



ORGANIZATIONAL EFFECTIVENESS

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Identifying and Supporting Distressed Employees

Dear Coach,

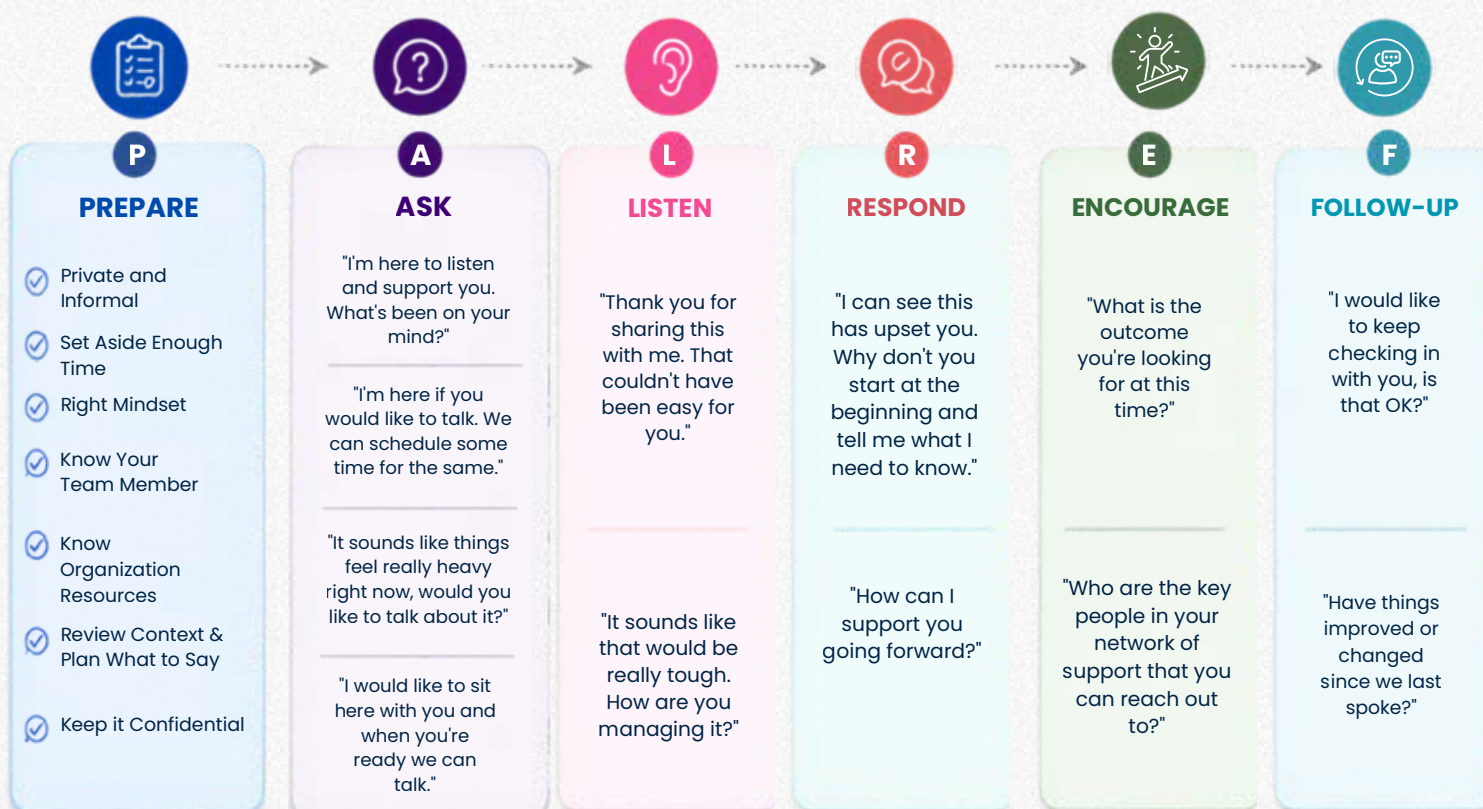
I have noticed an employee who has been distressed over the past two weeks. His behaviour has changed quite a bit and it's concerning – low mood & energy, easily irritable, how do I approach him about this?

**Here is a quick framework to
support an employee/
colleague in distress – PALREF.**



Have you ever noticed someone who is stressed, upset or low but you haven't approached them because you were unsure about what to say or how to manage the conversation? Very often we find ourselves in these situations and sometimes we even brush it off thinking we shouldn't interfere or if the person requires support they'll ask. But more often than not, people find it challenging to ask for support. This is where a kind word can go a long way. Caring doesn't cost a thing!

PALREF Support Pathway





As a manager, this framework can be useful even for regular check-ins and/or with employees who have recently showcased unusual/uncharacteristic behaviours – physically, emotionally & mentally. As an employee, this framework can be useful for individuals you interact with on a regular basis.

A few points to keep in mind – you don't need to solve the distressed employee's problems, diagnose them or be a therapist/doctor to them. All you need to do is hear them out, keep the conversation confidential & guide them to the appropriate resources. If the concern requires you to share details with others, always check with the employee if it's okay to share only the relevant details (not necessarily all the details).

BALANCING PERFORMANCE WITH WELLBEING

An important part of healthy workplace practices & positive work relationships is managing the workload & performance while also taking care of your employees. Here are a few tips on how to do so:

- ▶ Manage on a case-by-case/subjective basis not by assumptions or biases.
- ▶ Focus on the person, not the problem – don't make assumptions – they can still thrive at work.
- ▶ **Reaffirm expectations sensitively while considering health-related solutions & collaboration:**
"I understand that you're dealing with some tough issues, and at the same time, we need to make sure we're staying on track with our projects. Let's think about how we can adjust your workload or find other ways to support you during this time."
- ▶ **Discuss practical implications of any reasonable adjustment request.**
Allow them flexibility; how and when they perform their role where possible in line with business needs
- ▶ **Know when to escalate:**
"We will have a review by XYZ date. I would like to let you know that, if there isn't improvement, it might be helpful to bring in additional support, whether from HR or a mental health professional to make sure you're getting the help you need."
- ▶ **Use mediation**
(contact HRBP) to resolve any conflict if necessary/ appropriate.



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