Know that you don't need to have all the answers and you don't need to solve anything. Practice saying, **"I care, I'm concerned, but I'm not qualified. Can I help you find the right support?"** For this conversation, listening is the most important role. When 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.

Have a list of benefits and services your company offers to support mental wellbeing. If needed, explore whether additional community or national services are available. If there are specific organizational solutions you want to suggest, consider clearing these with Human Resources or leadership in advance, if needed.

(Remember that CHOW is here to help with resources. **Reach out to us at community@chowco.org for assistance**)

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Temperature Take



How are you really?

Rare	Medium Rare	Medium	Medium Well	Well
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Joy • Happiness • Confidence • Excited • Curious • Encouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Content • Proud • Relaxed • Hopeful • Calm • Thankful • Satisfied 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Glad • Amused • Patient • Concerned • Grumpy • Present 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Irritated • Frustrated • Tired • Lonely • Disappointed • Discouraged 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Destructive • Furious • Scared • Stressed • Sick • Unloved • Shamed

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CHOW Temperature Take

A general wellness check may be appropriate in a team huddle or in a casual one-on-one meeting. CHOW uses a temperature take on a scale of rare to well done.

For a more direct conversation, consider how to set up a private discussion that feels comfortable and safe. Schedule a private meeting with the employee. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Start by finding a private non-threatening space. (not the walk-in or closed door office) Find a place outside or at a private table. Use friendly body language, keep your arms uncrossed and head up.

Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask if they are feeling well, mentally and physically. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being.

People can find it difficult to talk about their mental health, but it helps to have an open culture where conversations about mental health are routine and normalized.

“Hey _____, you’ve been behaving differently lately. I noticed that you’ve been _____state the behavior_____.” For example: You also seem to be spending more breaks alone. Is everything okay? You seem irritated with your colleagues lately. Is everything okay?

Ask open-ended questions instead of “yes” or “no” questions. *“Is there something troubling you at home? At work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? I see that you are under a lot of pressure with _____. What are you doing to cope with stress and how can I help”*

Listen more than you speak. Practice reflective listening. Reflective listening can be done effectively through summarizing. Instead of telling them what to do, repeat what they have told you in your own words. Resisting the urge to break an uncomfortable silence can also help your employee to open up. *“This is what I am hearing you say, is that correct? Wow, it really sounds like you’re going through a lot. Tell me more about how you’re taking care of yourself.” “What can I do to make it easier for you to seek support?”*

Offer affirmations. If they share with you what’s going on or what their plan is, encourage their plan. Also recognize and comment on the employee’s strengths and abilities. *“Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. You are right to prioritize your mental health. I want you to know this isn’t going to affect how I view your work. I am here to support you to be your best self.”*

Be empathic. Validate and hold space for difficult emotions— don’t brush over them. While the desire to help someone feel better is normal, jumping to false optimism can be counterproductive and keep an employee from seeking help. End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *“I am wondering what you think your next step should be.”* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try.

At this point be honest and clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it’s important to address these at an early stage. Recognize that your job as a manager is to help eliminate work-related stressors and provide reasonable accommodations to employees with mental health disabilities. This could include a more flexible work arrangement, a temporary redistribution of responsibilities or additional support through mentorship or peer support programs.

Ensure confidentiality – people need to be reassured of confidentiality. It’s sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this. *“This conversation will stay between us and it will not affect how I treat you at work.”*

Develop an action plan – Mental Health Self Service Plan (MHSSP)

Offer help the way THEY want it. Referrals, time off, schedule changes, change of role, etc... You can make offers but allow them to come up with what will best serve them. If the organization can't accommodate them, let them know what you *can* do. Legally speaking, the employer only needs to provide an EFFECTIVE reasonable accommodation. It doesn't have to be the employee's first choice accommodation.

Work with your employee to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their work, who to contact in a crisis, and what support they need. The plan should include an agreed-upon time to review the support measures, and see if they're working. You can offer them what CHOW calls a Mental Health Self Service Plan or MHSSP. Some of you may be familiar with HACCP which accounts for the safety of your food product - from its condition on arrival to storage, production, and service. MHSSP is like that but for people.

MHSSP will allow your team members to design their own plan for mental health, and recovery from mental health set backs, should an issue arise. It allows an individual to discover their own best tools to maintain wellness goals, identify what throws you/them off track, develop a plan to keep moving forward despite challenges, ask for support, and stay in control even in a crisis.



Note: *This is for them to use if they want to and to keep for themselves and their trusted people*

MHSSP – Mental Health Self Service Plan

Daily Maintenance (Self Report Survey at time of hire?)



Medication: _____

Therapist/Counselor: _____

Mutual Aid: _____

Wellness Activities: _____

Things that help me feel better:

Things that should be avoided:

Things others have done that work:

Things that don't help: _____

My supporters: _____

I/others know I'm well when: _____

I/others can tell when my mental health
is challenged (warning signs): _____

Activators: _____

Action plan early: _____

Action plan when things are getting worse:

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Encourage people to seek advice and support

Reassure people – people may not always be ready to talk straight away, so it's important you outline what support is available, tell them your door is always open and let them know you'll make sure they get the support they need. *"Now that you've shared your concern with me, what can I do to support you?" "What is your plan for support after you leave my office today?"*

Organize notes from your discussion in a way that facilitates future reference, and, if appropriate, share the notes with Human Resources. If you discuss reasonable accommodations in any shape or form (even if you don't use those exact words), it's helpful to document what you said, their response, and how you left things. Always good to have a record you can refer back to if a dispute later arises.

! **NOTE** ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) and FMLA (Family Medical Leave Act).
For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

Follow up over the next few days and weeks. Our mental health is on-going, like our physical health. It is not a one-time conversation, it's important to check-in over the next few days, weeks, months, perhaps even years. Make a plan for ongoing check-ins. Collaborate with your employee on a plan for longer-term support. This could be as simple as a routine check-in during weekly meetings. Use follow-up conversations as an opportunity to evaluate whether the solutions or resources you offered to an employee are working or if a new strategy should be considered.

Normalize mental health in everyday conversations. Use these discussion starters during team meetings or other group settings to encourage workplace discussions about mental health. *"I was wondering if we could have a discussion about how everyone is feeling lately? Is there any information, resources or support that you need, or do you have any questions you'd like answered?"*

What to say

Thank you for opening up to me

I'm here for you when you need me

What support can I offer?

Can I help you make an appointment with a counselor?

Can I connect you with CHOW?

What not to say

It could be worse

Snap out of it

We all feel like that sometimes

I'm sure it will blow over

Try thinking happier thoughts

Calling in sick

For excessive absences:

Schedule a private meeting with the employee. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Start by finding a private non threatening space. (not the walk-in or closed door office) Find a place outside or at a private table. Use friendly body language, keep your arms uncrossed and head up.

Start with the facts:

" ___ you have missed a lot of shifts lately and without much notice. (If you have PTO and sick days: Let them know how many PTO days they have left or have them check) You do good work and we want you on our team. I'm concerned about you. I wanted to make sure you are physically ok and if you need help, and see what we can do to help. Is there something that is preventing you from making it to work on a regular basis?"

If they say no, be clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it's important to address these at an early stage. *"The expectation is that you will be here when you are scheduled. If you cannot work your shifts we will have to consider termination."*

If they answer, yes, ask them to tell you more. Allow them to share while you use active listening skills below

From the employment lawyer: Consider here that:

1. If the employee discloses a disability AND/OR if it's clear they're suffering from a health problem, that triggers the employer's responsibility to initiate the "interactive process" and work with the employee to find a reasonable accommodation (if they need one).
2. If it's a health issue, the employer should avoid asking more than they absolutely need to know (it's ok if the employee voluntarily gives you information, especially if unsolicited). Per the US Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, "Once a person is hired and has started work, an employer generally can only ask medical questions ... if the employer needs medical documentation to support an employee's request for an accommodation or if the employer has reason to believe an employee would not be able to perform a job successfully or safely because of a medical condition."

You can use the acronym :

Take it in - What this looks like is really listening to the person, “take it in”

Accept that this is their reality. You may see it differently. You do not need to agree with them, just listen. What is bothering them may not be something that bothers you. Or the person they have an issue with may never have made you uncomfortable. This is their story, and how it feels to them.

Condense and listen for clues - Repeat what they say in a condensed version. “Ok, so I heard you say...” and confirm that you’re on the same page.

Offer support the way they request it - *“Do you want help or do you just want me to listen? If they want help, “Here are the resources I have, would you like me to connect you or help you fill out any forms?”* Seek the opportunity to follow up - In a few days or a week follow up to see how the person is doing and whether they need more support. End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *“I am wondering what you think your next step should be.”* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point you can also make an agreement about the consequences of calling out again. *“My expectation is that you will come to work from now on. If you can’t do that we will have to consider your termination”.* **UNLESS** they have disclosed a condition that could be a disability, in which case the response would be: *“If you can't do XYZ because of your condition/disability, we will need to evaluate whether there are reasonable accommodations that can help you meet expectations”*

Seek opportunity to follow up - check in with the person in the next few days or week.

