

WELLBEING

CONVERSATIONS GUIDE



Let's start this journey together...

Creating a healthy workplace is an ongoing journey, not a destination. By prioritising your team's wellbeing, you're not just supporting their health - you're laying the groundwork for high performance, stability, and success.

At The Thrive Team, we're committed to helping organisations like yours thrive. We're a talent acquisition and people development company. We don't just help you build a team - we help you build them up. We offer a comprehensive suite of services including executive search, interim search, coaching, and training, all designed to support you in creating and maintaining a healthy, high-performing workplace.

A healthy workplace is the foundation of a high-performing organisation. It's not just about implementing policies - it's about creating a culture where every team member can bring their best self to work.

The Thrive Team offers a range of workplace training to help managers and team spot the signs of poor mental health and create cultures where people are comfortable discussing mental health. If you'd like to speak to us or find out more about how we could support your or your business, get in touch [here](#). We'd love to hear from you.

"Being able to confidently start a wellbeing conversation is a crucial life skill. So often we worry that we might say the wrong thing and offend someone or we just don't know how to start the conversation. We can build up the conversation in our head to make it feel hard but often starting the conversation can be as easy as asking "How are you?" remembering to ask twice if you're not sure that the person really is "fine". What's really important is the ability to listen and create a safe space for others to talk openly."



Ali Grady, FCIPD
Co-Founder and Director of Coaching & Development



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Wellbeing Conversations

Here at The Thrive Team we recognise that starting a conversation about wellbeing, particularly if you have concerns about someone's mental health, can be difficult. Often we don't know what to say, or we worry that we may say the wrong thing.

We've developed our Wellbeing Conversations Guide to share tips about how to make the conversations easier and go well. In it we cover:

- Making wellbeing conversations part of working life
- Preparing for the conversation
- Holding the conversation – starting the conversation, weekly wellbeing check up, building rapport, exploring thoughts and feelings, offering support, encouraging action and what if the person doesn't want to talk
- After the conversation
- Team wellbeing conversations

If you find yourself regularly having conversations with others and would like some extra signposting resources you might find The Thrive Team Mental Health Resources Directory helpful. We've curated a list of helpful organisations and resources for the benefit of those looking for support during difficult time or as a signposting tool for those supporting others e.g. Mental Health First Aiders, Wellbeing Champions, line managers and HR professionals.

You can also download our Mental Wellbeing Resources Directory [here](#)

Our affiliations



Wellbeing Conversations

Making wellbeing conversations part of working life

Things you can do to help

Be available and approachable:

Try to role model wellbeing and lead with compassion. Talk about how you are looking after your own wellbeing – it will go a long way in encouraging your team to look after themselves.



Listen without judgement:

Provide regular space and time for your team to ask questions and voice their concerns. Acknowledge issues and likely impact. Provide regular updates on changes across the business. Highlight news bulletins to your team, and use video/phone calls or virtual meetings/social forums.



Have each other's backs:

Check in on your team rather than checking up on them. Promote buddy/peer support in your team and partner inexperienced team members with more experienced colleagues.

Ensure the basics:

Make wellbeing the focus of your 1:1 check-ins with team members. Ensure your team are taking breaks away from their laptops if they are working from home and that everyone is finding time to do what matters to them to support their wellbeing.

Support your team to do their best:

As much as possible, support your team to have control over their work where they can. Encourage them to do some of the work/tasks that give them professional and personal satisfaction. Practice gratitude. A thank you goes a long way.



Signpost the support options available to you and your team

Wellbeing Conversations

Prepare for wellbeing conversations

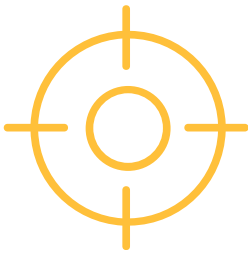
Before the conversation

Whether the conversation is to take place face to face or by phone/virtually take time to consider these points:



CLARIFY: What evidence do you have that there may be a problem;

- Observations - has there been a change in mood/behaviour/attitude/health/appearance/timekeeping?
- Listening - has the colleague raised or mentioned any problems or concerns?
- Records - attendance, any other records?
- Knowledge - nature of their work and potential sources of stress?



