

Spotting Early Signs in Your Team

Notice changes early, and know how to open the conversation

Managers are often the first to see that something has changed, sometimes before the person has noticed themselves. You do not need to know what is wrong, or to diagnose anything. Your role is to notice, to ask, and to point towards the right support.

What matters is change: someone behaving differently from their own usual pattern, rather than differently from everyone else.

IF SOMEONE NEEDS HELP NOW

If there is an immediate risk to life, call **999**. Samaritans are available free, 24 hours a day, on **116 123**. In England, NHS 111 (option 2) connects to an urgent mental health service.

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What to look for

WORK	BEHAVIOUR	ATTENDANCE AND ROUTINE
Missed deadlines or more mistakes than usual	Withdrawn, quieter in meetings	More short absences, or lateness
Difficulty concentrating or deciding	Irritable, tearful or unusually sensitive to feedback	Working very late, or never taking leave
Over-checking, or taking much longer than usual	Conflict with colleagues	Logging on at unusual hours
Loss of interest in work they used to enjoy	Changes in appearance or energy	Avoiding the office, or social events they used to attend

What have you noticed? Stick to what you have seen, not what you assume.

WHAT I HAVE NOTICED	SINCE WHEN	USUAL PATTERN FOR THIS PERSON

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Opening the conversation

Choose somewhere private, and a time when neither of you is rushing. Then:

- "I've noticed you seem a bit [quieter / more stretched] than usual lately. How are things?"
- "How are you doing, really?" (Asking twice tells people you mean it.)
- "Is there anything at work that's making things harder at the moment?"
- "There's no pressure to talk about it. I just want you to know I'm here if it would help."

Avoid:

- Guessing at a diagnosis or labelling what is wrong.
- Jumping straight to solutions, or to your own experience.
- Promising confidentiality you might not be able to keep if there is a risk to safety.

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What next?

WHAT WE AGREED	SUPPORT I POINTED TO	WHEN I WILL CHECK IN AGAIN