 **Note:** If they answer yes and disclose a diagnosis and it is covered by the ADA, they could qualify for intermittent unpaid leave under the Family & Medical Leave Act – FMLA

The FMLA applies to all companies with 50 or more employees, and it covers 12 weeks of unpaid leave for any of the following:

Birth and care of a newborn;

Adoption or foster care placement;

Immediate family member (i.e., spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition;

Employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

If they go out on leave and cannot work, they may also be qualified for short-term or long-term disability benefits.

For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

Calling in at the last minute

If a staff shared they are “xyz” and call off next day. How do we build trust and communication to just take the day off, if possible, so the team is prepared for your absence. Days off are okay.

What do you do when a staff member calls in sick and more specifically, when you do believe them?

Trust is a big requirement for a good working relationship. If you're suspicious of your employee, take a step back and ask yourself “why?” Is this a difficult employee who has a habit of abusing your attendance policy, or is this a one-time, last-minute callout and you're just frustrated? Is it an employee that has run out of sick days suddenly having a lot of “health conditions?” How dependable are they when compared to their coworkers?

Even if problematic employees are legitimately sick, it's worthwhile to protect your interests with conversations and company policy.

Attendance/Sick Call Policy

Have a Policy in Place Before They Call

- An online employee handbook with the policy details.
- Allow alternative ways to report illness if calling is difficult.
- Ensure a quick and efficient communication system to find replacements.
- Set a deadline for last-minute sickness calls.
- Require valid reasons for not calling in.
- Consider doctor's notes for extended or frequent absences.
- Address chronic health issues with a specific policy. Direct employees to the employer's reasonable accommodations policies or, if they don't have written policies, advise them that they may be entitled to certain protections (reasonable accommodations).* see the sample reasonable accommodations paperwork..[raform.doc](#) [medical.doc](#)
- Implement disciplinary measures for misuse of sick leave. If this policy is in writing, include language defining "misuse" to avoid misunderstandings.

Offer support the way they request it - *“Do you want help or do you just want me to listen? If they want help, “Here are the resources I have, would you like me to connect you or help you fill out any forms?” Seek the opportunity to follow up - In a few days or a week follow up to see how the person is doing and whether they need more support. End the summary with an open-ended statement such as “I am wondering what you think your next step should be.” This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point you can also make an agreement about the consequences of calling out again. “My expectation is that you will come to work from now on. If you can’t do that we will have to consider your termination”. **UNLESS** they have disclosed a condition that could be a disability, in which case the response would be: “If you can't do XYZ because of your condition/disability, we will need to evaluate whether there are reasonable accommodations that can help you meet expectations”.*

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Employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

If they go out on leave and cannot work, they may also be qualified for short-term or long-term disability benefits.

For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

When you decide you need to confront the employee, be aware that this may risk your relationship.

Here’s how to start the conversation.

Choose an appropriate place or have a phone call – somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and safe, possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. Politely approach the employee like you would a friend and ask. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being. Use open body language, no crossed arms or legs.

“Hey _____, you called out at the last minute __X day _____. How are you feeling?”

Employee answers

“As you may know, our call out policy is _____state the policy_____. When you call out at the last minute it creates frustration for the whole team. I need you to give us as much notice as possible in the future. Going forward, we need you to be here reliably, every day, except in the most extreme of circumstances. If you’re not able to do that, I understand, but the job does require it.”

Listen to what the employee tells you if they have an explanation.

Reinforce that you care about them.

“I’m glad you’re feeling better. We appreciate the work you do here”

If you KNOW they weren’t sick. Maybe they posted about the T Swift concert that they went to instead of working on social media.

“Hey _____, you called out at the last minute __X day _____. I saw on your social media that you were _____. That is not a reasonable reason to call in. If you need time off, you need _____start the process_____ and get approval. Going forward, we need you to be here reliably, every day, except in necessary circumstances. If you’re not able to do that, I understand, but the job does require it.”

How it affects the rest of the team:

It’s not just your ill/missing worker you need to think about. When an employee is absent, other team members may need to do more work or work overtime. They may need to come in when they’re not scheduled to work.

All of this can affect their well-being and their mental health through added stress.

Talk to team members who are directly impacted by the sick days of a co-worker. Find out how much work these employees can do and what they need to succeed. You may want to boost these team members with incentives or rewards. And, don’t forget to sincerely thank them for working hard to support a sick colleague.

Calling in long illness or injury

If an employee tells you they are going to be out of work for an extended period of time due to illness, they are covered by the FMLA and possibly the ADA. They may also be entitled to long- or short-term disability benefits. The FMLA entitles eligible employees who work for covered employers to take 12 weeks of unpaid, job-protected leave in a defined 12-month period for specified family and medical reasons. The ADA entitles employees with disabilities to reasonable accommodations that will enable them to perform the essential functions of their job. Here's how to continue that conversation. For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

After the employee's first few days off, give them a call. Make sure you are somewhere private and quiet. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being.

"Hi ____, I'm calling to see how you're feeling. Do you need anything to help you feel better?"

Employee answers

"I can/can't help with that and here's how." Tell them what you can do or offer alternatives if you can't give exactly what they need.

"I also wanted to go over some of the information I need from you. Our policy for longer absences is that we need ____state your policy need____ (for example, a doctor's note). When you're feeling up to it could you send one over?"

Employee answers

"Thanks so much. Do you have any idea how long your recovery will take?"

Employee answers

"When I tell the team that you will be out for a while, what would you like me to say?"

Employee answers

"I also want to stay in touch with you over the next few days/weeks to hear how things are going. Would you prefer a call or text?"

Employee answers

"We're really going to miss you. You're such an asset. We value what you bring to the table. And please take your time recovering, your job will be here when you return. Your health is the most important thing to us."

NOTE: only say this if you mean it and can guarantee it. they will be a lot more disgruntled and willing to retain a lawyer if they were falsely reassured that their job was safe

After the call consider :

Sending a get well soon card from the team

Creating a meal train from team members to help with food

Can the organization deliver food a few times a week?

Keep the team in the loop as much as you can

Manage additional workload effectively.

Address any uncertainty about the colleague's return.

If perceived unfair treatment arises, encourage constructive dialogue and resolution.

When they return to work:

"Hi _____. We're so glad to have you back. How are you feeling?" Listen and empathize with the employee.

[use]

"How much work do you think you can manage each week? We aren't expecting you to walk back into full time hours." "Is there anything that you're worried about [with] coming back to work?" "We're looking forward to seeing you _day/time_____. Take care."

When people are habitually late

When a team member is late it causes problems and tension for the whole team

Hi _____, we have noticed that you have been late for work _____ times this past month _____give specifics that are not open to argument_____. This is a serious issue that needs to be corrected because it affects the performance of the entire team. Is there some problem that prevents you from being on time for work every day? Is there anything anyone else can do to help you with that issue? If there is not, then can I have your commitment that you will be here on time every day from now on? Should you not come to work on time, it may result in your termination.

Coming into work intoxicated

A drug and alcohol policy is essential. Here is an example policy:

https://www.healthlinkscertified.org/uploads/files/2022_10_09_05_42_26_Drug%20and%20Alcohol%20Policy.pdf We generally recommend that organizations provide communications and training about the policy so that it is a “lived, real policy” rather than something that only exists in a handbook. (This is a good opportunity to role play and discuss case scenarios that may apply to the policy.) It should state the rules and provide guidance for managers to protect the safety of team members and the organization’s reputation. If you want the policy to stick you need to apply it across the board (from manager to dish, everyone has the same standards), including discipline and sometimes termination.

What is your responsibility?

FYI: Alcoholism may be a protected disability under the ADA, depending on how it shows up in the individual's life. What this means: you should provide reasonable accommodations (e.g., leaving work early to attend counseling), but you are still entitled by law (42 USC section 12114) to forbid the use of alcohol at work and forbid people from coming into work while under the influence.

As an employer you have a legal obligation to address alcohol and drug issues. This means you need to take reasonable steps to ensure the health and safety of all team members and guests who could be affected. Having an employee that is intoxicated at work is a delicate situation for a supervisor. How you handle the event is very situational. An employee who is physically resisting should be dealt with by agency security or local police. The employee should not be sent home alone or allowed to drive. It would be appropriate to consider having a family member take the employee home. A taxi is also an option. There could be some serious liability issues involved here. When observing the employee's behavior, determine whether any signs of substance use exist. Examples include: slurred speech, balance and coordination problems, a distinctive smell of alcohol or other substances on the employee's breath, and emotional or irrational behavior.

Note that employers should consider the possibility that an employee's drowsiness and odd behavior may be the result of taking legal medication.

Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask if they are slightly drunk. Try to move them to a quiet area, maybe outside, for the conversation. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being.

"Hey _____, you seem really off today. I noticed that you're slurring your speech and I can smell alcohol/pot on you. Are you slightly drunk/high?"

If the answer is yes, what is the level of toxicity? Are they potentially dangerous to themselves, other employees or guests? If so, getting them a safe ride home is likely the best recourse. If it's only mild intoxication, consider finding a space at work to rest or giving them a task of paperwork or taking them to a substance use meeting. Sending them home alone can be dangerous. Also sometimes necessary. There's no one answer.