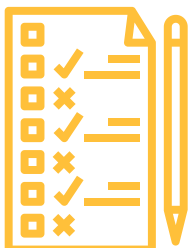
FOCUS: Ask yourself;

- What is the purpose of the conversation, what do you want to achieve?
- Am I in a good headspace?
- Am I willing to genuinely listen?
- Can I give as much time as is needed?
- How and when am I going to make contact to help the team member feel comfortable and ensure privacy?



COLLEAGUE: Think about your colleague;

- Take time to consider how your colleague will react.
- How might they feel about the conversation?
- What assumptions might they make?
- How will they be feeling?
- What can you do alleviate any concerns or fears they may have?
- What would work best for them when letting them know you'd like a conversation (unless wellbeing conversations are part of your usual support)?
- Tip: Put yourself in their shoes.



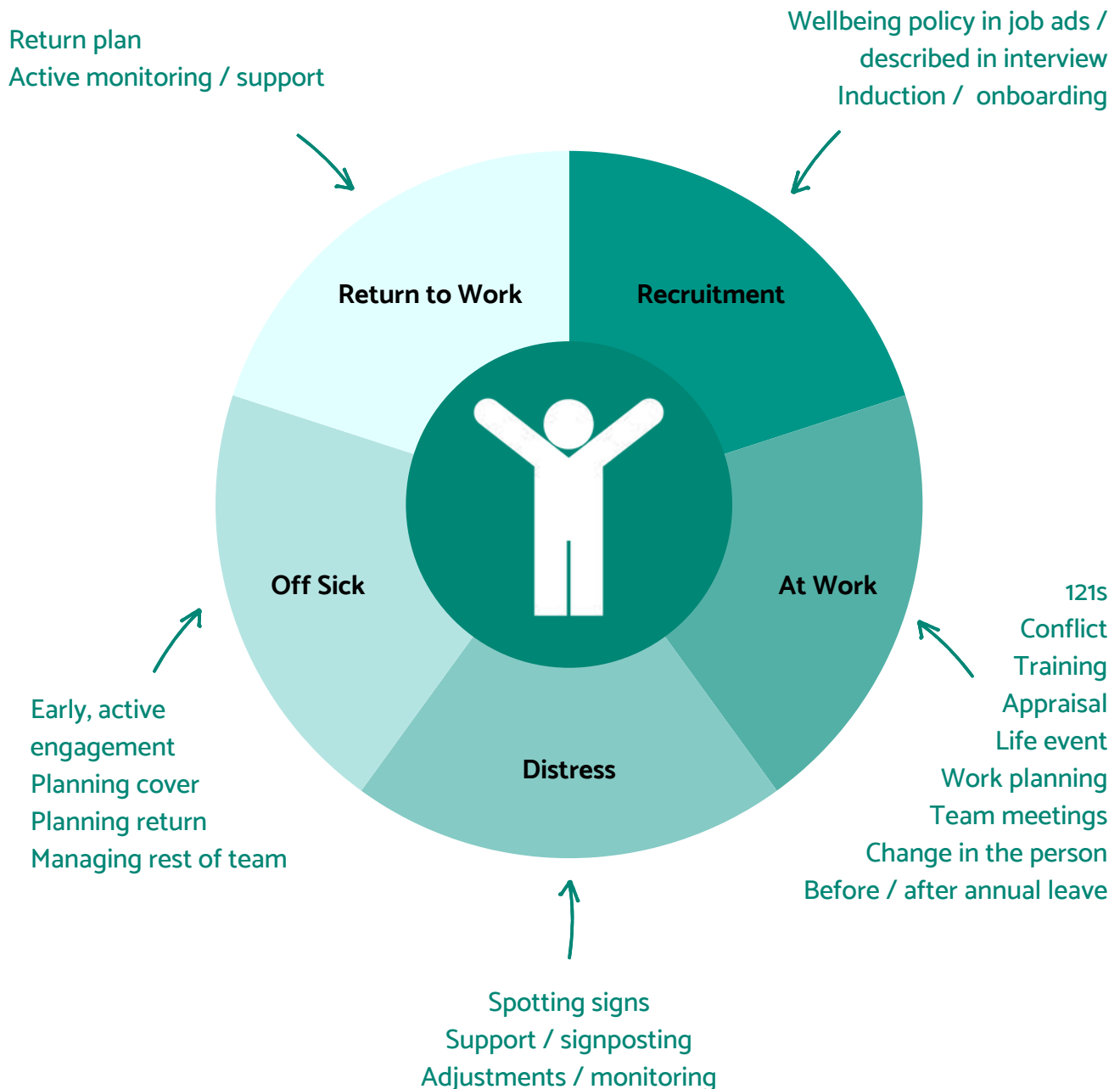
PREPARATION: Take a couple of minutes before the conversation to prepare if at all possible;

