

Find your first words.

Someone in my team has gone quiet.

A colleague who usually contributes has been quieter in recent meetings. You want to check in without assuming why.

01 OPEN

Make space, without putting them on the spot.

WORDS TO TRY

“Could we find a quiet moment to check in? I wanted to see how things are going for you.”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Choose a private time with room to listen. If now isn't a good moment, agree another time.

02 OBSERVE

Describe a change, not a conclusion.

WORDS TO TRY

“I noticed you were quieter in our last two team meetings than usual.”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Use a specific observation you can stand behind. Being quiet doesn't tell you what someone is feeling or why.

03 ASK

Invite their perspective.

WORDS TO TRY

“How have things been for you at work recently?”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Pause and listen. They may not want to discuss personal circumstances; you can still ask what would help at work.

04 AGREE

Let their answer shape the next step.

WORDS TO TRY

“What would be useful from me? Shall we agree one next step and a time to check in again?”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Only agree actions that fit what they've told you. Clarify who will do what, and don't promise a change outside your authority.

Examples to adapt, not a script or diagnosis. General workplace learning, not clinical advice.

Find your first words.

A reliable colleague is missing deadlines.

Two reports have arrived later than agreed. You want to understand what's getting in the way rather than make a judgement.

01 OPEN

Explain the reason for the conversation.

WORDS TO TRY

“Could we set aside a few minutes to talk about how the reporting work is going?”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Raise the issue privately and allow time for their response, rather than squeezing it into a passing comment.

02 OBSERVE

Keep the example factual.

WORDS TO TRY

“The last two reports came in after the dates we agreed. That's different from your usual pattern.”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Avoid labels such as careless or disengaged. You've noticed a change; you don't yet know its cause.

03 ASK

Explore the obstacles before offering a solution.

WORDS TO TRY

“What has been getting in the way? Are there priorities or expectations we need to clarify?”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

The answer could involve workload, a process, resources or something else. Listen before deciding what needs to change.

04 AGREE

Make the next action specific.

WORDS TO TRY

“What should we tackle first? Let's agree the next action, who will take it and when we'll review it.”

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

A useful step might be clarifying priorities or investigating a process problem. Agree it together rather than treating this example as a fixed solution.

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Find your first words.

Someone says their workload is too much.

A team member has told you they're struggling with the amount of work. Start by listening, then look at practical options.

01 OPEN

Acknowledge that they've spoken up.

WORDS TO TRY

"Thank you for telling me. Let's make some time to understand what's feeling too much."

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Take the concern seriously. Avoid immediately offering reassurance that everything will be fine.

02 OBSERVE

Reflect what they've actually told you.

WORDS TO TRY

"You've said the current workload feels too much. I'd like to understand which parts are hardest to manage."

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Don't invent signs or assume a diagnosis. Here, the starting point is their own account, not your interpretation.

03 ASK

Understand the work and what needs attention.

WORDS TO TRY

"Which tasks or deadlines are creating the most pressure? What would make the biggest practical difference?"

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Explore priorities, resources and expectations. A wellbeing benefit isn't a substitute for addressing manageable work problems.

04 AGREE

Be honest about what you can change.

WORDS TO TRY

"Let's agree what I can change now and what I need to take forward. When would be a useful time to review this together?"

PUT IT INTO PRACTICE

Record the agreed work actions appropriately, not unnecessary personal health details. If another source of support is relevant, use accurate information and explain any limits to confidentiality.

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