If possible, it's ideal to have a conversation in that moment. Otherwise, speak with them the next time you see them. Schedule a private meeting with the employee. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Start by finding a private non-threatening space. (not the walk-in or closed door office) Find a place outside or at a private table. Use friendly body language, keep your arms uncrossed and head up. You can use Motivational interviewing techniques.

Ask open-ended questions instead of "yes" or "no" questions. *"Is there a reason you're using ____ at or before work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? What is your plan to avoid coming in intoxicated again?"*

Offer affirmations. If they share with you what's going on or what their plan is, encourage their plan. Also recognize and comment on the employee's strengths and abilities. *"Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. I want you to know this isn't going to affect how I view your work. I am here to support you to be your best self. You're really good at _____. We value your ability to _____. We like that you _____."*

Practice reflective listening. Reflective listening can be done effectively through summarizing. Instead of telling them what to do, repeat what they have told you in your own words. *"This is what I am hearing you say, is that correct?"* End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *"I am wondering what you think your next step should be."* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. You are not expected to be a recovery coach or have all the answers. Letting the person know, *"I care, I'm concerned about you, but I'm not qualified. What do you need to reach your goal? I'll try to find you help."* (Remember that CHOW is a resource broker and can help with finding the tools you need.) At this point you can also make an agreement about the consequences of coming to work intoxicated again. *"My expectation is that you will come to work sober from now on. If you can't do that we will have to consider your termination."*

Follow up over the next few days and weeks.

If you have an Employee Assistance Program or Human Resources, they should be contacted. The counselor may be able to assist in any immediate assessment or may be at least able to talk to the client immediately. Even if the EAP counselor is unable to see the employee immediately, EAP personnel should be informed of the situation. You should refer the employee to the EAP after the employee returns to duty.

Coming into work hungover

A common question is, is this your business, when they were drinking on their own time? It's not interfering with their personal lives to expect people to show up at work clear-headed and ready to work.

A drug and alcohol policy that goes over discipline is essential. Here is an example policy:

https://www.healthlinkscertified.org/uploads/files/2022_10_09_05_42_26_Drug%20and%20Alcohol%20Policy.pdf

It should state the rules and provide guidance for managers to protect the safety of team members and the organization's reputation. If you want the policy to stick, you need to apply it across the board, including following through with discipline and sometimes termination.

What is your responsibility?

As an employer you have a legal obligation to address alcohol and drug issues. This means you need to take reasonable steps to uphold the health and safety of all team members and guests who could be affected. If they are hungover, they may also still be drunk. Being hungover at work can be dangerous, as the employee may still have a high Blood Alcohol Content.

Choose an appropriate place – somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and safe, possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being.

“Hey _____, I noticed that you’ve been __state the behavior__ and it seems like you might be hungover or ill. It’s up to you what you do in your off-hours but when you come to work I need you to be awake and focused.”

Allow them to respond. If they are hung over, continue. If they are ill, send them home.

Ask open-ended questions instead of “yes” or “no” questions. *“Is there something troubling you at home? At work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? You thought you could work today but you're putting yourself and others at risk. Did you consider that?”*

Offer affirmations. If they share with you what’s going on or what their plan is, encourage their plan. Also recognize and comment on the employee’s strengths and abilities. *“Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. I want you to know this isn’t going to affect how I view your work. I am here to support you to be your best self. You’re really good at _____. We value your ability to _____. We like that you _____.”*

3. Practice reflective listening. Reflective listening can be done effectively through summarizing. Instead of telling them what to do, repeat what they have told you in your own words. *“This is what I am hearing you say, is that correct?”* End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *“I am wondering what you think your next step should be.”* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point be honest and clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it’s important to address these at an early stage.

“My expectation is that you will come to work sober and with a clear head from now on. If you can’t do that we will have to consider your termination.”

Ensure confidentiality – people need to be reassured of confidentiality. It’s sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this. Encourage people to seek advice and support.



NOTE ADA and FMLA

- Follow up over the next few days and weeks.
- For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

Management is struggling with substance activities (like dab pens, alcohol..etc.) on shift and how to respond

Drug and Alcohol Policy

A drug and alcohol policy that goes over discipline is essential.

Here is an example policy:

https://www.healthlinkscertified.org/uploads/files/2022_10_09_05_42_26_Drug%20and%20Alcohol%20Policy.pdf

It should state the rules and provide guidance for managers to protect the safety of team members and the organization's reputation. If you want the policy to stick you need to apply it across the board, including following through with discipline and sometimes termination. Employers should evaluate their smoking/vaping/alcohol policies. Consider whether employees can bring e-cigarettes into certain areas, or if they are completely banned from the property. If a workplace already has a clean-air policy, but it doesn't reference e-cigarettes, employees may be confused about whether vaping is covered. Do they need to keep vapes in their car? Out of sight? Are they allowed anywhere?

Additionally, employees should typically be informed of any changes in workplace policies before they take effect. If you see someone smoking/vaping/drinking after sharing the policy, it's time to have a conversation.

Choose an appropriate place – somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and safe, possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being.

“Hey _____, I saw you __smoke/vape/drink____ and that’s against our drug and alcohol policy. Our policy states _____. I need you to refrain from smoking/vape/drinking during work hours or I will have to ____state consequence_____.”

Listen to what the employee tells you if they have an explanation. For example, a customer bought me a shot and I didn't want to make them mad by saying no OR I'm really stressed out, I needed my medical marijuana to calm down.

Try to find a solution together. *“What do you think the next steps should be since our policy is _____?”* You can get creative. Maybe have a vodka bottle filled with water for staff to do shots with regulars. Or ask for other ways that stress can be managed besides substances.

Active Shooter or Threat of active shooter

Sadly in our country it's possible to have a threat [of an active shooter] or an active shooter. Everyone involved will be affected. How you behave next will impact your team's success in recovery and willingness to continue to work with you.

What to do after a shooting as an organization:

Provide support in the moment. Establish who will be responsible for providing information and assistance to families and friends about fatalities and survivors. This will include information about survivors relocated to hospitals or other assembly areas.

What to say to staff:

"It is with a heavy heart and deep concern for you that I ~~want to~~ express my deepest condolences. Our thoughts are with those who have been injured, and our hearts go out to the families and loved ones of those who have lost their lives. I can imagine the fear and distress that each of you must have experienced during this horrific event. Please know that your safety and well-being are of utmost importance to us, and we are committed to supporting you in any way we can during this difficult time. In the coming days, we will be providing resources and support services to help you cope with the aftermath of this tragedy. We understand that everyone processes trauma differently, and we encourage you to reach out to (our HR department, if you have one) designated counseling services if you need to talk to someone, seek assistance, or require any support. Our priority is to ensure that you have access to the care and resources needed to heal and recover.

We will be working closely with law enforcement and security professionals to conduct a thorough investigation into the incident and to implement any necessary changes to enhance our safety protocols. Your input and feedback will be invaluable in this process, and we encourage you to share your thoughts, concerns, and suggestions as we move forward.

Please remember that we are a resilient community, and together, we will support one another during this challenging time. We are here for you, and we will get through this together. If you have any immediate concerns or questions, please don't hesitate to reach out to your immediate supervisor or the HR department. We will provide updates and further information as it becomes available.

Thank you for your strength, support, and compassion as we navigate this difficult journey together."

Things that will help with recovery:

- *Assist Employees with an Employee Assistance Program (EAP). An EAP is a benefit program that assists employees in resolving personal and work related problems. CHOW uses Triad EAP.*
- *Help employees apply for Workers' Compensation (or life insurance processing)*
- *Financial Assistance for the hospitality industry:*
- **The Giving Kitchen** <https://thegivingkitchen.org/stability-network>
- *The Colorado **Restaurant Association** also has an Angel Relief Fund to help folks in financial crisis. <https://corerestaurant.org/angel-relief-fund/hardship-application/> Many state restaurant associations have a similar program.*
- **Southern Smoke** - <https://southernSmoke.org/> to help folks in financial crisis._
- **The Big Table** - <https://big-table.com/> to help folks in financial crisis._
- *Hire a grief counselor for the team or for individuals. Give it some time before bringing in a counselor. The first few weeks many will still be in shock and recovering.*
- *Offer Mental Health Counseling. An option is **Khesed Wellness** makes outpatient mental health and wellness services affordable for the underinsured. They offer 16 free sessions to folks in the hospitality industry. <https://www.khesedwellness.com/> (in CO, IL, TX, and MI) <https://www.khesedwellness.com/> or the Giving Kitchen has a partnership with Better Health. Your local restaurant association may also have resources.*
- *Having a team CHOW meeting to talk about what happened. Contact community@chowco.org*

Returning to work

Recovery rates vary after traumatic incidents. Some return quickly, others need more time, and a few may not return at all. Accommodate employees' progress and encourage pacing, breaks, and rest. Have plans in place that include hiring temporary staff, and offering telework or alternate locations if possible.

Anniversaries

Consider incident anniversaries and memorials. This will have an impact on your team's mental health. Support victims and their families during these occasions in any way that you can.

