Supporting Staff in Distress – Is There a Mental Health Problem?

NON CRISIS

The staff member is significantly distressed but not a danger to self or others and is open to support.

- Discuss relevant issues and ask what you can do to help.
- Advise the member of staff to contact their GP. Gain their consent and make referral to occupational health if appropriate [see guidance].
- Advise member of staff to also seek support from the Employee Assistance Programme by encouraging/assisting the member of staff in making the call. [http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/depts/safety/intranet/eap.html](http://www.lancaster.ac.uk/depts/safety/intranet/eap.html)
- At this stage it is important to remember that if a staff member refuses to contact their GP or to seek support, then it is their right to do so. A management decision may need to be made taking account of this. Should they be at work?
- Visit [http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/safety/mentalhealth.html](http://www.lancs.ac.uk/depts/safety/mentalhealth.html)

CRISIS

Member of staff appears to be unfit to be at work or is a danger to themselves and/or others

- Keep calm
- Alert Security who will call 999 and ask for medical assistance and give directions to an ambulance.
  Call for professional local support - Single Point of Access – 01524 550541 before 5.30pm or Home Treatment Team [formerly crisis team] after 5.30pm – 01524 50199
- Explain to the member of staff what you intend to do.
- Offer staff member reassurance, as they are likely to be frightened and vulnerable.
- Never put yourself at risk. Keep yourself safe.
- Remember you are not solely responsible for a member of staff’s safety.

IMPORTANT

- Record all conversations of this type, including dates and time.
- Seek support for yourself either from your line manager, colleagues, HR or counselling and mental health service.
- Do not disclose personal information about members of staff outside the university, including family members, without the person’s explicit consent.
- Never promise absolute confidentiality. This may need to be broken to seek support for yourself and/or if risk to self and or others makes disclosure necessary.