- Get set up comfortably – somewhere quiet with good connectivity.
- You might find it helpful to make notes of key points you wish to cover.
- If you need more support, contact HR or connect with other managers for peer support (maintaining confidentiality). You can also use resources from your Employee Assistance Programme if you have one.

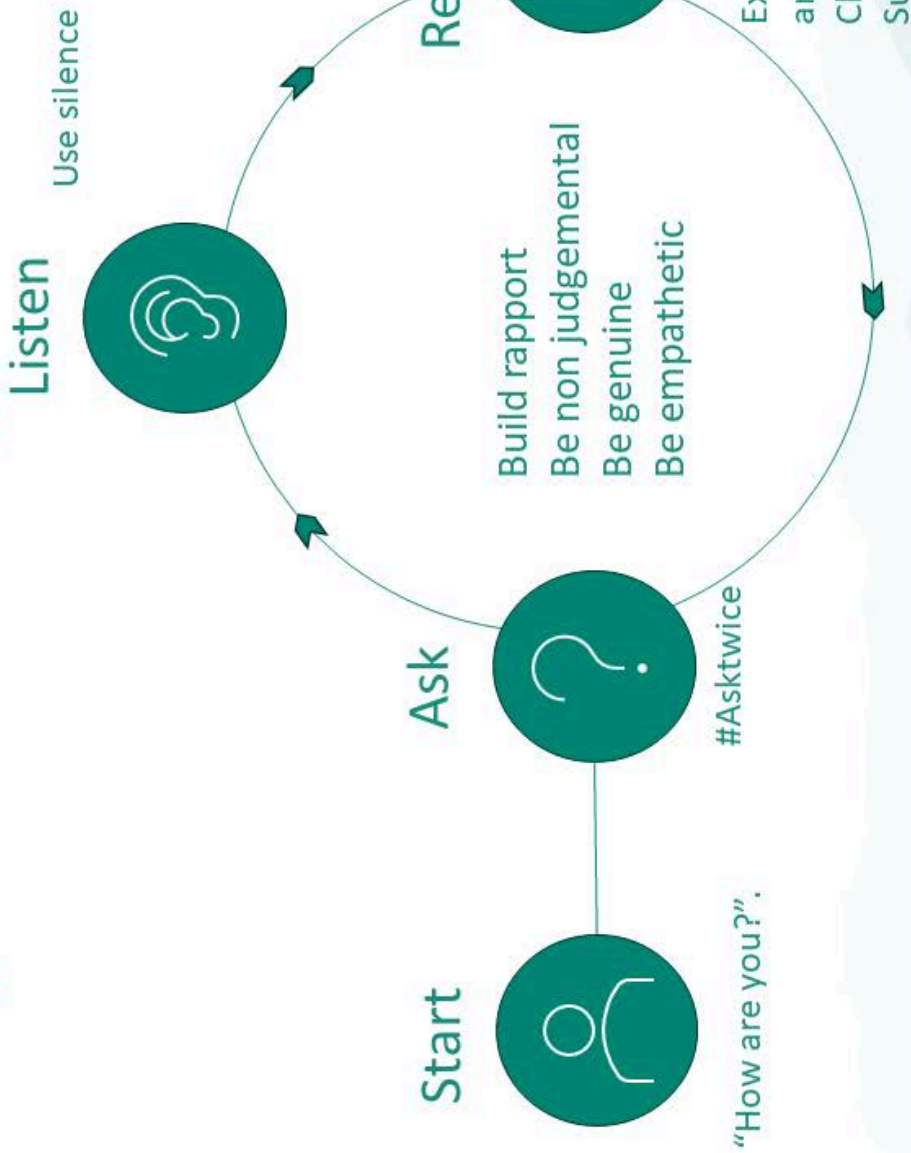
Wellbeing Conversations Guide

Opportunities for wellbeing conversations

There are many opportunities to have wellbeing conversations. The diagram below provides a useful guide to help you to consider the different touchpoints throughout the employee lifecycle where you may be able to have a wellbeing conversation.



Wellbeing Conversations Cycle



If someone doesn't want to talk, respect their choice, let them know you're there to support/signpost to other support. If you remain concerned seek advice from HR



Wellbeing Conversations

Holding wellbeing conversations

Starting the conversation

Help your colleagues to open up by asking them open questions like:

I thought it might be helpful for you and I to have a conversation about your wellbeing and how you are feeling at the moment

I haven't caught up, and wanted to check in about how you are feeling?

How are you?
(don't forget #asktwice)

How's life?
How are the family?

I've noticed you aren't yourself at the moment and thought it might be helpful for us to have a conversation about it, what are your thoughts?

How are you doing?

What's been happening for you lately?

Sharing a few anecdotes of something that has made you smile that day can also help them feel at ease.

Don't worry If this isn't the typical type of conversation you'd have with the individual. If this is the case, then the best approach is simply to acknowledge that straight away. It will help put you both at ease, and break the ice. Something like:

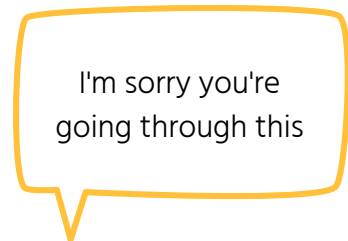
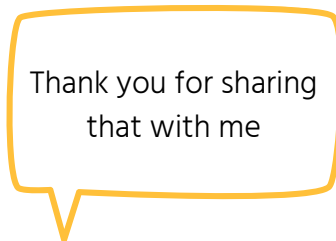
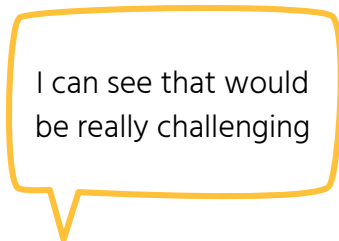
Look, I know we don't normally have these types of conversations, but I just want to check how you're doing?

Wellbeing Conversations

Holding wellbeing conversations

Build Rapport

- Adopt a non-judgmental approach.
- Listen, listen, LISTEN!
- Use questions where appropriate/supportive.
- Don't feel you have to be counsellor or therapist - maintain a professional approach and boundaries.
- Show empathy:



Encourage a two way process



Check understanding at regular intervals



Keep asking questions



Summarise



Reflect back

Wellbeing Conversations

Holding wellbeing conversations

Exploring their thoughts and feelings

Expand their exploration around what is happening from their perspective. Check out the data and information you have noticed through exploration of their thinking. Good open questions will be helpful:

- How are you feeling?
- What's your thinking around how you are at work at the moment?

If they confide in you about their struggles, ask them questions to explore what's going on so you can provide support:



Wellbeing Conversations

Holding wellbeing conversations

Offer Support

Explore what type of support might help;



Encouraging Action

After exploring ideas and what may help it's about helping them decide which ideas would help them at the moment.

ASK:

Of all the things we've talked about which one or ones would be most helpful for you now?

Once you've jointly identified which ideas would be helpful explore with them what exactly they will do and if there is anything that might get in the way of them doing this.