What to do after a shooting for individuals

- Attend to self care. You can't pour from an empty cup. Take care of your physical health needs - being sure to eat, sleep, exercise, and (if possible) maintain a normal daily routine.
- Pay attention to your emotional health. Remember that a wide range of feelings during these difficult times are common.
- Try to recognize when you or those around you may need extra support. Watch for behaviors:
 - Sleep or appetite changes — Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care.
 - Mood changes — Rapid or dramatic shifts in emotions or depressed feelings, greater irritability.
 - Withdrawal — Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
 - Drop in functioning — An unusual decrease in work productivity or difficulty performing familiar tasks.
 - Difficulty with thinking — Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are hard to explain.
 - Increased sensitivity — Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch; avoidance of over-stimulating situations.
 - Apathy — Loss of initiative or desire to participate in any activity.
 - Feeling disconnected — A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one's surroundings; a sense of unreality.
 - Illogical thinking — Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about personal powers to understand meanings or influence events; "magical" thinking (typical of childhood) [present] in an adult.
 - Nervousness — Fear or suspiciousness of others or a strong nervous feeling.
 - Unusual behavior — Odd, uncharacteristic, peculiar behavior.
 - Changes in work — Increased absenteeism, worsening performance, difficulties in relationships with peers and co-workers.
 - Substance use
- Avoid overexposure to media.
- Maintain contact with friends and family.
- Focus on your strength base. Remind yourself what has helped you in the past
- Talk to others as needed. This could be trusted friends/family or a therapist, doctor, etc...

Suicide

It is not your job to be a therapist or to save someone from themselves. That said, it is appropriate to be involved with your staff's wellness and to ask questions about how you can help. There is clear research that suggests asking an individual directly, "Are you thinking about taking your own life?" Or "Are you thinking about suicide?" is an important part of this conversation. We won't break the stigma around suicide unless/until we start using the word "suicide" in our conversations and questions with our employees. Attend a QPR class for more suicide prevention education.

If a person talks about or exhibits the following signs, seek help:

- Killing themselves
- Feeling hopeless
- Having no reason to live
- Being a burden to others
- Feeling trapped
- Unbearable pain

People who are considering suicide often display one or more of the following moods:

- Depression/Anxiety
- Loss of interest
- Irritability
- Humiliation/Shame
- Agitation/Anger
- Relief/Sudden Improvement

NOTE: that some of these signs can also indicate physical illness or substance use which is why it's helpful to have a conversation.

How you can offer help:

Schedule a private meeting with the employee. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Start by finding a private non threatening space (not the walk-in or closed door office). Find a place outside or at a private table, possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. Use friendly body language, keep your arms uncrossed and head up.

Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask if they are feeling well, mentally and physically. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being. People can find it difficult to talk about their mental health but it helps to have an open culture where conversations about mental health are routine and normalized

“Hey _____, you’ve been behaving differently lately. I noticed that you’ve been __state the behavior____” For example, “ I noticed that you have been really quick to get angry over little things the last few weeks.”

If you are really concerned about suicide the first question is the hardest, *“Are you thinking about suicide or hurting yourself?”* Practice saying this out loud before your meeting. It’s really hard to ask. Once they answer, ask open-ended questions instead of “yes” or “no” questions. *“Is there something troubling you at home? At work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? Can I help find you some help?”*

2. Offer affirmations. If they share with you what’s going on or what their plan is, encourage their plan. Also recognize and comment on the employee’s strengths and abilities. *“Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. You are right to prioritize your mental health. I want you to know this isn’t going to affect how I view your work. I am here to support you to be your best self. You’re really good at _____. We value your ability to _____. We like that you _____.”*

3. Practice reflective listening. Reflective listening can be done effectively through summarizing. Instead of telling them what to do, repeat what they have told you in your own words. *“This is what I am hearing you say, is that correct?”*

End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *“I am wondering what you think your next step should be.”* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point be honest and clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it’s important to address these at an early stage.

Ensure confidentiality – people need to be reassured of confidentiality. It’s sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this.

Develop an action plan

Offer help the way THEY want it. Referrals, time off, schedule changes, change of role, etc. You can make offers but allow them to come up with what will best serve them. If the organization can’t accommodate them, let them know what you can do. Work with your employee to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their work, who to contact in a crisis, and what support they need. The plan should include an agreed upon time to review the support measures, and if they’re working.

“Do you know about the Crisis Line?”

People can call, text, or chat with the 988 Lifeline. They are connected to trained counselors that are part of the existing 988 Lifeline network, made up of over 200 local crisis centers. These counselors are trained to provide free and confidential emotional support and crisis counseling to people in suicidal crisis or emotional distress, and connect them to resources. You don't necessarily have to be in crisis to use it. If you're simply not feeling ok, you can use it. Can I show you how it works on your phone?" If yes, text or call 988 and tell the person, "I am showing someone how this service works, can you walk us through the process?" This way the person has the number in their phone and they've seen it in action.

Encourage people to seek advice and support. When you hire new folks, you can have them add 741741/988 in their phone and a run through during orientation so they know where to go in a crisis.

Reassure people. People may not always be ready to talk straight away so it's important you outline what support is available. Tell them your door is always open and let them know you'll make sure they get the support they need.

If someone is in crisis and needs immediate help, call 911.

NOTE ADA and FMLAADA from the perspective of reasonable accommodations is pretty well covered in the paragraphs above. Mentioning their eligibility for FMLA leave is always fine to do as well.

Follow up over the next few days and weeks.

For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

After a suicide

How to Inform Employees About the Death

Ideally, there should be a consistent message to staff about what has happened. This prevents the news from being left to the informal channels of communication in the workplace, which can result in misinformation being shared. Here are some guidelines on how to inform staff about a death of a coworker by suicide:

- Communicate about what has happened in a timely manner
- Explain to staff that an employee has died, and briefly describe the circumstances while avoiding any erroneous details
- Keep your message factual, caring, and supportive

- Direct people toward resources for coping

"It is with deep sadness and a heavy heart that I must inform you of the loss of _____. _____ was a valued member of our team and a wonderful person.

It is important for us to acknowledge that _____ died by suicide. (only if the family is okay with this disclosure!!!) This is an incredibly challenging topic to discuss, but it is essential that we address it openly and honestly. Suicide is a complex issue, often linked to underlying personal struggles that may not be apparent to others. It is a reminder of the importance of mental health and the need for support and understanding within our community.

During this difficult time, we must come together as a team and support one another. Grief affects individuals differently, and it is important to respect each other's emotions and personal coping mechanisms. We encourage you to reach out to one another, offer support, and create a safe space for open dialogue.

We understand that this news may bring up a range of emotions, and we want to ensure that everyone has access to the necessary resources and support. (Describe your resources. If you don't have any, reach out to CHOW.

In memory of _____, we will be _____ mention any plans for honoring the individual____. These efforts are intended to celebrate their life and create a space for healing and remembrance."

What can you do:

In the event of a coworker's dying by suicide, it's essential to show kindness and compassion. This loss is a part of the workplace and shared experiences among employees. Taking the time to grieve and honor the departed colleague will create a strong foundation for moving forward in a healthy and supportive manner.

- Create memorials or rituals to honor their memory. Coming together and gathering in the workplace can provide essential support for healing and grieving. Organizing meaningful life-honoring rituals or ceremonies can contribute to this process.
- Supporting team members' attendance at the funeral or celebration of life is also crucial.
- One idea is a memorial board, where photos, memories, and stories about the person can be shared. This board can also serve as a space to collect cards and condolences, offering comfort and support to those who need it.
- As a team you can share your condolences with the family.
- Give people time to grieve the way they need to for as long as they need to.
- Hire a grief counselor or peer support for the team or individuals. Give your team a few weeks before bringing someone in. The first few weeks folks will be in shock.
- Offer a suicide prevention training (Contact CHOW for details). Wait at least 6 months from the death for this kind of training.

When people are physically fighting

Physical altercations are extraordinary events that require some cautions. First, obviously, separate the people involved. If necessary, involve the police. Do not put yourself in physical danger. Next, if your company has a zero-tolerance policy that requires immediate dismissal, that will lead to termination. However, if the behavior exhibited was not severe *and* isn't normal behavior, you might consider giving them a second chance.

Here's what you can say:

"We are not interested in who was at fault and who started it. What matters is that the outcome was unacceptable. Do you know that fighting is a violation of company policy?"

Employee answers

I am putting a note in your file and this is your last chance with our organization. Repeating this kind of behavior will not be tolerated and will result in immediate termination.

I will speak with the other person as well. You both need to know that staff and guest safety is important to us and there is to be no more disruptions of work. If I send you back to work now, can I be sure that you will behave professionally?"

Employee answers

I need your commitment that you will not engage with this person here or off premises. If you do, we will treat it like it occurred here and you will be fired. Do you understand?"

When people complain

It might feel annoying, but try to stay open-minded about whether there's a genuine issue affecting their work performance.

Hi _____ we have received complaints from some of the team members working with you. It seems that they are seriously disturbed because you _____ be specific about the alleged offending behavior____. I'd like to understand this a little better. Are you aware that you are doing this? End the summary with an open-ended statement such as "I am wondering what you think your next step should be." This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point be honest and clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance, it's important to address these at an early stage.

