



# How to approach the necessary talk

As a manager, you have a special responsibility for preventing and handling stress. If you have an employee who seems stressed, prioritise having the talk and book it in your calendar right away. In that way, you may in many situations contribute to preventing stress and avoiding that your employee is reported absent due to stress. Here is a brief guide on approach having the necessary talk.

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## 1. SCHEDULE A MEETING WITH THE EMPLOYEE WHEN YOU NOTICE THE FIRST SYMPTOMS OF STRESS

Nothing is gained by waiting, and it may be decisive that you have the talk as early on as possible, as it will best enable your employee to regain control and thrive again.

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## 2. PREPARE BEFORE HAVING THE TALK

People suffering from stress are just as different as everybody else, and no two cases of stress are identical. Stress is often due to a combination of several factors. You should therefore be accommodating and ask questions in a professional and probing manner. More than one talk may be necessary for you to arrive at a common understanding of the situation and be ready to do something about it.

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### 3. STRUCTURING THE TALK

See here how you can structure the talk.

#### 1. Why have you scheduled the meeting?

Share your observations with the employee. Stick to factual observations and ask if the employee has experienced any change her-/himself.

#### 2. Ask questions about the employee's well-being

How are you? Does your work energise you? And how is collaboration your teamwork with your colleagues? It is important that you constantly relate to the way the employee experiences the situation.

#### 3. Talk about possibilities

What could make your working day better? What can I do to make you feel better? What can you do yourself - and could your tasks be prioritised differently?

#### 4. If you have a common understanding, make agreements

What should we agree? Who does what and when? Agree on a follow-up meeting in a week's time - and make a note of all scheduled meetings and send it to the employee so you both have something in writing.

#### If you do not have a common understanding

... tell the employee that you will schedule a new meeting to continue the dialogue. And if you reach a dead end, try to get assistance from a third person to improve the dialogue - for instance an employee from the HR department or a psychologist.

### 4. FOLLOW UP AFTER YOUR TALK

Now, it will be a good idea to prioritise your employee's tasks – either for or together with the employee. Make sure to get a clear idea of the most important tasks and eliminate things of less importance for a period of time. Maybe another colleague can take over important tasks with short deadlines? And remember to follow up on both scheduled meetings and the employee's well-being again and again over the coming weeks and months.

#### A good tip – if you find it difficult

If you find it a little difficult to have the talk, remember that an awkward talk is better than no talk. The most important thing is that you do it, so the employee can begin to gradually recover and eventually regain his/her well-being.



**Has your employee come under stress?**  
Contact us on + 45 45 13 17 17.  
We will take care of your employee.