



The manager's mental health quick checklist



Use this 5-step framework before and during sensitive conversations.

This isn't about fixing mental health - it's about noticing early, responding with care, and following fair process.

1. Notice the change

Ask yourself:

- Has their behaviour shifted suddenly (quieter, defensive, withdrawn)?
- Are they "present" but not performing (presenteeism)?
- Is there a pattern - or is this new?



Tip: Write down one specific example to keep your conversation factual.

2. Ask, don't assume

Starter questions:

- "I've noticed you seem a little different this week - how are things?"
- "Is anything at work making things harder right now?"
- "What support would help you most?"



Tip: Keep it simple and genuine. You're opening a door, not diagnosing.

3. Record support offered

Log what you've done:

- Signposting to **EAP, counselling, MHFA**.
- Referrals to **Occupational Health (OH)**.
- Adjustments offered (e.g. workload, flexible hours).



Tip: Capture notes in your HR system (like Breathe's performance tools) - it shows a fair and consistent approach.

4. Balance care and team needs

Ask yourself:

- Am I protecting the individual and ensuring the rest of the team feels safe and supported?
- Is anyone else being negatively affected (workload, conflict, morale)?



Tip: Boundaries matter - don't promise what you can't deliver. Keep empathy + fairness in balance.

5. Stick to process

Check yourself:

- Am I following company policy (absence, conduct, performance)?
- Have I logged key actions?
- Am I avoiding "special deals" outside procedure?



Tip: Policies and procedures aren't red tape - they're your safety net. They protect both people and the business.



Useful links for managers:

[Breathe
HR Partner
Directory](#)

[HSE Stress Risk
Assessment
Tool](#)

[Acas -
Supporting
Mental Health
at Work](#)

[Mind UK - For
Employers](#)

Remember, you don't need to have all the answers - you just need to notice, act, and follow through.

Next steps

Log 1:1s and follow-ups in Breathe.
Keep conversations and actions easy to revisit.



[See more on tracking 1:1s with Breathe](#)