ASK:

What exactly are you going to do from (this afternoon, tomorrow)?

What if anything might get in the way of you doing this?

What can you do to overcome that barrier?

Re-cap for me what you are going to do to help improve your wellbeing?

Wellbeing Conversations

Holding wellbeing conversations

What if the person doesn't want to talk?

The below points can help if the conversation doesn't go as you'd hoped:

- Remain relaxed.
- If the person doesn't want to speak about it, respect their choice, but leave the door open for further dialogue.
- Always try to listen non-judgmentally and see the issue from their perspective.
- Let them know you're asking because you're concerned about them.
- Acknowledge the person's feelings.
- If they get angry or upset, stay calm and don't take it personally..



Watch outs

Watch out for:



- The individual trying to blame others and not take any responsibility for the changes that they can make.
- The individual asking you for your ideas and not doing any thinking themselves – they are the expert on themselves, not you.
- The individual expecting you to make all the changes and they don't make any personally.
- Moving into rescue mode - it's not your responsibility to 'fix' people.
- Making promises about the business or committing to actions that you can't keep.

Wellbeing Conversations

After the conversation

When the conversation has ended

- Take a moment to think about the conversation and work through any feelings you may be experiencing yourself.
- Summarise any actions you and your team member have agreed (document via a quick email with bullet points if useful).
- Follow through on actions.
- Schedule reminders to make follow-up phone calls to stay connected with your team member on a regular basis.
- Keep the conversation open.
- Seek guidance from HR if necessary.

For follow up meetings/phone calls

- Prepare yourself again.
- Review any points or actions from your last conversation.
- Have a conversation along the lines above.



Wellbeing Conversations

Team wellbeing conversations

Conversation points

These are some suggested conversation points for Team discussions about wellbeing (you could use the weekly wellbeing check up as a guide):

How would you currently score our team's wellbeing?
What ideas have we got to improve the scores?

Discuss the ideas and decide as a collective what you are going to do:

What does good look like for us?

Take one of the areas and discuss where are we now in comparison with the agreed perspective of what good looks like:

What can we do to work closer towards good?

As a team discuss what gets in the way, what barriers there are and explore as a team what you could do to overcome the them.

Agree actions

Weekly Wellbeing Check Up

Use the questions below to check in on your (or your teams') wellbeing weekly.



How's my health?

How do I feel;
Mentally?
Physically?



How's my wellbeing?

Am I drinking enough water?
Is my diet balanced?
How am I sleeping?
Is there anything I can improve?



How's my thinking?

How are my thoughts making me feel?
Am I having unhelpful thoughts?



How's my stress container?

How full is my container?
Am I using helpful coping strategies?
Are they working?

Additional Resources

Conversation Skills

[Empathy vs Sympathy \(film\) Brene Brown](#)

Mental Health Resources

[Hub of Hope - Mental Health Support](#)

[Mental Health Foundation - A - z of Mental Health](#)

[Mind](#)

[The Thrive Team - Worried About Someone's Mental Health? How to start the conversation \(short video\)](#)

Manager's Mental Health Resources

[Health and Safety Executive - Stress and Mental Health at Work](#)

[Mental Health at Work](#)

[Mental Health First Aid England - Line Managers' Resource Book](#)

[Mind - Wellness Action Plan Guide for Line Managers](#)

Manager's Mental Health Resources

[Health and Safety Executive - Stress and Mental Health at Work](#)

[Mental Health at Work](#)

[Mental Health First Aid England - Line Managers' Resource Book](#)

[Mind - Wellness Action Plan Guide for Line Managers](#)

The Thrive Team Resources

[Mental Wellbeing Resources Directory](#)

[How Full is Your Stress Container?](#)

[Weekly Wellbeing Check Up](#)

[Digital Detox Challenge](#)

[Find Balance with the Wheel of Life](#)

[6 Productivity Techniques to Get More Done](#)

[5 Ways to Wellbeing](#)

[Awakening Productivity: How Sleep Impacts Your Business's Bottom Line](#)

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