



CRISIS RESPONSE CHART FOR THE WORKPLACE

READ BEFORE USE

This tool is meant to be used as guidance and does not apply to every situation. As indicated below, there are national resources available for you to seek further guidance from or to whom you might refer.

Trust your judgment and use it to achieve the best possible outcome.

This document outlines three levels of concern that helps identify when a coworker may be in psychological or life-threatening distress. Each level offers associated indicators of distress and recommendations about what you can say or do to help.



LEVEL A INDICATORS OF A DISTRESSED EMPLOYEE

BEHAVIORS

- Talking about problems sleeping; fatigue, exhaustion; trouble staying awake while on the job
- Noticeable changes in usual manner, patterns, or hygiene/grooming
- New or ongoing irritability, belligerence, hostility, insubordination, anger, tantrums at co-workers, supervisors, customers
- Excessive use of alcohol or drugs, compulsive gambling, or illegal activities that impact work
- Difficulty with problem-solving in their job
- Consistently non-compliant, resistant, or uncooperative with others at work
- Performance problems like truancy, poor quality of work, or missed deadlines
- Recklessness

INTERPERSONAL RELATIONS

- Strained work relationships; persistent unresolved conflicts with others
- Inability to let go of a grudge or negative performance feedback
- Isolation or withdrawal from co-workers or team members
- Consistently blaming others for performance problems

FEELINGS

- Expressions of overwhelming emotional pain or distress
- Stuck feelings; difficulty moving past feelings of anger, disappointment, sadness, or guilt
- Extreme mood swings, unpredictability
- Depressed, anxious, or angry mood

COGNITIONS

- Difficulty concentrating, problem-solving, remembering, or making decisions
- Ruminating/excessive preoccupation
- Negativity about work, co-workers, management, family, or life in general
- Preoccupation with breaches of rules or procedures

If you are friendly with the person of concern and/or comfortable approaching:

Do Share your concerns.

Say “I’ve noticed that you seem more _____ lately and I am concerned. Can we talk about what’s going on?”

“I’ve noticed that you seem more _____ lately. I read that when people feel/act this way (or say things like that), they often are struggling with more significant issues. Has that been going on for you?”

If they open up:

Do Listen and Respond

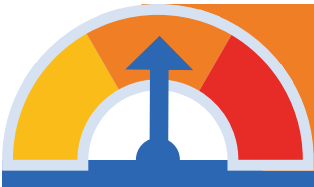
Say “I hear you. I’m sorry you’re feeling this way. I can’t fully understand what you are going through, but I am here to help.”

Do Follow up

Say “I wanted to check in and see how you are feeling today. I am concerned about you. Have you considered reaching out for help with what you are experiencing?”

If they do not want to talk about what is going on/you are not comfortable approaching them:

Do Share your concerns/observations with an HR professional or, if one is unavailable, with another manager/supervisor.



LEVEL B INDICATORS OF GREATER CONCERN AND POSSIBLE SUICIDE RISK

CONCERNING INDICATORS

- Engaging in self-harm activities such as cutting oneself
- Communicating in words, writings, or other ways about wanting to die or being dead
- Directly communicating thoughts of suicide or threatening suicide
- Diminished pleasure in usual activities; Nothing is enjoyable
- Social withdrawal; isolation from colleagues and usual activities
- Intense need to escape from perceived intolerable situation; Feelings of being trapped
- Expressing negative or hopeless feelings about the future
- Ruminating or rigidly focusing on worst possible outcomes
- Expressions of despair, feeling like a burden to others, or deep anguish/pain
- Persistent insomnia/sleep problems; trouble staying awake at work
- Expressing intense negative feelings about self, co-workers, or management
- Depressed mood and heightened anxiety or feelings of intense anger/rage
- Agitation, restlessness, or difficulty sitting through a meeting
- Dramatic mood changes unexplained by external or known circumstances
- Drastic changes in behavior
- Expressions that suggest life has no meaning
- Significant change in pattern of drinking or drug use

Any of the indicators above should be considered in the context of current or threatened life stressors and adversities like the loss of a relationship, loss of a loved one, potential job loss or loss of income, and serious physical or mental illness diagnosis or prognosis.

What you can do/say:

Do Ask the person if they are thinking about suicide.

Say “I understand that when someone feels the way you do, they might be thinking of ways to end their pain or of not wanting to live anymore. Have you been having thoughts like these?”

“From what you have shared with me, it sounds like you might be in danger of hurting yourself. Two heads are always better at finding ways to deal with these things and most all problems can be resolved by getting that kind of help. Will you let me help you find someone who can help?”



LEVEL C INDICATORS OF A SUICIDAL EMERGENCY REQUIRING IMMEDIATE INTERVENTION

EMERGENCY INDICATORS

- Actions already taken to harm oneself seriously or kill oneself (overdosing, going to high place from which to jump...) or threats to harm coworkers
- Actions taken to prepare or plan to take one's life, such as searching for or securing means to take one's life like hoarding pills, buying a gun, scouting out a bridge, or searching online for ways to die.

If bodily harm has already occurred or you believe it is in process:

Do Contact 911 Immediately

Say "I'm here to keep you safe and get you to help."

"I'm going to make sure we get you to help."

Do Stay with the individual until help arrives or arrange for someone to do so, so they are not alone.

Say "I want to ensure your safety so I am going to stay with you until help is here."

Do Contact a crisis resource

Say "I know you are hurting right now, but we will get you to someone who can help."

If no bodily harm, but you have serious concern:

Do Contact 911 Immediately

Say "I'm here and I'm not going anywhere."

"I'm going to make sure we get you to help."

Do Stay with the individual until help arrives or arrange for someone to do so, so they are not alone.

Say "I want to ensure your safety so I am going to stay with you until help is here."

Do Contact a crisis resource - Suicide Prevention Lifeline: Call 988

Say "I'm going to stay connected with you until we can get you to help."

Remember, you don't have to do this alone. No matter where you are in the process, there is additional crisis support.

Resources | If you are concerned that a coworker may be suicidal, contact one of the following:

Suicide Prevention Lifeline

Call 988

Crisis Text Line

Text SAVE to 741-741

Your Local Resources

Mental Health Association, Psychological Association, Psychiatric Society, or a Trusted Physician