

Manager fact sheet:

Responding to Absence and Disengagement at Work



Repeated absence, reduced engagement or employees attending work while not functioning at their best can indicate underlying wellbeing, workload or workplace issues.

As a manager, your role is to respond early, explore concerns respectfully and balance support for the employee with operational needs.

A timely conversation can help identify what may be contributing, clarify expectations and connect the employee with appropriate support.

Responding to Absence and Disengagement

Below are some strategies you can use to support employees. You can also access the [Manager Assistance Program](#) through PeopleSense by Altius at any stage for confidential guidance from a qualified psychologist. Manager Assistance can help you prepare for conversations, respond appropriately to employee concerns, consider workplace factors that may be contributing to disengagement and identify practical next steps to support both wellbeing and performance.

1. Check in early

If you notice changes in an employee's behaviour, wellbeing or performance, arrange a private and supportive conversation. Manager Assistance can help you plan how to approach this conversation in a respectful and constructive way.

2. Listen without judgement

Focus on understanding what the employee is experiencing rather than trying to solve everything immediately. A Manager Assistance session can help you consider what to ask, how to respond and when further support may be appropriate.

3. Clarify priorities

Help the employee identify what is most important, what can wait and where support may be available. Manager Assistance can help you think through workload, role expectations and practical adjustments that may support the employee while also meeting operational needs.

4. Stay connected

Disengagement often develops over time. Regular check-ins can help employees feel supported and identify issues before they escalate. Manager Assistance can help you plan an appropriate follow-up approach and manage ongoing conversations with care and consistency.

5. Encourage professional support

Where appropriate, remind the employee that confidential EAP support is available through PeopleSense by Altius. Manager Assistance can also help you understand how to raise this option sensitively and support the employee while maintaining appropriate boundaries.

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