

PTSD Management in the Workplace

By understanding the varying levels of PTSD manifestations and responding appropriately, you can offer meaningful support to your coworkers, contributing to a safer, more inclusive workplace environment.

Remember, the goal is to approach each situation with empathy, understanding, and a readiness to assist, while also ensuring your own well-being.

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Initial Signs: Approach with Awareness and Sensitivity

1. Dissociation: Seeming distant or disconnected.

Offer a calm presence. Engage in light conversation or suggest taking a break together.

2. Difficulty Concentrating: Struggling to focus on tasks.

Offer to help organize tasks. Create or suggest a quieter work environment.

3. Avoidance: Withdrawing from social interactions/activities.

Gently include them in group activities but respect their need for personal space.

Intermediate Signs: Empathetic Engagement and Support

4. Emotional Withdrawal: Less emotional engagement or response

Engage in friendly, casual conversations. Show empathy and patience.

5. Passive Aggression: Exhibiting indirect hostility.

Address their feelings in a non-confrontational manner. Encourage open communication.

6. Frequent Absences: Regular lateness or not showing up.

Demonstrate understanding. Discuss flexible work arrangements if possible.

Advanced Signs: Active Support and Safety

7. Self-Medication: Alcohol misuse or reliance on substances.
Discuss concerns privately and compassionately. Suggest professional help and resources.

8. Heightened Reactions: Overreaction/intense emotional response
Maintain calm during outbursts. Address the behavior later in a neutral environment.

9. Anger and Aggression: Signs of verbal or physical aggression.
Prioritize safety for all involved. Avoid direct confrontation. Inform HR for further action.

Critical Signs: Immediate Intervention and Care

10. Self-Harm: Indications of self-injurious behavior.
Approach with utmost sensitivity. Encourage seeking professional help discreetly.

11. Violence Against Others: Any threats or acts of violence.
Ensure immediate safety. Contact appropriate authorities or HR. Offer support in seeking professional intervention.

12. Suicidality: Expressions of suicidal thoughts or intentions.
Treat this as an emergency. Contact crisis services or guide them to immediate professional help.

General Principles of Support

- Active Listening: Be present and attentive. Sometimes, just being heard can provide immense relief.

- Confidentiality: Always respect their privacy and confidentiality.

- Resource Awareness: Familiarize yourself with available workplace resources and mental health support options.

- Creating a Supportive Environment: Foster an inclusive, understanding workplace culture. Lead by example in promoting mental health awareness and support.

