

Frequently Asked Questions About Mental Health in the Workplace

1. What should I do if an employee expresses suicidal thoughts or is in crisis?

- **Take immediate action**
- **If someone's safety is at immediate risk, call 9-1-1 right away.**
- **For someone showing signs of distress:** talk to the employee, listen actively, and contact the Suicide Crisis Line by **dialing or texting 9-8-8** for support.
- Provide intensive care after a crisis or suicide attempt and maintain regular contact with the employee to organize appropriate support. It's important that the employee not feel cut out or shunned.

2. An employee requests accommodation without details. What information can I request?

- The employee doesn't need to disclose a diagnosis but must provide enough information for you to offer reasonable accommodation. This might include a doctor's note stating a disability exists, outlining work limitations, and/or the recovery prognosis.

3. An employee's performance has declined, and I suspect mental health issues. Can I ask about mental health concerns?

- a. You can discuss performance issues and suggest they consider speaking with the Employee Assistance Program (EAP) or their doctor if health concerns are impacting their work. Avoid directly asking about mental health conditions.
- b. Inform employees about your workplace accommodation policy and the process for requesting accommodations. Reassure employees that disclosing a mental illness won't jeopardize their job, unless performance issues exist, *and* they haven't requested accommodation.

4. An employee returns to work after long-term leave and may require accommodation in the short or long term to ensure a safe and successful re-integration into their job duties. What can I do to help a returning employee who may need accommodation?

Have a return-to-work discussion:

- This process helps ensure successful reintegration into the workplace after an absence.
- It can include:
 - Identifying essential job duties.
 - Considering potential challenges.
 - Discussing concerns and goals with the employee.
 - Reviewing medical limitations.
 - Addressing unresolved past issues.
 - And ensuring both employee and supervisor understand the return plan.
 - Supervisory training is recommended.

5. Can I refuse to hire someone with a mental health concern due to safety risks?

- You can refuse to hire if there's a **demonstrable safety risk** directly related to the essential job duties, and **clear evidence** they cannot perform the job safely. Do not rely on stereotypes; base your decision on actual and probable risk.