

Supporting information

Support a colleague

There isn't "the answer" to each of the cards. Players' experience, culture at work, management style and personal characteristics will all have a bearing on how they would respond.

Here is an idea or two for each card to provoke thought and reflection.



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<p><u>1. Huff and puff</u></p> <p>You have worked with Andi for eight years. He's changed. You notice he huffs and puffs a lot now. He blames others for everything. His most common comment has become "What do you expect. They are idiots."</p> <p>As his colleague, what might you do?</p>	<p>Andi has changed behaviour. That's a strong indicator that something is up. We read frustration and blaming others. Andi looks like he needs help to regain control and responsibility over whatever is the root cause.</p> <p>Options include:</p> <p>Starting a conversation with something like:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "I've noticed that you huff and puff more than you used to. And it's not like you to call people idiots. What's up?" <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • "There is something going on with you just now and I want to help you. Talk to me."
<p><u>8. Given up?</u></p> <p>Ishani has said openly she will never apply for a team leader role again. (She has not been appointed twice in three months). You know she has the potential and as a senior colleague, you want to help and support her.</p> <p>What could you suggest to her?</p>	<p>Ishani is lashing out. Saying openly, "I'll never apply again" we could infer that she is communicating from her inner child.</p> <p>A couple of options here are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be a child too, at first, with something like, "I know it's terrible isn't it what's happened to you." before engaging her adult brain with something like, "How about you find out as much feedback as you can from your recent applications and then I'm happy to help you plan what to do so that you increase your chances of promotion next time. How does that sound?" <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Match the child be communicating as a critical parent with, "Behaving like that certainly will

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	<p>ensure you never get promoted. You've got potential but right now you're sabotaging yourself. Go and get some air and when you're ready to talk about what to do constructively I'm always here for you."</p>
<p><u>3. Capitalising on strengths</u></p> <p>Greig has a resilience capability that should make him a valuable asset to your team.</p> <p>As his manager, how can you make the most of him without patronising others or making Greig seem like your favourite?</p>	<p>There are people with a high natural resilience capability. It would be silly not to make use of them.</p> <p>Greig's manager needs to tread carefully or risk the negative outcomes mentioned on the card.</p> <p>A couple of suggestions could be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • At a regular meeting - so as not to make it special - review a situation where Greig has shown resilience. Ask Greig (let him know beforehand) to review what happened and move on to asking him about what he was thinking, what he was saying to himself and what he was feeling. Once done reflect back to the team the resilient actions, thoughts, self-talk and acknowledge the feelings. No need to say this is what you should do - just leave your summary for others to take on board. <p>Or</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use someone else's practical skill like dealing with difficult people as way of showcasing that sharing practice is good. Ask the person to explain what they did to manage the situation successfully. Ask the rest of the team to take an action from what they have heard. Now you can move on the Grieg. • Say you noticed that Greig was particularly resilient recently. Then follow the interview technique above before throwing it open for questions and observations. Finally ask the team to suggest what they might take away from what they have heard. Finally announce that at the next meeting you will feature a strength of another team member.
<p><u>4. Loss of faith</u></p> <p>Darren has come to you for advice. His experienced team are resisting changes. They've made comments like "We've seen it all before" and "Why should we get on</p>	<p>This looks like a change weary team. Your advice to Darren should start with him publicly acknowledging the team's comments and letting them talk further about their previous experiences. Let him know that if he doesn't get all their issues out they will remain blocks to progress.</p> <p>Next advise him to ask the team what kinds of things they as a group, and Darren as the manager, needs to do to get everyone on board.</p>

