Wellbeing Literacy Bite #3

Identifying Distress & Self-Care
Strategies for Leaders

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Identifying Distress in Your Team

Mental health issues are common, affecting half of all Australians at some point in their lives. As a leader, identifying distress or a decline in mental health among your team members early can lead to timely intervention and support. Mental ill health can manifest in various ways, including emotional, cognitive, behavioral, and physical changes.

Promoting Self-Care as a Leader

As a leader, fostering a culture of self-care within your team is vital for maintaining their mental health and overall wellbeing. Self-care isn't just about managing stress; it's about building resilience and improving the quality of life.

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4 Distress Indicators
within your team

1 Emotional Changes
- Persistent sadness or hopelessness.
- Irritability or anger over minor issues.
- Overwhelmed, anxious or panicked behaviour.
- Emotional withdrawal from colleges and team activities.

2 Cognitive Changes
- Difficulty concentrating or making decisions.
- Memory problems or frequent confusion.
- Negative self-talk or self-doubt.
- Disorientation or trouble staying focused.

3 Physical Changes
- Constant fatigue, low energy, or frequent headaches.
- Changes in sleep patterns or personal hygiene.
- Noticeable weight fluctuations or appetite changes.

4 Behavioural Changes
- Loss of interest in work or activities once enjoyed.
- Decline in work performance or increased absenteeism.
- Increased use of alcohol or substances.
- Avoidance of social interactions or isolation from the team.

Encouraging Self-Care
Your role as a Leader

1 Encourage Open Communication
- Foster an environment where team members feel comfortable sharing their feelings.
- Encourage them to reach out to supportive colleagues, friends, or family members when needed.

2 Promote Social connections
- Regular social interactions & maintaining strong relationships are essential for mental health.
- Encourage team bonding & ensure no one feels isolated.

3 Support Physical Wellbeing
- Regular exercise, a healthy diet, and quality sleep are critical for reducing stress and boosting energy levels.
- Promote activities like group exercise challenges or mindfulness sessions.

4 Introduce Mindfulness Practices
- Mindfulness & meditation can help team members manage stress and stay grounded.
- headspace and CALM apps support guided sessions.

5 Maintain Work-Life Balance
- Help your team manage work-life balance by offering flexible work arrangements & encouraging them to set clear boundaries between work & personal life.

6 Encourage Pursuit of Hobbies
- Support your team in pursuing hobbies & interests outside of work. Activities like gardening, cycling or crafting can be effective stress relievers.

7 Provide Access to Support
- Ensure your team knows they can seek help if they feel overwhelmed.
- Promote the use of Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) & external mental health services.