

How can you help a colleague if you're concerned?

More than 3 million Australians experience depression or anxiety. These conditions tend to affect people during their prime working years which are between the ages of 16 to 64. It is likely then that you or someone you know will experience anxiety or depression and it is important to seek help.

If you are concerned about a colleague at work, here are some tips on how to talk and support them;

- Think about how to approach your colleague. Are you the best person?
- What's the best time and place?
- How will you react if your discussion doesn't go as planned?
- Plan how you will start your conversation. Let the person know that you are concerned and explain why.
- Let the person talk about their experience. Avoid saying "Get over it" or "It will be alright" as this could sound dismissive.
- Use appropriate body language. Make the person feel comfortable.
- Don't diagnose or label someone or what they are experiencing. Accept their decision.

If you need support, your employee assistance provider is a great place to get free counselling support. You can gain practical tools, skills and strategies for managing stressful situations and work in a solution focused model of counselling. There is also the option to just vent, feeling there is someone to air your thoughts and feelings with who won't judge and can supportively talk with you. Other services who offer support are Lifeline (www.lifeline.org.au), Beyond Blue (www.beyondblue.org) and headspace (www.headspace.org.au) if you are 25 years of age or younger. It is also good to talk to your GP. They may decide to talk to you about a mental health care plan. For more information on mental health care plans go to www.healthdirect.gov.au.

To make an confidential appointment with a counsellor at Positive Solutions,
Please call 03 6223 5612