

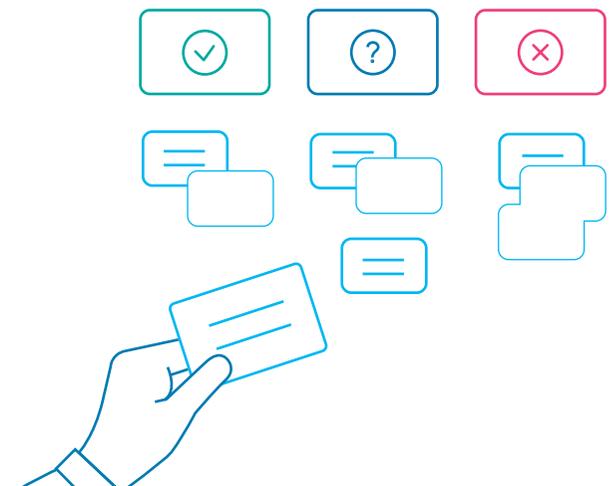
# Identify what might help

A tool for employees to use alone or with their manager

Going through a tough time?  
Figure out what support might help.

Use these cards to determine what changes are helpful to you and possible for your employer. Follow these steps:

1. Put the header cards out, ready to make piles.
2. Sort the other cards in piles, to identify what will help the employee.
3. Discuss those cards with the employer, to see which are possible.
4. Discuss ways to tweak the cards to make them helpful and possible.
5. Make a plan to confirm arrangements.
6. Confirm arrangements. Be clear and specific about expectations both ways.
7. Make a plan to check how things are going. This [Mental Health Foundation problem-solving planner](#) might help.



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## Tips for workers

- Your mental wellbeing is important. Don't be afraid to ask for things that you know will help you thrive.
- Before talking to your manager about what might help, it's good to share a bit about what's going on for you. Use the 'Decide what to share' resource.
- Be open to what might help you. Let the cards spark other ideas of what might help.
- Don't assume what might be possible at your work. Employers usually have a good handle on what the business can accommodate.
- Don't default to time off work. The more people stay engaged at work, the better their long-term wellbeing.
- If you think flexible working arrangements might help, you can make a formal application to your employer. That sparks a specific process and rules. Find out more at [www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/productive-workplaces/flexible-work](http://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/productive-workplaces/flexible-work)
- Try and find something that works for you and your employer. It might be a different solution than you first imagine. Keep communication open and regularly review arrangements and get all agreements in writing.
- Find other help at <https://www.worksafe.govt.nz/topic-and-industry/work-related-health/mental-health/information-for-workers-where-to-get-help/>

## Tips for managers

- It's hard to see people in distress, but many effective responses don't need extreme intervention. Sometimes small actions make a big difference.
- Don't assume what someone might need, or what might help them the most. It's always best to ask. People are usually experts in their own mental health. Some good questions to ask include: What can we change to make life easier? What might be a good first step? What has helped in the past? Often people learn a lot about themselves and others through their challenges and experience.
- Organisations that support good mental wellbeing generally have happier people, a more positive workplace and, ultimately, a healthier business. Learn more at [www.business.govt.nz/news/why-workplace-wellbeing-is-important/](http://www.business.govt.nz/news/why-workplace-wellbeing-is-important/)
- Don't take the cards literally. Let them spark other ideas of what might help and what might be possible.
- Don't default to time off work. The more people stay engaged at work, the better their long-term wellbeing.
- If workers think flexible working arrangements might help, they can make a formal application to their employer. You'll need to follow a specific process and rules. Find out more at [www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/productive-workplaces/flexible-work/](http://www.employment.govt.nz/workplace-policies/productive-workplaces/flexible-work/)
- Try and find something that works for you and your worker. Keep communication open and regularly review arrangements and put all agreements in writing.
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### Really helpful for the employee



### Might be helpful for the employee



### Not helpful for the employee

#### Reduced hours



Eg. scheduled or as needed, for a short time or ongoing.

*If the work has caused you harm and you need reduced hours to recover, employers need to enable that. If something outside work means you need reduced hours, employers can consider it. If it is possible for the business, they should enable it. You might like to formally apply for reduced hours as part of flexible working arrangements.*

#### Talking to a counsellor



Eg. paid for by the employer, confidential, during work time or outside.