When there is suspicion of interpersonal abuse

We are whole people, and if there is interpersonal violence at home, we need to have a conversation. If you see a team member with physical injuries or signs of abuse, talk to them.

“_____, thank you for agreeing to meet with me. Some of your coworkers have asked me to speak to you because they’re worried about you. (Or I’m worried about you) It has been noticed that on several occasions recently, you have come to work showing signs of injury, bruises and cuts. We care about you, and we can’t help wondering if there isn’t something else going on, something bigger that you may need help with. It may be difficult for you to talk about these issues, but we can refer you to people who can help. We can also arrange for confidential interviews with the police or other authorities if you need protection elsewhere. We care about you and we want to help you.

- ! **NOTE** The federal Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) and some state laws allow domestic violence victims to take leave from work in certain circumstances. If your state has a paid sick leave law, you may be able to use your sick
 - leave to handle issues stemming from domestic violence, as well.
- For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.

Insubordination

If an employee refuses a direct order from a superior or has a heated argument with their boss, it's essential to carefully consider these situations. If the employee thinks that following the order is against the law or could harm them or others right away, they are protected by state and federal labor laws/whistleblower laws. They won't face any negative consequences for not doing the task.

However, when there is a clear case of insubordination, it should not be ignored. If we overlook it, the same behavior might happen again in the future.

I

“____, I just asked you to do____describe the request or assignment____, and you refused to do it (or did not do it). I need you to know that is not acceptable. If it is not corrected, it is cause for immediate termination. What needs to be done is ____ because _____. Are you willing to do ____? Is there something on your mind that is preventing you from doing your job?”

Employee answers

If nothing, *“I would like you to start the task now. Do you understand?”*

If something, listen and see if the concern is valid and can be addressed.

When people are argumentative

In both work and life, disagreements are inevitable due to individual differences. These disagreements can sometimes lead to employees becoming argumentative and challenging authority. It's crucial to address this promptly to prevent escalation. This involves respectfully discussing the issue using factual points rather than emotions. Keep in mind that the employee might not be aware of their behavior, as their intentions might be different. It's helpful to provide specific instances of argumentative behavior so they can grasp the situation. Privately, you can say something like:

“____, lately, you've been argumentative and obstructive. We must refocus on the task and your frequent arguments are causing delays. You've made your points, and we've taken them into account. We've clarified our decision to proceed with the current plan. We need everyone's support for its success. It's time to move forward collaboratively. Do you understand this and agree to work together?”

You can also ask open-ended questions instead of “yes” or “no” questions. *“Is there something troubling you at home? At work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? I see that you are under a lot of pressure with _____. What are you doing to cope with stress and how can I help”*

When people exhibit bullying behavior

What is bullying? 1. : to treat (someone) in a cruel, insulting, threatening, or aggressive fashion : to act like a bully toward. 2. : to cause (someone) to do something by means of force or coercion.

Bullying can be very subtle. And because of that, these destructive behaviors tend to go uncorrected.

In private, say something like the following:

"I wanted to address a concern that has come to my attention regarding your interactions with ____ (and ____). It appears that there have been some issues with how certain situations were handled. At our organization, we value a respectful and supportive workplace culture, where everyone feels comfortable and safe. It's important for us to treat all employees with kindness and professionalism, regardless of any disagreements or challenges that may arise. Our priority is to foster a collaborative environment that brings out the best in each team member. I understand that tensions can arise, but we must find constructive ways to address them.

I'm asking you to be mindful of your approach when communicating with your co-workers. Let's strive to engage in respectful and understanding conversations that promote a positive atmosphere within the team. Your contributions to our organization are valued, and we believe that working together with mutual respect will lead to a more harmonious and productive work environment. I trust that we can move forward with a renewed focus on collaboration and support."

This is where you can create a plan moving forward.

"If you cannot change your behavior, it may be grounds for termination. Do you understand? Any questions?" Also be sure to document conversations to create a record you can point to if/when termination happens.

When people complain about being bullied

35% of workers surveyed personally experienced bullying behavior while on the job.

68% of bullying is same-gender harassment.

Workplace bullying leads to employee stress and that can impact workplace productivity, quality of work, and it can have negative financial impacts on the victim. (2010 Workplace Bullying Institute)

Meet with the alleged victim in private

Hi _____, thank you for sharing your concerns about _____'s behavior. Your openness is crucial for a healthy workplace. We apologize for any stress caused and are investigating the situation thoroughly, speaking with _____ to understand their perspective.

Your well-being is a top priority, and we won't tolerate retaliation for speaking up. If you have safety concerns, please let us know, and we'll take appropriate measures. We'll keep you informed of our progress and speak to witnesses for a comprehensive understanding.

Thank you for your courage. We're dedicated to resolving this matter and ensuring a workplace where everyone feels respected and supported. <https://workplacebullying.org>

Mental health absence

Choose an appropriate place – somewhere private and quiet where the person feels comfortable and safe, possibly a neutral space outside of the workplace. For a direct conversation, set up a private an environment that feels comfortable and safe.

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.
- Prepare company benefits and support options. Brush up on the benefits and services your company offers to support mental wellbeing. If needed, explore whether additional community or national services are available to recommend. If there are specific organizational solutions you want to suggest, consider if you need to clear these with Human Resources or leadership in advance.

Politely approach the employee like a friend and ask if they are feeling well, mentally and physically. Don't make accusations, but mention the employee's unusual behavior. Remain calm and nonjudgmental. Emphasize your concern for the employee's well-being. People can find it difficult to talk about their mental health but it helps to have an open culture where conversations about mental health are routine and normalized.

"Hey _____, you called out yesterday for mental health, is everything okay?" Ask open-ended questions instead of "yes" or "no" questions. "Is there something troubling you at home? At work? Is there something going on that you want to tell me about? I see that you are under a lot of pressure with _____. What are you doing to cope with stress and how can I help"

Listen more than you speak. Practice reflective listening. Reflective listening can be done effectively through summarizing. Instead of telling them what to do, repeat what they have told you in your own words. Resisting the urge to break an uncomfortable silence can also help your employee to open up. *"This is what I am hearing you say, is that correct? Wow, it really sounds like you're going through a lot. Tell me more about how you're taking care of yourself." "What can I do to make it easier for you to seek support?"*

Offer affirmations. If they share with you what's going on or what their plan is, encourage their plan. Also, recognize and comment on the employee's strengths and abilities.

"Thank you for trusting me enough to share this with me. You are right to prioritize your mental health. I want you to know this isn't going to affect how I view your work. I am here to support you to be your best self."

Be empathic. Validate and hold space for difficult emotions— don't brush over them. While the desire to help someone feel better is normal, jumping to false optimism can be counterproductive and keep an employee from seeking help. End the summary with an open-ended statement such as "I am wondering what you think your next step should be." This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employee is willing to accomplish, not just try.

At this point be honest and clear with your needs– if there are specific grounds for concern, like high absence levels or impaired performance. It’s important to address these at an early stage. Recognize that your job as a manager is to help eliminate work-related stressors and provide reasonable accommodations to employees with mental health disabilities. This could include a more flexible work arrangement, a temporary redistribution of responsibilities or additional support through mentorship or peer support programs.

Ensure confidentiality – people need to be reassured of confidentiality. It’s sensitive information and should be shared with as few people as possible. Create strict policies to ensure this.

Develop an action plan

Offer help the way THEY want it. Referrals, time off, schedule changes, change of role, etc... You can make offers but allow them to come up with what will best serve them. If the organization can’t accommodate them, let them know what you can do. Work with your employee to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their work, who to contact in a crisis, and what support they need. The plan should include an agreed upon time to review the support measures and see if they’re working. Use the MSSHP plan here. Let employees know it’s for them! Do not try to keep the MSSHP plan.

MHSSP – Mental Health Self Service Plan

MHSSP – Mental Health Self Service Plan

Daily Maintenance (Self Report Survey at time of hire?)



Medication: _____

Therapist/Counselor: _____

Mutual Aid: _____

Wellness Activities: _____

Things that help me feel better:

Things that should be avoided:

Things others have done that work:

Things that don't help: _____

My supporters: _____

I/others know I'm well when: _____

I/others can tell when my mental health
is challenged (warning signs): _____

Activators: _____

Action plan early: _____

Action plan when things are getting worse:

Encourage people to seek advice and support.

Reassure people – people may not always be ready to talk straight away so it's important you outline what support is available, tell them your door is always open and let them know you'll make sure they get the support they need. *“Now that you've shared your concern with me, what can I do to support you?” “What is your plan for support after you leave my office today?” “Is there anyone I can call or reach out to for you for extra support?”*

After, organize notes from your discussion in a way that facilitates future reference, and, if appropriate, share the notes with Human Resources. From the employment lawyer: If your typical practice is to forward all personnel notes to HR. Be consistent with your usual practices. **NOTE ADA and FMLA. For additional information on ADA and FMLA, go to page 55.**

Follow up over the next few days and weeks. Make a plan for ongoing check-ins. Collaborate with your employee on a plan for longer-term support. This could be as simple as a routine check-in during weekly meetings. Use follow-up conversations as an opportunity to evaluate whether the solutions or resources you offered to an employee are working, or if a new strategy should be considered.

