

Talking About Trauma

Blue Knot Foundation fact sheet for members of the general public on how to have safe conversations about trauma with colleagues

Raising concerns with a colleague can be tricky as you may not know the person well, and you also share a workplace which may be traumatic itself. This can make the situation feel unsafe.

Depending on your workplace culture you might choose to speak to the person outside work, although that might not be easy, if you don't know the person well.

- Ensure the safety of the context in which you are speaking. The workplace itself may be a source of overwhelming stress.
- Depending on how well you know your colleague, consider speaking in a venue other than the workplace.

If it's 'the workplace or not at all', take particular care to ensure confidentiality, that you cannot easily be overheard, etc.

- Begin from an extension of the 'Are you okay?' question.

Note that the less well you know the person, the greater the likelihood that they will brush your question aside and that you may need to 'ask a second time'. This scenario is more likely to apply with colleagues than with friends.



- If the interpersonal trauma relates to a context outside the workplace (such as family violence) let the person know that support is available i.e contact details of support services and/or how to find them if/as appropriate.
- If their trauma relates to workplace incidents or culture reflect on the most appropriate way to engage with your colleague.

An expression of solidarity may be welcome but also problematic; consider prior 'brainstorming' with someone you know and trust.

To read the full paper:

Talking About Trauma - Guide to Everyday Conversations for the General Public
<https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-publications/talking-about-trauma-guide-to-everyday-conversations-for-the-general-public/>

You might also find our other fact sheets in this series helpful as they provide tips around talking about trauma with different people (family, friends, someone you don't know). Go here to read more:

<http://blueknot.org.au/category-fact-sheet/talking-about-trauma/>

For general information please see:

- Fact Sheet: Talking about Trauma – Having Safe Conversations with a family member or friend (For General Public) <http://blueknot.org.au/category-fact-sheet/talking-about-trauma/>
- Fact Sheet: Talking about Trauma – Applying Trauma-Informed Principles (For General Public) <https://blueknot.org.au/resources/blue-knot-publications/talking-about-trauma-guide-to-everyday-conversations-for-the-general-public/>