*If the need for counselling is connected to your work, employers may need to pay for it and make time available during work hours. Eg. someone working in family violence services might benefit from counselling to process their client interactions. If the need for counselling is not related to your work, they don't have to.*

#### Reduced performance expectations



Eg. removing targets, lowering quality standards, for a short time or ongoing.

*If a work issue or situation means you can't perform fully, you might need reduced output for a period of time. Make a plan to return to work. If something outside of work is impacting your ability to perform, employers don't have to reduce their expectations of you. But they might do anyway.*

#### Working from home



Eg. for a short time or ongoing, regularly or as needed, set up or make do.

*Employers do not have to allow work from home if the place of work impacts the ability to perform the role. If you want to work from home regularly, you might like to formally apply as part of flexible working arrangements. Employers and employees should consider aspects related to employment law, health and safety, as well as costs, privacy and data security issues.*

#### Addressing issues with another worker



Eg. if lack of skills or certain behaviours cause mental distress.

*The manager can talk to the other person. They might need training, discipline measures, or other things. This might require a formal process, and the ability to talk about your distress. Your manager might also need to know specific examples of when the other worker caused you distress.*

#### Time off



Eg. every now and then, to go to appointments, extended leave, paid or unpaid.

*Employees can choose to use sick leave or annual leave. Employers might grant leave without pay, special paid leave, or annual leave in advance. Remember, working can help. Find out more about leave at [www.business.govt.nz/hiring-and-managing/handling-holidays-and-leave/introduction-to-holidays-and-leave](http://www.business.govt.nz/hiring-and-managing/handling-holidays-and-leave/introduction-to-holidays-and-leave)*



### Telling the team

Eg. some or all of what's going on, about changes, support being given, timeframes.

*Telling your team about what's going on for you can be really empowering. It can help you, them, and the business. Employers must not share personal details unless the employee gives permission.*



### Different work duties or responsibilities

Eg. different tasks, reduced load, more familiar work, for a short time or ongoing.

*Sometimes work that is too hard or too easy adds to your mental distress. Employers don't have to change your work duties or responsibilities, but they might be happy to.*



### More training, coaching, guidance

Eg. performance reviews, courses, mentors, paid for, in work time.

*When we don't have the skills to do our work, it can make us feel stressed, overwhelmed and more. If your work is causing stress, you might benefit from more training, coaching or guidance. Employers must help workers to gain the skills they need to do their job. You might feel more confident if someone checks your work and gives you feedback.*



### Different work hours

Eg. changing shifts, new work pattern, for a short time or ongoing.

*Different work hours might help you manage personal responsibilities, work at times that suit your productivity cycle, or go to important appointments. If it is possible for the business, they should enable it. You might like to formally apply for different work hours as part of flexible working arrangements.*



### Additional staff

Eg. to help with workload or skill, for a short time or ongoing.

*If you're going through a tough time, you might not be able to work as productively. Your manager might be able to get someone in to help. If the workload and pressure is causing your mental distress, your manager can alter your workload.*



### More clarity about job expectations

Eg. the minimum effort and standard, what good looks like, processes.

*Employers must be clear about minimum standards, what good looks like, and processes required. It can be stressful not knowing what's expected of you. Finding out might help reduce your mental distress. If you're going through a tough time, you might be able to lower your usual standard while you get through — without underperforming.*



### More hours

Eg. more time to complete tasks, more time away from home.

*Employers have to give you enough time to complete assigned tasks, they don't have to give you more than that. But having more time might increase the standard of your work, and relieve your pressure. Being at work — being productive, contributing, being social, earning more money, and being in a nice environment — might help with what you're going through.*



### Different set-up at work

Eg. location of desk, tools available.

*If aspects of your work set-up are causing you harm, your employer must help you make reasonable changes.*



### Extra quality assurance processes

Eg. peer reviews, additional check-ins.

*If a personal situation is impacting your work, or if your work is a little outside your comfort zone, it might help to have someone stay closer to your work outputs. They could review your work along the way or before you mark it complete. You might feel more confident if someone checks your work and gives you feedback.*