What to say

Thank you for opening up to me.

I'm here for you when you need me.

What support can I offer?

Can I help you make an appointment with a counselor?

Can I connect you with CHOW?

What not to say

It could be worse.

Snap out of it.

We all feel like that sometimes.

I'm sure it will blow over.

Try thinking happier thoughts.

Sharing about your (employee or manager) mental health or SUD

CHOW knows that sharing stories can offer a map to folks going through what you have gone through. As a leader within your organization, you have the power to set your company's tone of compassion and caring for employees experiencing mental health challenges. Sharing your own story can offer profound benefits to your workforce by:

- Combating stigma
- Normalizing mental health challenges
- Empowering employees to seek help

You can share your story or the story of someone who impacted you. PLEASE don't share any identifying details if it isn't your story. For example, "A person in my life had/did ___ and they ____."

Don't feel pressured to share, but if you want to, here are some ways to prepare.

Why do you want to share this story? What do you want your team to take away? Are you normalizing the conversation or do you want a behavior change to come from it?

What was/is your unique experience with mental health or substance use? We encourage you to focus on the glass being half full. You may have had struggles but is there a positive outcome?

Let's consider the following outline to shape your story:

Begin by briefly summarizing the challenges you faced, providing a general overview of your experiences.

Describe where you found help and the feelings that emerged after receiving support.

Reflect on whether stigma affected how and when you sought care, and share what motivated you to move forward.

Explain what strategies or resources worked well for you, such as therapy, peer support, medicine, etc.

Update the audience on your current well-being and the self-care practices you employ to care for yourself.

Make a connection to your organization by expressing the culture you aspire to see regarding mental health support and understanding.

Conclude with a "call to action," inspiring your team members to drive change within the organization. Encourage self-care, open conversations about mental health, regular check-ins, asking for help when needed, and utilizing available company resources.

Remember, sharing your story can have a positive impact on others and promote a more compassionate and supportive workplace environment.

Use safe, inclusive language. Your story should normalize mental health struggles without glorifying unsafe or unhealthy behaviors.

What not to say

Blaming others

Suggesting that mental health is "selfish"

Stereotyping specific groups of people

Graphic or specific personal details

Making dangerous behavior sound fun

Common Warning Signs for Mental Illness

- Sleep or appetite changes — Dramatic sleep and appetite changes or decline in personal care.
- Mood changes — Rapid or dramatic shifts in emotions or depressed feelings, greater irritability.
- Withdrawal — Recent social withdrawal and loss of interest in activities previously enjoyed.
- Drop in functioning — Decrease in productivity at work or difficulty performing familiar tasks.
- Difficulty with thinking — Problems with concentration, memory or logical thought and speech that are hard to explain.
- Increased sensitivity — Heightened sensitivity to sights, sounds, smells or touch; avoidance of over-stimulating situations.
- Apathy — Loss of initiative or desire to participate in any activity.
- Feeling disconnected — A vague feeling of being disconnected from oneself or one's surroundings; a sense of unreality.
- Illogical thinking — Unusual or exaggerated beliefs about personal powers to understand meanings or influence events; "magical" thinking (typical of childhood) [present] in an adult.
- Nervousness — Fear or suspiciousness of others or a strong nervous feeling.
- Unusual behavior — Odd, uncharacteristic, peculiar behavior.
- Changes in work — Increased absenteeism, worsening performance, difficulties in relationships with peers and co-workers.
- Substance use

Follow up. Employees may reach out, and you can continue the conversation in the following days and weeks. Use this time to create a culture of caring. Ask for feedback and see if they want more support or resources. Have the resources ready. Utilize CHOW for more resource help. Remember to have boundaries. You are not the therapist. Managers and supervisors should recognize signs of struggle, feel confident to check in, and know the resources and support available [in order] to point employees in the right direction. If you think someone is in crisis, you can connect with 988 or call your local police department.

For Employees

Again, if we are thinking about these conversations as a team, then anyone can start the conversation. If you want to start a conversation as an employee here are some common topics that we've scripted.

General Concern

When you have a workplace issue to discuss, it can be very hard to start a conversation in our fast paced environment. As an employee, you can start the ball rolling with a short email:

"Hey ____, would you be open to sitting down with me for 20 minutes in the next week or so? I'd like to get your input on _____. (you can be vague here) What time would work best for you?"

What you're doing here is indicating that this discussion is different from the norm, that you require assistance and that you would like to schedule a specific date to meet.

You're not providing excessive details, just enough to convey that this isn't an ordinary conversation. They might reach out to you by phone or visit your workspace. In this case, stay calm, thank them and say, *"I'd really rather you and I schedule a time to talk in more depth. What date works for you?"*

When you meet, you can start with, *"Thank you so much for taking time to talk to me. I really respect what you've done here, so I thought you'd be a good person to talk to."*

As you know, I've been __state your role__, and I'm really proud of the work I've done. I want to bring to your attention that ____state the situation/thing__ has been on my mind. It makes me feel __state the emotion__, when you/the organization does __state the thing__, I need you to __state your need__. This is also where you could add a consequence, "or I will __state the consequence ____." You could hold off on the consequence until you heard what they have to say. For example: It makes me feel unsafe to use chemicals without proper safety gear. I need you to provide person protection equipment. (If you don't, I cannot continue to do the task or I will quit.) Resist the urge to fill in the silence. Allow them time to think and speak.

Allow the person to respond with what they can offer and what adjustments they can make. End the summary with an open-ended statement such as *“I am wondering what your next step will be.”* This should be a specific goal, however small, that the employer is willing to accomplish, not just try. At this point be honest and clear with your needs. *“My expectation is that you will provide _____ within the next week. (If not, I will have to consider a new job.)”* Be sure you document what is said.

Requesting accommodation

Employees can use this information to ask for help or accommodations to deal with their work-related problems. This helps both the employee and the manager figure out what's necessary for success at work. For employees with disabilities, accommodation is essential for equal opportunities at work. It means the employer changes things like rules or the physical workspace to support them. If you need accommodation, you should expect to talk about your health condition with your employer and explain why you need the accommodation. Be clear about what you're requesting, and be willing to work with your employer to find a solution that works for you both. An Employee Plan ([Employee Plan/Accommodation template for employers](#)) is a document that helps you identify what you need to succeed in your job. It's not a contract but a request for reasonable changes. This plan helps you and your manager discuss your needs. Others-[people] like HR, a nurse, or co-worker can help too.

Usually, you and your manager work on this plan together. It doesn't replace rules or laws. It's meant to help you succeed while balancing work and health. Sometimes your manager might not know how to help, and this process can give them ideas. This plan can help you with workplace issues, whether you're [currently] at work or will soon be returning. If you're returning, it's best to do it gradually. You and your manager should review this plan regularly to keep you successful at work. The employee plan can be used for everyday issues to complex tasks. It's intended to help you and your manager best support your success at work.

- What do you need to be successful at your job?
- How do you want future issues to be addressed, should they arise?
- For your contribution to being successful at your job, what will you commit to?

What do you need to be successful at your job?

Think about things you find challenging at work. Below are some examples to help you. Also, think about what you believe your manager sees as problems. Then, think of practical solutions that you and your manager can talk about. The examples are just ideas, not the only answers. Your situation might need different solutions. These examples are here to spark your own ideas.

- **The way work is assigned**

An employee who is struggling with competing demands at work and last-minute requests from his manager may write in his employee plan:

"I understand the need to be flexible around last-minute changes. These changes interrupt my other tasks and can cause me to feel overwhelmed because I am then unable to finish my other tasks on time. When my manager asks me to take on a last-minute task, I will ask my manager to help me prioritize my other tasks."

- **The way your work is monitored**

An employee who would describe their manager as a "micro-manager" who is causing distress:

"I understand my manager's need to monitor my work for quality and accuracy. When my manager interrupts my work to make changes several times a day, I become agitated and lose focus and confidence in my abilities. I would like to be able to give my manager regular updates with a schedule that works for both of us. And, I would like my manager to wait until our scheduled meeting to give me feedback or make changes, unless the issue is urgent."

A different person may welcome the immediate feedback.

- **The way information and direction is given to you**

An employee who has difficulty remembering verbal instructions:

"I prefer to have instructions about my tasks given to me in writing. Or, they can be given to me verbally, and I will immediately write down what I've heard and check back with the person who gave me the directions to make sure I've got it right."

- **The way others interact with you**

An employee who regularly cries at work:

"I'd like to have people at work not worry or react if they see me crying. I'd like them to just allow me a few minutes to compose myself. If this happens during a shift, I'll excuse myself and return as soon as I'm able to work calmly."

Additional ideas for dealing with stress at work:

- **Planning for them**

When you know that you may become emotional, plan how you will manage tears, frustration or anger in a way that preserves your dignity and well-being.

- **Use CHOW's toolkit** for ideas around wellness <https://chowco.org/get-involved/#wellness-toolkit-1>
- **Write it down**

When you write down your fears, hurts or concerns, they often lose their power over you. Writing it down can put things in perspective so that you can find a way forward.

