

FACT SHEET #2

RECOGNISING A MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION

"From the outside looking in, it's hard to understand. From the inside looking out, it's hard to explain" **Unknown**

When it comes to recognising an existing or developing mental health condition there is likely to be some noticeable patterns of behaviour, changes in behaviour, or particularly unusual behaviours.

The table below describes some of the indicators that might indicate someone is struggling with their mental health.

<h2>MENTAL HEALTH CONDITION SIGNS</h2>	
Unusually emotional Decreased coping ability Lowered motivation Difficulty concentrating Withdrawn Avoiding certain people or situations Not coping well with change or set backs	Easily agitated Lack of clear thinking Significant mood swings Lack of focus Distorted thinking Unhealthy relationships with others A generally negative or pessimistic outlook

Whilst these general indicators are not exhaustive or absolute, they may be helpful in triggering you to pause and reflect on the overall behaviour you are observing more deeply.

Behaviours that seem out of character might flag a developing mental health condition or existing mental illness episode. A normally mentally healthy person may start to display some behaviours which seem out of character. An obvious and sustained decrease in performance at work or an increase in absenteeism may be one of the signs that initially draw your attention to the potential that there is an issue.

Consistent patterns of concerning behaviour might reflect that an individual has an ongoing mental health condition. If performance is being compromised, or you are concerned about the person’s wellbeing this might be the catalyst to have a conversation and explore how to best provide support.

Remember, it can sometimes be difficult to distinguish between someone’s personal qualities and the presence of a psychological issue. It is important to just make your best judgement possible and determine the next step. Also keep in mind that you are not expected to, nor is it advisable for you to function as a psychologist or counsellor. However, if you are able to recognise if someone is struggling with their mental health, you can take action to support the individual. Actions you can take include:

- Having a conversation to share your observations and offer your support and assistance.
- Encouraging the person to see their GP or seek other psychological assistance.
- Refer them to TIACS on 0488 846 988 or your organisation’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP).

If you or someone you know needs help contact **TIACS** on 0488 846 988 or your organisation’s Employee Assistance Program (EAP), your GP or call: **LifeLine** on 13 11 14, **Kids Helpline** on 1800 551 800, **MensLine Australia** on 1300 789 978 or the **Suicide Call Back Service** on 1300 659 467.

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