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<p>board?” Someone even said she had lost faith in the organisation because of past experiences.</p> <p>As his peer, what advice might you give?</p>	<p>Finally make sure actions get shared around. The team must also see Darren keeping his commitments and delivering his actions thereby changing their perception of him and the change.</p> <p>Darren should also make sure he delivers a quick win to show he is serious and that things will be different this time.</p>
<p><u>5. Leadership?</u></p> <p>Leeanne has a meeting with her 10 managers next week. She has concerns about the future and is worried for her own role. She wants the team to work on their resilience as part of supporting one another. She says that she however cannot afford to show any vulnerability because people look to her for leadership.</p> <p>How might you respond to her?</p>	<p>This is a common assumption that leaders cannot be vulnerable.</p> <p>Responding to Leeanne will depend on her preferences as a person. If she is more action orientated your response will be about the impact on results by her communicating incongruently. (Remembering that as animals we are excellent at picking up mixed signals between what’s said and the accompanying non-verbal communication). If she is more logical you could help her explore the illogic of ‘leaders cannot show vulnerability’.”</p> <p>Finally, help Leeanne find a form of words that are true to her but don’t undermine her credibility as a manager. For example, “I too have concerns about the future and my role in particular. I have a meeting with my manager to talk them through just as I am here to support you.” is much better than, “I know I hate it here just now and nobody tells me anything.”</p>
<p><u>6. Being there</u></p> <p>Claire’s mum passed away two months ago. Claire still talks about her as if she is still alive. At least twice a week she is in tears apparently not work related. Her colleagues now tell you they are ‘Walking on egg shells’ around her.</p> <p>This is your first people manager</p>	<p>This is a situation outside work that is showing itself inside it. This confirms that we have more than just a work life.</p> <p>As it’s your first people manager role and you are a new start in the company there could be an argument for asking someone who knows Claire better than you to talk with her. However talking with Claire about such emotionally challenging matters will change your relationship with her. It’s an opportunity, a pivotal moment in your career and as the manager of this team.</p> <p>Firstly clear your diary as you will need to give Claire as much time as she needs to talk, be silent, cry, get angry, whatever she needs.</p>

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<p>role and you only joined the company three months ago.</p> <p>What might you do next?</p>	<p>Talk with her in a place that gives you 100% privacy. (Take tissues with you).</p> <p>Ask short open questions such as:</p> <p>“I’m concerned about you. It’s two months since your Mum passed away, how are you really doing?”</p> <p>Or</p> <p>“I want to hear how you are really doing. It’s just two months since your mum passed away and I want to support you as best I can. How are you really?”</p> <p>As this is about listening your goal is for one of your questions to have Claire open up to you. You may only need to ask one question.</p> <p>You are mostly there to listen. You may need to hear about her Mum, their relationship, her passing how things are at home. Your job is to listen and acknowledge, empathise, not judge or problem solve.</p> <p>You may want to offer her to go home for the rest of the day - making sure a trusted colleague takes her and get her settled.</p> <p>Depending on the conversation you may need to sign post her to professional services, look at leave, and many other options.</p> <p>Agree to check in with Claire regularly at first and then less so as time passes.</p> <p>Update the team with facts (“You’ll know Claire is struggling after her Mum’s passing so I have sent her home with Jacqui and will be arranging support for Claire to help her.”) but not details (“You’ll know Claire is struggling after her Mum’s passing. Her family has fallen out over the house and the will. Claire’s sister has changed the locks at the family home and Claire is very upset because her Mum wouldn’t have wanted this trouble.”)</p>
<p><u>7. Say and do?</u></p> <p>Sophie says all the right things about being resilient and that she is one of life’s ‘bounce backers’. However, recent work stats are noticeably erratic, in the last few months she has been off with</p>	<p>This is a tricky situation. Sophie thinks she is resilient but the growing evidence is that they aren’t.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ways to proceed include the critical friend with “Sophie, you say that your one of life’s bounce backers but I do the team stats and yours are uneven. I’ve seen that you’ve been off sick which isn’t like you and even more unlike you is that you’ve stopped lunching with us. I’m your friend. What’s happening?” <p>Or</p>

