The Individual Risk Assessment

Checklist

Introduction

Aims: to discuss the individual's work, allow them the opportunity to explain any problems they are experiencing.

- Depending on the individual concerned and the situation, you may explain the organisation's approach to employee care and describe the purpose of the session.
- Assure the employee that personal information will be confidential.
- The approach you use with the individual will depend on whether they have recognised 'stress in themselves'. Either way, don't say – are you stressed? Do not ask 'what is wrong with you then?' 'Are you stressed or something' or 'you seem depressed'.
- Ask open questions about what is happening and how they are feeling. Examples:
    - What is your work situation like at the moment?
    - Have there been any changes in your work recently?
    - Why don't you tell me know you are feeling?
    - I was wondering how you were doing? Rather than... I can see you are feeling very low?
    - How are you doing at the moment?
    - Are there are problems outside work that they might like to talk about/ and or it would be helpful for me to know about? (However, you should not put pressure on the individual to reveal external problems).
- If there is a problem in performance, ask open non-judgemental questions such as 'I've noticed that you have sometimes been arriving late recently and wondered if there was a problem?'.
- Reassure them it's ok to be upset and that you are listening – listening helps gain insight into a problem and solutions. Be patient, just sitting quietly with someone is offering support. Wait for an answer and listen to it before asking the next.
- State positively that all help, assistance and support will be offered and the discussion will continue at their own pace.
- Keep language neutral.
- Give person time to answer, do not grill them, do not push for answers,

You may want to run the introduction as a stand-alone session, arranging another meeting to run the remaining stages.

<u>Problem assessment</u>

Aims: use the MS (Management Standards) framework to explore the problems the individual is experiencing, at work and, if appropriate, at home. Identify when the problems occur and when they don't, as well as their impact.

- Determine how long the individual concerned has felt this way. Is it an ongoing issue or something that an immediate action could put right?
- Let them share as much or as little as they want to – whatever they are comfortable sharing. Take your steer from them. Ask questions but tell them that they don't have to answer any questions that make them feel uncomfortable. Make it clear that you don't blame them for their problems.

Below are some questions you might ask to help you complete the Individual Risk Assessment log. This is **not** a definitive list of questions that should be asked of all individuals suffering from work related stress. Rather, this should be used as a guide to help you frame your discussion with the employee. The questions you used will depend on the individual and situation. Therefore, your questions should be tailored accordingly.

- <u>Demands</u>
  - What is your workload like at the moment? Do you think it is excessive?
  - Are you able to meet all your deadlines?
  - How are the demands of your job at the moment?
  - How do you find your working environment?
- <u>Control</u>
  - Can you decide how to complete your work?
  - Are you allowed to make decisions with regard to your work?
- <u>Support</u>
  - How do you get on with your colleagues?
  - Do you feel supported by your manager/organisation?
  - What is communication like between you and your manager/colleagues?
  - Do you feel you get enough/practical emotional support?
- <u>Relationships</u>
  - How are working relationships between colleagues?
- <u>Role</u>
  - Are you clear about your job role and what is required of you?
  - Do you feel you are being pulled in different directions?

- <u>Change</u>
  - Are changes in the organisation/team communicated to you efficiently?
  - Are you worried about anything going on within the organisation/team?

Wishes and goals

Aims: to help the employee define what they would like to happen, making sure that their outcome is specific, stated in positive language, within their own control measurable, achievable, future-orientated, and worthwhile.

- Ask questions such as 'Is there anything we can do to help?'
- Establish precisely what they wish colleagues to be told and who will say what.

Action planning

Aims: to help the employee to develop strategies, formulate plans, set realistic targets, identify available resources/support, build in rewards/recognition (personal treats, non-financial recognition), and establish timescales. It should have clear milestones, which should take the form of regular review meetings between the LM and the individual. Complete the action plan in the Individual Risk Assessment document.

- Ask if they are aware of any support that the organisation may provide such as counselling, Employee Assistance Programme (EAP), heath checks.
- Ask if they are aware of any possible sources of support as: relationship, bereavement counselling, drugs/alcohol services/advice, legal or financial advice.
- Identify if the individual has any ideas about any adjustments to their work that may be helpful. These could be short or long term.
- 'I believe it will be possible to deal with this situation quite easy'.

Review

Aim: to review the progress made to date.

- Ensure that you refer back to the individual risk assessment risk log.

Closing the sessions

Aim: to close the session appropriately and allow yourself recovery time.

- Agree what will happen next and what action could be taken.
- Set up a further meeting.
- Record all actions and conversations.

You may want to have a closing conversation at the end of each stage, depending on the individual concerned.

Sources

- SHiFT (2007). Line Manager's Resource: a practical guide to managing and supporting people with mental health problems in the workplace
- Shaw Trust