

HELPFUL TIPS FOR LEADERS

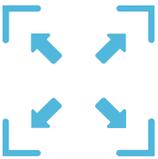
As a people leader, you have additional responsibilities when it comes to managing occupational violence and aggression (OVA) and supporting your team post-incident. Debriefing an incident and encouraging your team members to seek support can be challenging.

Follow these tips to help you speak with your people and support them following an incident.



Take your time

- Before you offer support, take the time to get accurate details about the incident (preferably from someone not directly affected).
- Allow enough time to speak with the person so that they don't feel rushed.



Create a safe space

- Ask yourself if you're best placed to speak with the person. For example, you may have been directly affected by the incident. Consider who else may be able to provide support.
- Have the conversation in a confidential environment.
- Maintain a calm and caring approach, even in difficult circumstances.
- If the person is distressed, don't feel like you must make their distress go away. You could say something like, 'It's really tough to go through something like this.'
- Don't pressure the person to tell you what happened. Instead, focus on how you can support them.
- Avoid using humour that may be interpreted as making light of the situation.
- Remind them of EAP or other supports available. Encourage them to speak with their GP about their experience and emphasise the benefits of early intervention.



Listen

- Consider the person's perspective and listen carefully — in your own words, see if you can summarise what they've said to show you've been listening.
- Don't worry about saying 'the right thing'. Remind yourself that what is most important is listening and showing genuine concern.
- Try not to give simplistic reassurances, such as, 'I know how you feel,' 'You shouldn't feel that way' or 'You'll be fine in no time.' Acknowledge that having strong reactions are normal.
- Don't talk about your own or someone else's troubles.

An OVA event can lead to a drop in performance. Early intervention and providing the right support can prevent performance deterioration.

