

Check-in conversation card

For a manager or colleague who seems to be struggling. You are not there to diagnose. You are there to listen, look at the work, and point to support. Fill in the first part before you speak, and the last part afterwards.

BEFORE I SPEAK

- ☐ I have a private place and enough time, ideally 30 minutes, and not just before a deadline.
- ☐ I know two or three specific things I have noticed, not general impressions.
- ☐ I have looked at their workload and what has changed recently.
- ☐ I know what support exists and how to reach it.
- ☐ I am ready to listen more than I speak.

What I have noticed

Describe, do not interpret. For example: you have seemed tired in the last few weeks and have not joined the team lunch.

THE CONVERSATION IN FIVE MOVES

- ☐ **1. Choose the setting**
Invite them privately, say what it is about, and do not make it formal or surprising.
- ☐ **2. Say what you noticed**
Describe what you have seen, without guessing why. Then ask how things are going.
- ☐ **3. Listen**
Ask one open question and wait. Do not fix, argue, or compare. A pause is fine.
- ☐ **4. Look at the work**
Ask what makes work hard now: workload, control, support, relationships, role, change.
- ☐ **5. Agree one step and a date**
Choose one adjustment, such as moving a deadline, and a date to talk again. Write it down.

TO OPEN

Thanks for making time. I wanted to check in because I have noticed [one or two specific things]. I am not here to judge your work. I would like to understand what is making things hard and see what I can do.

AFTERWARDS

The one step we agreed, and the date we talk again

Support I can point to: occupational health, an employee assistance programme, HR

You are not a clinician. Do not diagnose, and do not promise confidentiality you may not be able to keep. If someone mentions harming themselves, do not leave them alone: help them reach urgent support through your local emergency service.

Sources: HSE: Signs of stress HSE: What are the Management Standards? WHO: Mental health at work