Tip sheet

Looking out for each other during COVID-19

Before COVID-19, we were used to spending a lot of time with our teammates – either at site, out in the field, socialising over lunch and back at camp, or in the office during meetings and informal gatherings. It was easier to get a sense of their moods and notice subtle changes in their behaviour if they weren’t having a great day.

Social distancing measures in place can make checking in with our colleagues a little trickier now, but it’s really important to keep looking out for each other, and watch out for signs when someone isn’t ok.

When to consider starting a conversation?

Some signs to look out for in your colleagues (either in person or on video conference/telephone) include:

- Sounding flat during one-to-one conversations or meetings.
- Physical changes such as headaches, sleep problems or fatigue, digestive problems and/or weight changes.
- Behaviour changes such as over-reacting, emotionally charged, more distracted, becoming withdrawn, increased use of alcohol, tobacco etc.
- Hidden changes such as feeling anxious or angry, lowered self-confidence, lowered mood, lowered energy, assuming the worst and doubting your own ability.

How to start a conversation

- Approach the conversation with care, and be open and empathetic.
- Before starting a conversation, think about:
  - Picking a place that is relatively private and informal to have the conversation – either face to face, or on the telephone.
  - If possible, think about walking and talking or sitting down for a drink or break. The same principle applies to those who may not be able to have a face-to-face conversation.
  - Give yourself enough time to talk and be in the right headspace.
  - Find out what type of support options might be available.

Listening and encouraging action

- Make sure you listen to what they have to say without judgement.
- Take what they are saying seriously and help them open up by asking questions about how they are.
- Remember you don’t need to resolve the issue and don’t feel as though you need to have all the answers.
- It’s unhelpful to tell them things like “we all get stressed” or “I can imagine how you feel”.
Encourage them to take action by:

- Speaking with a family member or trusted friend.
- Making an appointment with their doctor.
- Contacting the Employee Assistance Program if they would like in depth assistance or support.
- Pointing them towards other support tools available on the wellbeing pages of bhp.com (English | Spanish).

Follow up

- Follow up a few days after you’ve had the conversation to see how they are going. They may need your support again.