

Wellbeing Conversation Framework

A structured wellbeing conversation helps managers and employees talk openly about health, workload, and balance. This framework guides supportive, constructive discussions that build trust, prevent burnout, and promote long-term engagement.

1. Purpose of This Tool

- ☐ Provide a structured approach for wellbeing conversations.
- ☐ Build trust between managers and employees through open dialogue.
- ☐ Identify early signs of stress or imbalance.
- ☐ Encourage practical actions that improve wellbeing and performance.
- ☐ Create a culture of empathy, care, and accountability.

Tip: The goal of a wellbeing conversation is not to fix everything, but to listen, understand, and support.

2. Preparing for the Conversation

Preparation Step	Description
Schedule dedicated time	Allow at least 30–45 minutes with no interruptions.
Choose a comfortable setting	Neutral, private, and relaxed environment.
Review recent performance and workload	Be ready with examples of progress and challenges.
Approach with empathy	Keep the tone supportive, not evaluative.
Prepare to listen	The focus is on understanding the employee's experience.

- ☐ Preparation ensures the discussion feels safe and genuine.

Tip: Start with care, not with a checklist.

3. Conversation Structure

The conversation follows five natural phases:

1. **Opening** – Set context and tone.
2. **Exploration** – Discuss wellbeing, workload, and stress factors.
3. **Understanding** – Identify root causes and patterns.
4. **Support** – Co-create practical solutions.
5. **Follow-Up** – Agree actions and next check-in.

Tip: Flexibility is key - follow the flow of the discussion rather than forcing the order.

4. Opening the Conversation

Objective	Example Phrases
Set a positive tone	“Thanks for taking time to talk - I wanted to check in on how things are going for you.”
Build trust	“This isn’t about performance, it’s about how you’re doing and what support might help.”
Encourage openness	“There’s no pressure to share anything personal - only what you’re comfortable discussing.”

☐ Begin by creating psychological safety.

Tip: People open up when they feel heard, not judged.

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5. Exploration Questions

Focus Area	Example Questions
Workload	“How are you managing your workload at the moment?” / “Are there any recurring pressures or challenges?”
Energy & Motivation	“How energised do you feel during your day?” / “Are there particular tasks that drain or boost your motivation?”
Stress & Balance	“What tends to create stress for you?” / “How easy is it for you to switch off after work?”
Support & Relationships	“Do you feel supported by the team and leadership?” / “Is there anything we could do differently to help?”
Health & Wellbeing Habits	“How are you looking after yourself outside work?” / “What helps you stay at your best?”

☐ Use open questions to invite reflection and dialogue.

Tip: Silence can be powerful - give space for thoughtful answers.

6. Understanding and Reflection

Prompt	Example Follow-Up
Clarify key themes	“It sounds like workload and interruptions are the biggest sources of pressure - is that right?”
Explore underlying causes	“What makes that situation particularly challenging?”
Reflect understanding	“It seems you’ve been doing a lot to stay on top of things - that sounds draining.”

☐ Focus on understanding the “why” behind stressors, not just the “what.”

Tip: Empathy turns a conversation into a connection.

7. Support and Solutions

Category	Example Actions
Workload Adjustment	Reassign or prioritise tasks, clarify expectations, extend deadlines.
Flexibility	Offer flexible working hours or hybrid options where possible.
Development	Provide training or coaching to build confidence and skills.
Wellbeing Resources	Connect with HR, counselling, or employee support services.
Team Collaboration	Encourage shared problem-solving or buddy systems.

☐ Agree on realistic, actionable steps that will make a genuine difference.

Tip: Commit to specific actions - general reassurance is not enough.

8. Follow-Up and Accountability

Action Owner Target Date Progress Review

☐ Schedule a follow-up within 2–4 weeks to review progress and adjust support.

Tip: Consistent follow-up reinforces trust and accountability.

9. Manager Reflection

Question	Reflection
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What went well in the conversation?	
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What could I improve next time?	
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Did I listen more than I spoke?	
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Did the employee feel heard and supported?	
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What actions will I take as a result?	
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☐ Reflect after each discussion to build your skill and confidence.

Tip: Every conversation strengthens your ability to lead with empathy and awareness.

10. Conversation Checklist

- ☐ Schedule regular wellbeing check-ins (not only when problems arise).
- ☐ Listen actively - allow pauses and avoid interrupting.
- ☐ Keep discussions confidential unless risk or safety is involved.
- ☐ Focus on action and follow-up, not just listening.
- ☐ Model self-care by sharing your own healthy practices.

Tip: Leaders who normalise wellbeing conversations build stronger, more resilient teams.

How to Use This Framework

Use this framework quarterly or whenever signs of stress, fatigue, or disengagement appear. Managers can adapt it to one-to-one meetings or informal check-ins. Combine it with the Workplace Stress Assessment and Resilience Building Plan to strengthen wellbeing across the organisation.

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