

Decide what to share

A tool for employees

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.

Telling your manager what's going on can help them, your teammates, and you. You don't have to tell them all the details. This worksheet helps you figure out what to share.



Know why you're sharing

Getting clear on why you are telling your manager will help you determine what to say and ask for. There might be more than one reason to share.

- I need some temporary changes at work.
- I want to explain why I'm not performing at my best.
- I think I'm coping okay, but want them to know just in case.
- Something at work is causing my distress.
- My situation increases risk for the team.
- _____
- _____

TELL YOUR MANAGER

There's something going on for you

If you don't want to say much, just say, "there's something going on for me".

If you are happy to say more, tell them what is going on for you. Give them context without giving them all the details.

For example:

- I'm dealing with a family issue.
- I have depression and am working with my doctor to get better.
- I'm stressed about work deadlines.
- My dog died.
- I found a lump and need to have some hospital tests.

Saying a bit more helps your manager understand your situation better, and makes it easier for them to support you in the right way. It's good to give more detail when:

- You need some changes at work.
- Work is causing you distress.
- Your performance is not up to standard.

TELL YOUR MANAGER

What the impact is on you

If you don't want to say much, you can skip this altogether.

If you are happy to say more, tell them how the situation is making you feel, or how it makes you behave.

For example:

- I'm sad and a bit mad.
- I'm finding it hard to concentrate.
- Some days I don't want to get out of bed.
- I jump when the phone rings, and don't want to miss personal calls.

Saying a bit more can help explain your behaviour at work. It's good to give more detail when:

- Your behaviour is below standard.
- Your situation is impacting your work.
- Your work is causing you stress.

TELL YOUR MANAGER

What the impact is on your work

If you don't want to say much, tell them how big an impact this is having on your work, and in what ways.

For example:

- I don't think this is impacting my work, but I'm not as social as usual.
- The quality of my work isn't as good as usual.
- I'm not working very quickly.
- I don't feel confident to speak up.
- I don't work regular hours. I work when I feel up to it. But I get it all done.
- If I get a personal call, I want to step out of work to take it.

If you are happy to say more, give them some specific examples. This helps your manager understand and support you better.

For example:

- I said no to overtime yesterday, when usually I'd say yes.
- It is going to take me longer to write the report you asked for.
- I jump when the phone rings, and don't want to miss personal calls.

It's good to give more detail when:

- Your behaviour is below standard.
- Your work is not your usual standard.
- Changing things at work will help your health.

TELL YOUR MANAGER

Who they can tell, what they can tell

Be clear with your manager about what they can tell other people, and who they can tell.

Managers can't share your personal information without your permission, except under specific circumstances laid out in the Privacy Act 2020. Sometimes it can help you, them and other people to know what's going on.

For example:

- This is strictly between us.
- I don't mind if people know I'm going through a health issue, but I don't want them to know all the details. If they ask questions, just say I'm not sharing more than that.
- I don't want anyone else to know yet.
- I only want the people in my team to know. I'll tell them. Please don't discuss it with them or anyone else.
- I'm open about my mental illness. It's part of life for many of us.

If you want to, get more specific about exactly who to tell what.

Find out more about the Privacy Act 2020 at privacy.org.nz.

TELL YOUR MANAGER

What you need from them

If you know what you need, tell them. Managers need to support you if they can. If you don't need anything, tell them that.

For example:

- I can't do any overtime for the next few weeks.
- I need some time off to visit doctors and lawyers.
- I'd like to reduce my load at work.
- I don't need you to do anything, I just wanted you to know.

Use the 'Identify what might help' tool to figure out what you need.

Find five simple ways to boost your wellbeing

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

If you're clear on how much you want to share with your manager, you might want to consider what may help, or how best to go about sharing.

Find out more here:

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