



## How to recognise and have a conversation about mental health

### Dos and Don'ts

#### The Dos

- Be genuine
- Be informal – allow the conversation to take place off site?
- Take it seriously
- Give the person space and allow them to go at their own pace
- Be empathetic, it may be worthwhile being open about your own experiences if you have any
- Make sure the time and space for the conversation are appropriate – ensure it's private and not rushed
- Have follow up conversations
- Agree outcomes
- Listen
- Build trust

#### The Don'ts

- Be too formal
- Make assumptions – keep an open mind
- Assume there is one cause
- Fill gaps in the conversation
- Use clichés like 'get a grip' etc.
- Try and down play their issue
- Be afraid of saying the wrong thing
- Be a counsellor
- Take too many notes

### Signs and Symptoms

The following changes may be indicators of a mental health issue (although they may be indicative of any number of things so don't make assumptions)

#### Behavioural

- Agitation

- Withdrawn
- Doesn't want to talk
- Doesn't want to interact
- Body language
- Absence
- Lateness
- Weight loss or gain
- Drinking more caffeine
- Forgetfulness
- Working more hours/taking more breaks
- Irritability
- Making mistakes
- Performance issues

### **Physical**

- Sweating
- Bloodshot eyes
- Weariness
- Changes in appearance – eg. Unkempt or dishevelled

### **Psychological**

- Concentration issues
- Withdrawn
- Agitated
- Doesn't respond well to change
- Difficulty making decisions
- Tearfulness