

## The 4 Rs Approach to Supporting a Colleague

<p><b>RECOGNIZE</b></p> 	<p>You may be the first person to recognize that someone is in distress or to notice a change in their typical behaviour.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Trust your instincts.</li> <li>It's okay to ask and express concern.</li> <li>Be specific about the behaviour that worries you.</li> </ul> <p>See reverse for possible indicators of stress, overwhelm and distress.</p>	<p>"I've noticed you seem distracted and upset lately – I'm concerned. Are you okay?"</p>
<p><b>RESPOND</b></p> 	<p>Talk with the person. Once you have recognized there may be a problem, or if others have expressed significant concern about the person, it is important to respond and let the person know you are concerned.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Acknowledge:</b> Express concern and be specific about the behaviour that concerns you.</li> <li><b>Listen:</b> Give your full attention and keep an open mind.</li> <li><b>Reassure:</b> Affirm their thoughts, feelings and experience in a sensitive and compassionate manner.</li> </ul>	<p>"It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed. Can I connect you with a resource for help?"</p>
<p><b>REFER</b></p> 	<p>Encourage the person to get help and make a referral to one of the services on the back of this document. Ask if they are already connected to support.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide information about resources</li> <li>Encourage help-seeking</li> <li>Offer to help your colleague connect with resources</li> </ul> <p>The person may say no to a referral or may not follow up with resources. We must respect their decision, except in the case of emergencies. Remind them that your door is always open if they reconsider or need additional help.</p>	<p>"If you'd like, we can call and book the appointment while you're here with me."</p>
<p><b>REFLECT</b></p> 	<p>After the conversation ends, it is important to support yourself and practice self-care. Seek personal support if needed, 24/7 from the Employee and Family Assistance Program provider, Family Services Ottawa at 613-725-5676.</p> <p><i>* For Managers/Supervisors/Academic Leaders: If you have observed concerning changes in behaviour in the individuals you manage/supervise, you have a legal duty to inquire. Reach out and say something. If you need support when preparing for this conversation, contact Human Resources for support in managing workplace-related health issues.</i></p>	

## Make a good referral

Encourage your colleague to seek out help early and connect them with available resources. Seeking help is a sign of strength. Remember to take care of your own well-being. All of these resources are available to you as well.

<p><b>Wellness Support</b> Proactively manage work and personal life</p>	<p><b>Declining Mental Health</b> Address mental health concerns and emotional distress</p>	<p><b>Risk to Safety</b> Violent or threatening behaviour, risk of suicide or harm to others</p>
<p><a href="#">Workplace Strategies for Mental Health</a> Whether you need help at work, or for your family's well-being, the Workplace Strategies for Mental Health website has free tools and information to help support your mental health and safety.</p>	<p><a href="#">Employee &amp; Family Assistance Program (EFAP)</a> <b>613-725-5676</b> EFAP is a free, confidential counselling service provided to faculty and staff, and their immediate family members, at any time.</p>	<p><a href="#">Campus Safety Services</a> For <b>life-threatening situations</b>, call Campus Safety at ext. 4444 from any campus phone or 613-520-4444 from your cell phone. <b>If you are off campus, call 911.</b></p>
<p><a href="#">WellCan</a> WellCan provides a hub for mental health resources and tools to help all Canadians maintain positive mental, physical, social and financial health during the COVID-19 pandemic.</p>	<p><a href="#">Human Resources</a> <b>613-520-3634</b> If you are concerned about a colleague, please contact Human Resources for support and guidance on how best to support them.</p>	<p><a href="#">Distress Centre Ottawa</a> <b>613-238-3311</b> No referral needed. Offers crisis prevention, intervention, information and support 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.</p>
<p><a href="#">Department of Equity and Inclusive Communities (EIC)</a> EIC fosters the development of an inclusive and transformational university culture where individual distinctiveness and a sense of belonging for every member drive excellence in research, teaching, learning and working at Carleton.</p>	<p><a href="#">BounceBack Ontario</a> BounceBack is a free skill-building program managed by the Canadian Mental Health Association. It is designed to help adults manage low mood, mild to moderate depression and anxiety, stress or worry. Delivered over the phone with a coach and through online videos.</p>	<p><a href="#">Crisis Line</a> <b>613-722-6914</b> Professionally trained Crisis Line Responders are there to answer calls 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Responders will focus on your immediate crisis and work with you to find solutions.</p>

# Supporting a Colleague: A Step-By-Step Guide

**Is your colleague stressed or distressed?**  
You have noticed changes in your colleague's behaviour. Do you believe they are stressed or distressed?

## Possible Indicators of Stress/Overwhelm

- Missed deadlines
- Reduced productivity
- Reduced quality of work
- Absent or late more frequently
- Relationship issues or conflicts with colleagues
- Withdrawal or reduced participation
- Anxiety, fearfulness, or loss of confidence

## Possible Indicators of Distress

- Significant low mood with feelings of extreme worry/anxiety, sadness or pain
- Withdrawing from colleagues, family or friends
- Prolonged irritability and/or unpredictable outburst of anger
- Expresses hopelessness or references suicide, self-harm or harm to others
- Unusual disinterest in or disregard for work with marked changes in concentration

## Use the 4 Rs Approach:

- **Recognize**
- **Respond**
- **Refer**
- **Reflect**

See reverse.

**If YES**, determine if the situation is **URGENT** or **NON-URGENT**

It is **URGENT** if:

- Their behaviour is threatening or highly disruptive.
- They make serious verbal threats.
- They are incoherent or uncontrollable.
- They are making direct or indirect reference to suicide.

**If NO**, consider using the **4 Rs Approach**:

- **Recognize**
- **Respond**
- **Refer**
- **Reflect**

See reverse.

## For **URGENT** situations:

- If the person is **on campus**, dial **4444** to connect with Campus Safety Services.
- If the person is **off campus**, dial **911** and notify Campus Safety Services **4444**.
- If **unsure** if off-campus situation warrants a 911 call, consult the **Crisis Line** at **613-722-6914**.
- **After hours**, contact Campus Safety Services at **4444**.
- Inform your department head and Human Resources (ext. 3634) of the situation.

## For **NON-URGENT** situations:

- Listen, show concern, be non-judgmental.
- Ask questions to determine what kind of information or referral would be appropriate.
- If referral warranted, provide contact information to appropriate services and encourage the person to get help.
- Encourage them to connect with the **Employee & Family Assistance Program (EFAP)** for free, confidential counselling. **613-725-5676**
- Offer to make the referral for them if they are hesitant but willing to access help.
- If unwilling, respect their decision. Remind them that your door is always open if they reconsider or need additional help.