

What will you do to
make well-being a
reality for everyone,
every day?

Put caring into action with We Care.



The better the question. The better the answer.
The better the world works.



Building a better
working world

NOTICE signs of change that may impact individuals or teams.

ASK "Are you OK?" to start the conversation and open up the topic for further discussion.

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

ACT to remedy matters by involving LifeWorks (Employee and Family Assistance Program) or others to get the individual and/or team the help they require.



Why use this guide?

One of the ways we support our culture of caring is by putting caring into action. This guide can help you recognize signs or behaviors that indicate someone may be struggling with a work or personal matter. We support your asking a team member, “Are you OK?” and provide guidance to help you have that conversation with the individual and your team members. Empathy and active listening are keys to a successful conversation. Together, we can build on our culture of caring to create a trusting atmosphere where people feel confident asking – and answering – the important question, “Are you OK?”

It is crucial to look for the signs someone may be struggling and know how to help. You need to notice, ask, listen and act.

Changes in physical appearance

- ▶ Unusually tired – appearing sleepy or disengaged on virtual calls
- ▶ Appearing poorly groomed or dressed to get attention
- ▶ Frequently complaining of aches, illness, exhaustion, headaches or stomachaches
- ▶ Suddenly gaining or losing weight

Changes in behavior

- ▶ Withdrawn, distracted and/or lacking enthusiasm
- ▶ Exhibiting odd or new behaviors
- ▶ Expressing discomfort with their home or home office environment

Changes in expression

- ▶ Talking rapidly or slowly; using confused or extremely loud speech
- ▶ Begins making situations personal
- ▶ Acting distracted by intrusive thoughts
- ▶ Hyper-focusing on a topic

Changes in mood

- ▶ Having strong emotional reactions, prone to anger or sadness, tearfulness
- ▶ Appearing irritable and frequently complaining
- ▶ Appearing overwhelmed by previously manageable tasks
- ▶ Acting anxious or worried

Changes in work or social interactions

- ▶ Not responding to calls, texts or emails
- ▶ Creating excuses and blaming others
- ▶ Having interpersonal issues, bullying others
- ▶ Declining in job performance
- ▶ Lacking boundaries, always online or noticeably changing working hours, e.g., emailing late at night

Important: Any threats of harm to self or others should be taken seriously. Contact LifeWorks (EFAP) or a member of the Talent Team to help ensure a person is safe. Contact 911 if there is immediate danger to a person's safety.

Approaching the conversation:

Once you recognize the signs or they are brought to your attention, determining the right person for the conversation is important. Consider who (e.g., partner, manager, supervisor, Talent Team or EY counselor) has the best relationship with the individual.

Also consider:

- ▶ Having a Talent consultant join the call
- ▶ Talking with LifeWorks (EFAP) (manager consultation program) or the Talent Team if you're unsure how best to proceed

Be prepared

Are you in the right mindset to have the conversation?

- ▶ Are you in a good frame of mind – focused and calm?
- ▶ Are you ready to really listen?
- ▶ Remember that you don't need to have all the answers and you don't need to solve anything
- ▶ Listen and express your caring – it's your most important role
- ▶ If someone is talking about personal struggles, they may get emotional, embarrassed or angry – that's OK; be ready to listen without judgment or assumptions

Pick your moment

- ▶ Pick a time that is convenient for both of you and allows ample time to talk
- ▶ Ask at the beginning of the call if the person can speak freely; if not, offer to reschedule the call

Ask "Are you OK?"

- ▶ Be relaxed
- ▶ Help them to open up by asking questions like:
 - ▶ "How's it going?"
 - ▶ "What's happening?"
 - ▶ "I've noticed that you're not yourself lately – what's going on?"
 - ▶ "Recently you shared that you're struggling; I care about you – how are you doing?"
- ▶ Mention specific things that make you concerned; note any comments they've made or behaviors you've seen

Listen without judgment

- ▶ Take what is said seriously; don't interrupt them or rush the conversation
- ▶ If time is needed to think, sit patiently with the silence
- ▶ Stay calm and don't take any reaction personally
- ▶ Reiterate that you are asking because you are concerned
- ▶ Invite future discussion if the person declines to engage in a conversation now or offer to connect them directly with a Talent professional or LifeWorks (EFAP)

Encourage action

- ▶ Ask "Where do you think we can go from here?"
- ▶ Ask "What would be a good first step for you to take?"
- ▶ Ask "What do you need from me? How can I help?"
- ▶ Additional options within EY include talking to LifeWorks (EFAP), a Talent Consultant, a supervisor or an EY counselor; outside of EY, they could speak to a family member, trusted friend or medical or mental health professional

Follow-up

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

Discussion questions for teams

- ▶ Why is this topic so important to the firm, our people and our teams?
- ▶ What can we do to help eliminate the stigma of mental illness, at work, home and in our communities?
- ▶ What might make it difficult to ask someone at work if they are OK?
- ▶ Have you ever experienced someone struggling at work? What did you notice and what actions did you take?
- ▶ When working on virtual teams, what are the signs that someone may be struggling?
- ▶ How can we bring a "We Care" conversation into a LEAD or feedback discussion?

Additional resources

The firm has a wealth of resources that can assist our people in having a We Care conversation or finding the support they need. You can always consult with a member of the EY Talent Team or LifeWorks (EFAP) for guidance around how to approach an individual or to better understand the resources available to them.

- ▶ [EY Live Well](#): a one stop shop to everything related to well-being
- ▶ We Care events: contact the [internal AccessAbilities network team](#) to coordinate We Care events
- ▶ LifeWorks (EFAP): confidential short term counselling and referral service available 24/7 at: 1 844 880 9142
- ▶ Manager Consultations (through LifeWorks (EFAP)): Confidential advice and guidance to help Managers, Supervisors, and People Leaders deal with sensitive employee and workplace situations (1 844 880 9142)

EY | Building a better working world

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