

# Mindful Work

## Signs of mental health issues in your colleagues

This summary from the Mental Health Foundation is a useful introduction:

'If we have significant challenges in our home or work life, the chances are that it has an impact on our mental health.

Mental health problems can have a lot of different symptoms and signs. As a rule, you should seek help from your GP if you have difficult feelings that are:

- Stopping you from getting on with life
- Having a big impact on the people you live or work with
- Affecting your mood over several weeks
- Causing you to have thoughts of suicide

At work, we might notice that we are more tired than usual. We might make uncharacteristic mistakes, find it hard to motivate ourselves, our timekeeping might slip, or we may be short tempered.

We might look or feel very tired or drained. We might find we isolate ourselves, avoid colleagues or appear distracted. We might procrastinate more – or grind to a halt altogether. Alternatively, we might speed up or become chaotic, intruding into others' conversations and work, and taking on more work than we can manage.

We may find these early warning signs hard to see in ourselves, and it can help to have colleagues who can help us connect this to our mental health.'

### **What to look for in your colleagues:**

- increased lateness or absence
- decreased productivity
- being distracted and dreamy
- not talking as much, or more than usual
- slow thinking or making mistakes
- lack of self-confidence
- agitation and conflict
- appearing overwhelmed
- behaving oddly and being more introvert

### **What to do if you see these signs:**

- have an informal chat with your colleague
- just listen with empathy, don't judge or offer advice
- help them figure out where to get help, e.g. line manager, HR people, doctor
- check back in after a few days