Supporting Employees in a Crisis

Promoting Safety Together
Welcome

Aaryn & Ginger work on the traditional, unceded territories of the Syilx people of the Okanagan nation.

Aaryn Secker, MEd, CPHR
Director, Education & Training
CMHA BC Division
aaryn.msecker@cmha.bc.ca

Ginger Brunner, CPHR
Senior HR Specialist
go2HR
gbrunner@go2hr.ca
Overview

• Framing Our Crisis Response

• Seeking Assistance

• Importance of Choice
What is a Crisis?

• Demands of the situation exceed our usual methods of coping with challenges, or our perceived ability to cope.

• Immediate safety is not always a concern, but err on the side of caution.
Common Concerns

• What if it is none of my business?
• What if I do nothing?
• What will I do next?
• What if help is far away?
• What if I make it worse?
Parallels to First Aid

- Immediate danger? 911 & environment management
- You’re not a paramedic* or surgeon… or a counsellor or psychologist
- Promote safety, prevent further harm
Seeking Assistance

• If calling 911, just the facts

• Be transparent

• Know that the police may come

• A note re: Mental Health Act

• Crisis line, navigation service, or mental health line together
Importance of Choice

• Reasons:
  • Lessen trauma
  • Promote empowerment
  • Build trust

• Often, someone in a crisis may feel they have little or no control/few or no options
Examples of Choice

• Emergency = immediate 911

• “Emergency services are on their way to help, do you feel more comfortable waiting in here or should we wait outside?”

• “I have to call someone, would you prefer we call the crisis line first or try your doctor?”
Listen to Understand

• Active listening does not mean:
  • Listening to reply or “get it right”
  • Giving advice on their problems
  • Judging

• It does include:
  • Holding time and space
  • Checking understanding
  • Challenging assumptions
Proactive Mental Health Support for Employees

- Provide training and support – how to respond to difficult guest situations
- Build relationships with employees
- Normalize talking about mental health in the workplace
- Debrief challenging situations
- Provide a safe space to share frustrations
- Share mental health supports and resources
Dealing with Difficult Guests

go2HR Resources

- [Scripts: Responding to Difficult Guest Situations during a Pandemic](#)
- [Scripts: Proof of Vaccination - How To Deal with Challenging Situations](#)
- [BSAFE™ Training](#)
Safety Talks

- Pilot “Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace”
- Employee resource + 5 minute video
- Workmentalhealthbc.ca
- We want your feedback!
- 10 topics ~mid-November
Thank you!

Visit us at workmentalhealthbc.ca

Outside of BC? cmha.ca