- **Talking about it**

Find a trusted person or professional or CHOW meeting to share what you're feeling. Talking about things is often the first step to taking back control of your thoughts, emotions or feelings.

- **Paying attention to what works**

When you've successfully dealt with a stressful situation or emotion, record what you did both as a reward for your success and to refer to when you are not sure what to do. Acknowledge when you take a step in the right direction. Use a MHHSP plan to remind yourself what has worked in the past

Additional ideas for dealing with stress at work:

- **Finding a friend**

Having someone at work who understands what you're going through can be an important source of support. If this isn't possible, find a friend outside of work you can call when you need support.

- **Taking a break**

Use your breaks to go for a walk, find a quiet place to sit. Relax and refocus. Do not work through breaks and lunch when you are stressed or otherwise.

- **Breathing**

When we're stressed or anxious our breathing tends to become shallower. This sends a message to the brain that there's a risk of dying from lack of oxygen, which in turn creates a stress response. Breathing deeply and slowly goes a long way to help your body return to a less stressful state.

- **Talking with your manager about addressing issues**

You can help your manager by anticipating where you may have difficulty and by giving concrete suggestions on what to do. Here are some examples:

If you appear to be distressed or unwell

"If I appear to be angry and have a raised voice, I'd like my manager to say to me: 'I notice you seem uneasy. Would you like to continue this discussion at another time?'"

If there is a performance issue that needs to be addressed with you

"If my manager notices that the quality or quantity of my work is dropping, I'd like my manager to speak to me face-to-face as soon as possible, saying: 'I've noticed changes in your work and I'd like us to find a time to talk about it'. I'd prefer that my manager not send me an email about it because that will just increase my anxiety."

If there is conflict

*"When my manager and I have conflict between us, I ask that we both refrain from speaking in anger. We may need to request to discuss the issue at another time when each of us is calm enough to have a civil conversation."
Use CHOW's conflict resolution skills"*

TEMPLATE LETTER

How to Request a Reasonable Accommodation

DATE (January 1, 2018)

METHOD OF DELIVERY (Email/U.S. Mail/Hand Delivered, etc.)

Human Resources Department

Employer's Address

Re: Request for Reasonable Accommodation for (Your Name)

Dear Mr./Ms. (Contact at Human Resources Department or your Manager):

I work at _____(Company Name) as a _____(Your Job Title) and have been in this position since ____ (Date).

I am writing to request that you provide _____(list accommodation needed here) as a reasonable accommodation under the ADA. As you may know, I have a disability (you may list your disability here or wait for your employer to request documentation of your disability) and this accommodation would help me be successful at my job.

If you are unable to provide me with _____ (list accommodation needed here), I ask that we engage in the interactive process to determine whether there is an alternative effective accommodation.

If you have any questions, you can feel free to contact the Job Accommodation Network a 1-800-526-7234 or the Great Lakes ADA Center at 1-800-949-4232 for more information, free of charge. Please contact me if you have any questions about my request. I would appreciate a written response to this letter. Thank you very much.

Sincerely,

(Your Name)

How to ask for a raise

Asking for a raise in our industry is tough, as we know that most places are on a tight budget. If your responsibilities or tenure has increased enough for you to feel that a wage adjustment is needed, here are some things to consider.

Choose the right time. Has it been a slow few weeks and there's not much income for the organization? If so, consider asking at a time when the organization seems financially healthier. Also consider the person you're asking. Are they in a good place to listen and consider your ask? Have you completed a major project, milestone, or taken on more responsibilities? Keep notes, and have them ready for your conversation.

Know what others in your position are being paid, and consider how you compare to your peers. Make a list of accomplishments. Plan your target pay increase.

Now, request a meeting with your supervisor. Try to set the meeting in person or video call if needed. Choose an appropriate place – somewhere private and quiet where you feel comfortable and safe. Give your manager a week or so and let them know that you plan to discuss your compensation. *"I'd like to set up a short meeting to discuss my wages. Please let me know if this time works for you."*

Before your meeting, prepare what you're going to say. Acknowledge that you may have feelings of fear and anxiety. Rehearsing is one way to manage those feelings. You can also bring notes to stay on track. When creating your script, be sure to keep the reasons professional, rather than person[al], for why you deserve the raise. (for example, "my car got stolen" is not a professional reason to ask for a raise). *"Thank you for taking this meeting. I'm excited to share some of my recent accomplishments with you and discuss my wage"*.

Be in the right mood; ask yourself-

- Am I in a good frame of mind — focused and calm?
- Am I able to really listen and discuss this calmly

Follow up with specifics

If your manager is open to the conversation from there, follow up with specifics: tell them the increase or salary figure you'd like, cite the research you've done to arrive at that number, and close with examples of [how] your work justifies a raise.

When you give an example of your work, include a metric that makes the value clear. Here are some examples of accomplishments backed up by metrics:

- *"Over the last few months, I planned and then executed our largest event to date. Guest feedback significantly surpassed last year's event."*
- *"I've kept food cost low for x months."*
- *"I am one of the most reliable members of the team, I show up on time, I work hard, and I am consistent in my work."*

Example script

Here's an example script for asking for a raise:

"Thank you for taking the time to meet with me today. In my current role, I'm excited to keep working towards key company goals and grow my personal responsibilities. As a result, I'd like to discuss my salary [/hourly wage]."

"Based on the research I've done, which includes looking at averages for my job title in this area and considering my tenure here, my years of experience and skill set, a salary [/hourly wage] increase of X% is appropriate."

"In the time since my last salary[/hourly wage] adjustment, I've worked on ___ that has added significant value to the company. For instance, in the last few months, I ___insert example of your most impressive accomplishment___. These achievements have made me eligible for a raise."

"Does that sound fair?"

Throughout your conversation, try to avoid words that could undermine your position, such as: *believe, feel, think, just, only* and *might*. Go into this conversation knowing that you deserve a raise and communicate confidently with strong words.

They may have questions

You can also expect there to be some negotiation. Listen carefully to how your manager responds to your request. If you feel intimidated at any point, return back to the research you have that strengthens your case.

Use active listening skills to create understanding. Ask open ended questions and repeat what you heard to ensure that you are both clear. *"Can you tell me more about..."* and *"What I'm hearing..."*

Here's an example of how a conversation may unfold:

Manager: *"Thank you for that overview. While I agree that you've contributed a great deal to the company, a raise of X% may not be possible at this time."*

Employee: *"From my research, I've learned that X% is a reasonable increase and in line with what I've contributed. Can you tell me more about why that increase isn't possible today?"*

Manager: *"That amount is not something I have in the budget right now but it's something I could make a case for in the future."*

Employee: *"That makes sense. What I'm hearing is that you agree that my receiving a raise is appropriate but maybe not right now. How can I help you make that case in the near future?"*

There is the possibility that you receive a rejection when you ask for a pay raise. In this case, you should learn more about why you are being rejected. Ask questions such as:

- *"Are there skills or accomplishments you'd like to see from me before increasing my compensation?"*
- *"Are you satisfied with my performance overall?"*
- *"Is there a better time for us to have this conversation in the near future?"*

It's also normal at this stage to negotiate the salary/wage increase you initially suggested. You may need to ask for a lower amount if you are met by a lot of resistance.

If a pay raise doesn't seem possible at this time, you may consider asking about other elements of your compensation, such as vacation time or flexible hours.

Thank your manager

Regardless of how the conversation about your pay request went, end it by thanking your manager for their time. Later that day or the next, send them a follow-up email that recaps your reasons for asking for a raise and includes a summary of the conversation you had.

If your manager needs to ask someone else about your raise, this email will make it easier for them to have a conversation on your behalf. If they reject your request for a raise, this email can serve as a record of the conversation. You might decide to request a raise again at a later date, and if you do, you can reference this email at that point.

Asking for a raise because you found out someone is making more than you for the same work

The way you found out about the pay discrepancy — whether it was through the rumor mill or because a document was mistakenly left on the copy machine — is not relevant. But your awareness of the gap most certainly is. When you talk to your boss, say something like, *"It has come to my attention that others make much more for doing the same job."* Then say something like, *"I've been working hard and I love working here. What can I do to improve my chances of getting a significant raise at my next review?"* This tactic puts your boss on notice and lets them know that you are serious. Do not mention any coworker by name if you can help it. This is a conversation about you, the value you bring to the company, and how you can get the money you want.

Be realistic

When it comes time for your official wage review, it's important to be realistic about what's possible. The fact is that you're unlikely to change your situation at a company unless you get a promotion or a new position altogether. If a big raise isn't in the cards, think about other ways to address the gap. Perhaps a one-time performance bonus or an extra week of vacation would fix the issue. If alternatives don't pass muster, it may be time to start looking for a new job. The job search process is a way to test your market value and see what you're worth.

How to quit

How to decide if you should quit

If your work is worsening your mental health, you're becoming more depressed, anxious, or negative, it's time to think about leaving.

You're the average of the 5 people you spend most time with.
Think hard about whether your work entourage is helping you level up.

