

Decide whether to share

A tool for employees

Going through a tough time?
Figure out whether or not to
talk with your manager about it.

Stuff happens. Whether you're going through a breakup, having health issues, or dealing with other tough situations, personal stress doesn't necessarily go away when you're at work.

It's not always easy to know if you should tell your manager what's going on in your life. This worksheet can help you decide.



THE IMPACT ON YOUR WORK

Your personal situation might impact your work, coworkers and customers. Or it might not.

1. Is the issue affecting my work?

Eg. not my usual quality, speed, energy, focus.



Yes

It might be a good idea to chat to your manager so they can understand why your performance is changing. They might be able to help you and the business while you're going through a tough time.



Don't know

Sometimes it's hard to clearly see the impact your personal issues are having. You could chat to your manager, a friend or a coworker to find out.



No

You don't have to share what's going on for you. But you might want to. It could help keep your performance high.



Yes

By law, you must tell your manager. But you don't have to go into all the details.



Don't know

It's important that you're not putting yourself or others at harm. Talk to your manager or a coworker just in case. You don't have to go into all the details.



No

You don't have to tell your manager. But you might want to. It can help keep everyone healthy and safe.

WHAT YOU MIGHT NEED

It can be helpful to make changes at work when you're going through a hard time. Many workplaces offer specific wellbeing support too.

3. Do I need/want support or changes at work?

Eg. time off, flexible working arrangements, reduced workload or responsibilities, someone to check my output, mentoring.



It's best to raise this with your manager. They can make changes that help you and work for the business. They have a better view of the options and impacts across the team.



Chat to your manager, a friend or a coworker. Even if you don't need changes, they might help you get through and back to your best.



You don't have to tell your manager. But you might want to. It could help relieve some pressure.

4. Do I need/want to talk to someone outside work?

Eg. a counsellor, life coach, lawyer, someone with specialist skills to help with your personal situation.



Your manager might be able to connect you with someone, access a pre-paid service, or change your work pattern to make this possible. You don't have to talk to your manager, but it could help a lot.



You might want to explore options with your manager, a friend or a coworker.



You don't have to share what's going on for you. But you might want to. You could learn about options in case you change your mind.

FEELING ABLE TO SHARE

Talking with your manager can help you get the support you need to cope well. But whether you feel comfortable sharing depends on your work situation and relationships.

5. Do I think my manager can give me what I need, or help me figure out something that works for us both?

Eg. changes to my work pattern, access to an employee assistance programme, time off.



Yes

It's great to share and figure out the right solution together. Use the 'Identify what might help' tool.



Don't know

Maybe chat to your manager to find out. A friend or coworker might also have some ideas.



No

You don't have to share. But you might want to. They have a better view of what would help you and the business.

6. Do I trust my manager to keep it confidential and treat me fairly?

Eg. not tell other people my personal stuff, not take me off work I love and am capable of.



Yes

Great. You can be comfortable sharing what's happening with your manager. This can help you and the business.



Don't know

You might decide not to tell your manager more than you have to, or more than you want others to know. Talk to someone about what you're going through, and find other resources to help.



No

You might decide not to tell your manager more than you have to, or more than you want others to know. Talk to someone about what you're going through, and find other resources to help.

TO SHARE? OR NOT?

Sometimes you have to tell your manager what's going on for you. Sometimes you don't have to, but it's good to. Tick the boxes that apply to your situation, and weigh up your decision.

Important to share if

- Your situation puts yourself or others at risk.
- Your health is getting worse.
- You can't perform your job to the necessary standard.

Employers and employees have a responsibility to look out for each other. If the situation is harming you, others or the business, it's important to tell your manager. You don't have to go into all the details.

Good to share if

- Your manager can help reduce your pressure.
- It helps your manager and the business while you're under strain.
- You feel confident your manager will look out for your interests and respect your privacy, eg won't share your personal information with others.

Sharing can help you get the support and changes you need. It also lets your manager know you aren't at your best, so they will be less likely to add pressure or judge your work too harshly. You don't have to go into all the details.

Share carefully if

- You feel unsafe talking about personal stress with your manager.

Get support in other ways, eg talk to a colleague, family member, union rep or professional.

If you decide to share:

- You don't have to go into all the details.
- Use the other 'Sharing personal challenges at work' resources to decide what to share, and how to share it. This will set you up for the best possible outcome.
- It's a good idea to agree what information you feel comfortable for other people to know. It can help you, the business, and your coworkers to know a little of what's going on.

Either way, consider getting support in other ways, too, eg talk to a colleague, family member or professional.

Find five simple ways to boost your wellbeing

<https://mentalhealth.org.nz/resources/resource/personal-wellbeing-plan>

If you've decided to share, the next step is to figure out how much you want to share with your manager. Find out more here:

www.business.govt.nz/problem-sharing-and-solving