Situations to ponder when considering quitting:

The company's actions or your leadership's actions are at odds with your morals.

The work may sometimes be arduous, but you're not fulfilled by the impact and you dread going to work — you know you're not doing your best work.

The people you respect have left the company and you're not inspired by any of the people around you.

The commute and/or hours are murderous, with little flexibility. You should be able to have time to see your family — no one looks back on their lives and wishes they would have spent more time at work.

You are feeling physically or mentally unhealthy.

You can do the job with your eyes closed and you're not feeling challenged.

Think to yourself: when you're 80 and looking back, will you regret having left this company?

If you have a bad relationship with your manager

Also consider: If you have a fulfilling job, with good benefits, the flexibility you want, and you work with people you like, you may want to stay

How to find another job

Interviewing before you've left can be logistically difficult, but it's very much a normal part of the process: some of your colleagues are probably currently interviewing and your manager certainly has done it, too.

Be prepared to take a vacation/personal days to give yourself the breathing room to perform well in your job interviews.

Don't ever call in sick or outright lie: besides the risk of getting caught, the anxiety of juggling lies will place a burden on your interviews.

Don't feel overly pressured by recruiters to be available if you truly cannot be available to meet. This is a relationship and it starts at the beginning — they should respect that you have prior obligations you need to work around.

When to give notice

Plan to give a minimum of 2 weeks notice, unless you have a really good reason to quit immediately.

Exception: if you're the head of a department, a senior leader or in a mission-critical role, it's nice to give 3-4 weeks notice or more if possible.

There's no legal obligation to provide a notice period — if you're experiencing physical or psychological harm, it's certainly your right to leave immediately.

Some considerations as you think about your departure date:

Bonus and incentives: make sure you don't miss important deadlines for quarterly bonuses, annual bonuses and other incentives.

Health benefits: in the US, health benefits (medical, dental, vision, etc.) generally work in calendar month increments — leaving after the 1st of the month instead of the 30th could save you hundreds of dollars in COBRA premiums.

Rest: consider taking at least a week between jobs and being ready to start the new job refreshed (if you're relocating, be sure to pad a few days for unexpected issues).

Is the new company ready for you? Most people don't think about this enough: do not start when your hiring manager is on vacation, at a conference, or at a multi-day offsite — waiting the extra day or two is well worth it.

Note: You can be asked to leave immediately and the company is under no obligation to pay you until the day you indicated was your last day. Most companies will respect your departure day, but in especially sour breakups, be extra careful about upcoming deadlines.

Telling your manager and resignation letter

Tell your manager first. Have this conversation in person and an email to confirm what you've shared. When you're ready to announce your resignation, ask for a meeting with your manager.

In the meeting be clear and straight forward. *“Hi X, I've decided to leave. I truly valued working with you here but I'm really excited to take the next step to grow professionally — my last day is going to be __state last day__.”*

They may try to keep you on. If you have made your decision:

“Everything you've done has been really appreciated. It is a very, very tough decision for me, but it's best for my career. I really want to help with the transition, I'm preparing a doc and love to talk through how we can hand off my responsibilities.”

At this point your manager may try to dig into the issues. Avoid criticizing the issues of the workplace and redirect the conversation to the logistics of the transition. If you genuinely want to share your concerns to help the company improve, suggest a separate meeting, but reiterate that your decision is final.

Instead of talking about what's bad about the current place, talk about what's great about the new place.

Don't let them guilt you or negotiate you into staying longer than you really want to. If your manager forces you to "think it over" and speak with them in a couple of days: again, be kind but firm, in repeating that your decision is final, and that you want to focus on a successful transition.

If you're given a counteroffer— title bump, big compensation increase, new perks - know that taking a counteroffer is rarely something that works out long term. It's an offer born out of fear and desperation, the extra cash/title is unlikely to really address your fundamental issues. There are exceptions, of course. Ask yourself: if they valued your work so much, why didn't they help grow your responsibilities or act on your concerns before there was a threat?

Once you've had the conversation, make sure to follow up with a written confirmation and resignation letter.

*Hi X,
Confirming what we spoke about earlier: I'll be leaving the company and __date__ will be my last day.
I've learned so much here and deeply appreciate the opportunity — thank you.
Over the next two weeks, I'll be working to train folks on my responsibilities. Let me know if there's anything else I can do to help create a smooth transition.*

Telling your co-workers

Don't gossip or overly focus on the issues you have with the company, even in conversations with close co-workers. Focus on what's great about the new destination and how excited you are.

Once you've spoken to your close co-workers, send an email to the broader team announcing your resignation, offering to stay in touch and sharing your personal contact information:

*Hi team,
I've decided to leave the company — my last day is __date__.
It's been heartwarming to see the team grow — I've truly valued working with you and would love to stay in touch.
Here's my personal email address. Please say bye this week and I'm hoping we can grab a coffee or lunch in the next couple of months.*

Thank you! I'm proud to have worked with you.

Only email the group of people on your immediate team/the people that you work with everyday.

Preparing a transition document

The best way to support your co-workers is to put together a written document of all the important things you've been holding in your head. For each project or area of responsibility, list the tasks that need to be done and who will be responsible for them going forward.

Don't expect that your manager knows everything that you do — take the lead on figuring out who will pick up your responsibilities. Actively work to train or brief each of the people on your list.

In addition, when you receive your final paycheck, look at the deductions carefully: you may pay extra in health benefits if you're leaving early in the month, but watch out for any other suspicious deductions. States like California carefully regulate what can be deducted from your final paycheck, e.g. negative vacation or sick balances.

If you have questions about ADA or FMLA, contact the department of labor:

<https://www.dol.gov/general/contact/contact-phone-topics>

Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Is the employer covered under the ADA? Covered employers include private employers with 15 or more employees.

Is the employee covered by State workers' compensation laws? The ADA protects individuals with a disability who are qualified for the job, meaning they have the skills and qualifications to carry out the essential functions of the job, with or without accommodations. An individual with a disability is defined as a person who: (1) has a physical or mental impairment that substantially limits one or more major life activities; (2) has a record of such an impairment; or (3) is regarded as having such an impairment. What are the Medical and Disability-Related Leave Rules? The ADA does not specifically require employers to provide medical or disability-related leave. However, it does require employers to make reasonable accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities if necessary to perform essential job functions or to benefit from the same opportunities and rights afforded employees without disabilities. Accommodations can include modifications to work schedules, such as leave. There is no set leave period mandated because accommodations depend on individual circumstances and should generally be granted unless doing so would result in "undue hardship" to the employer.

What Are Reasonable Accommodations? If an employer is covered by the ADA, they must provide "reasonable accommodations" to eligible employees with disabilities. Reasonable accommodations are adjustments to a work setting that make it possible for qualified employees with disabilities to perform the essential functions of their jobs. Not all employees with mental health conditions need accommodations to perform their jobs. If an employee does need accommodations, the process of developing and implementing accommodations is individualized and should begin with input from the employee. This could include accommodations such as modifications to the workplace, providing equipment/technology, modifying job duties, adjustments to management/supervision of employees. For more detailed examples of accommodations, see attached Accommodations for Employees with Mental Health Conditions, Department of Labor, Office of Disability Employment Policy, accessed 11/14/2023.

[Add a heading](#)

productivity-accommodations-for-employees-with-psychiatric-disabilities.

Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA)

Is the employer covered under the FMLA? Covered employers under the FMLA include private employers who employ 50 or more employees in 20 or more workweeks in either the current calendar year or previous calendar year. An employee is eligible if they (1) worked for a covered employer for at least 12 months, (2) have at least 1,250 hours of service with the employer during the 12 months before their FMLA leave starts, and (3) work at a location where the employer has at least 50 employees within 75 miles.

Is the employee eligible for leave under the FMLA? Employees are eligible to take FMLA leave if they have worked for their employer for at least 12 months, and have worked for at least 1,250 hours over the 12 months immediately prior to the leave, if there are at least 50 employees working within 75 miles of the employee's worksite.

What are the Medical and Disability-Related Leave Rules? The ADA does not specifically require employers to provide medical or disability-related leave. However, it does require employers to make reasonable accommodations for qualified employees with disabilities if necessary to perform essential job functions or to benefit from the same opportunities and rights afforded employees without disabilities. Accommodations can

The FMLA applies to all companies with 15 or more employees, and it covers 12 weeks of unpaid leave for any of the following:

Birth and care of a newborn;

Adoption or foster care placement;

Immediate family member (i.e., spouse, child, or parent) with a serious health condition;

Employee is unable to work because of a serious health condition.

If they go out on leave and cannot work, they may also be qualified for short-term or long-term disability benefits.

Determine whether employee is entitled to leave pursuant to the federal FMLA or ADA, or any relevant state or local laws, such as workers' compensation.

See supporting documents:

1 - Employment Law and Medical and Disability-Related Leave and

Accommodations Fact Sheet;

2 - DOL Accommodations for Employees with Mental Health Conditions;

3 - DOL Fact Sheet #28: The Family and Medical Leave Act

include modifications to work schedules, such as leave. There is no set leave period mandated because accommodations depend on individual circumstances and should generally be granted unless doing so would result in "undue hardship" to the employer.