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<p>headaches and she has stopped lunching with her long-time colleagues.</p> <p>As her long-term work friend, how might you proceed?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take an 'I' approach, making all your points from the position of 'I'. "I've known you a long time. I'm seeing things that concern me. I notice that your work stats are unpredictable. I know you've been off sick and that's unusual. And it upsets me that you don't come to lunch with us anymore. My feeling is there is something going on. Talk to me please Sophie.
<p><u>8. Look behind all the questions</u></p> <p>Susan appears anxious in a meeting that you are chairing. She seems very unsure about what's expected of her. She asks lots of questions and raises doubts about the team's future direction.</p> <p>As a senior colleague within the team, what might you do to follow up with her afterward?</p>	<p>This needs careful approach. We are dealing with 'appears' and 'seems'</p> <p>As a colleague, you are firstly checking out what you experienced. You could be wrong in your conclusions so you ought to be tentative.</p> <p>"I have a sense that all is not well in the world of Susan right now. Am I right?"</p> <p>Or</p> <p>"Susan I sensed some of what appeared to me anxiety and uncertainty in the meeting earlier. I wanted to check out that sense with you. How are you right now?"</p>
<p><u>9. Organisational conspiracy?</u></p> <p>Liv recently returned part time from maternity leave. She now misses the weekly meeting and nobody updates her. She admitted to some struggles with the workload and described her manager as 'unsupportive'. Liv feels trapped because she needs the money so can't leave.</p>	<p>Conspiracy may be too strong but there can be situations, which through no-one's explicit plan, mean someone gets left behind.</p> <p>Here we have Liv whose life has changed forever with a baby. We don't know what's behind the 'unsupportive' comment but we do know that Liv needs support.</p> <p>As a trusted colleague - seeing that Liv is dealing with a lot you could take action for her. You tell Liv that a team member will send her the actions from the team meeting and call her if there is anything that can't wait.</p> <p>You will help her review her workload and if necessary ask the team to help out.</p> <p>You will speak with the manager off the record to let her know that Liv would benefit from a one to one meeting within the coming days.</p> <p>Or</p>

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<p>As her trusted colleague, what would you advise?</p>	<p>Coach Liv to generate options and actions to the areas that are affecting her just now.</p> <p>“What might be a first step if no-one is updating you about after the team meeting?”</p> <p>“How much workload do you have, how much resource to you have and what’s the shortfall?”</p> <p>“In what specific ways is your manager unsupportive? What do you want her to be like with you? What might a next step be for you?”</p>
<p><u>10. Born and bred?</u></p> <p>Over lunch Ian comments on how he is dealing with all the ‘disasters’ at work and with his ‘traumatic’ house move, “Well resilience is something you’re either born with or you’re not.”</p> <p>What kinds of things might you say to him?</p>	<p>This card deals with assumptions about resilience. We have someone who is using exaggerators like ‘disasters’ and ‘traumatic’. From his statement we can conclude that Ian is not controlling his situations. Hence the no control comment that he isn’t resilient and can’t ever be.</p> <p>We might state facts: that the current thinking is that resilience is a capability so you can develop it, it’s trainable and people do improve it.</p> <p>We might use an analogy such as presenters or managers. Are they born not made? Can a presenter improve their capability?</p> <p>We might connect him to something in his past that disproves his own statement. For example working through redundancy, his father’s death, defeat in the final of the village tennis tournament (which he won the following year).</p> <p>Once he sees his exclamation about resilience as flawed you can ask him to take a breath before reviewing his work situation and then his house move. All the while you help him look for practical actions that put Ian back in control.</p>
<p><u>11. Inside and outside</u></p> <p>Sanjay has seemed preoccupied lately and making a lot of mistakes. When asked if he’s ok, he avoids the question and says he’s fine. As his manager, you suspect he may have challenges outside of work.</p>	<p>Sanjay’s behaviour has changed. Mistakes indicate Sanjay’s weakened concentration. “Fine” can be a brush off. As manager with accountability for the people and the team’s performance it’s your responsibility to speak with Sanjay. It’s time for a private talk.</p> <p>An opening like, “Sanjay. It’s important we talk. I want to help but telling me you’re ‘Fine’ isn’t working for me. Your mistakes have increased and I have a strong sense that you are preoccupied. I’m your friend as well as your manager and I want to help. Please talk with me about what’s happening with you just now.”</p>

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How might you proceed with Sanjay?	Once Sanjay shares what's happening you can help or signpost him to help as appropriate.
<p><u>12. Uncertain times</u></p> <p>Ryan's got a new role. Doing a good job will surely lead to promotion. His manager has confidence in him yet Ryan confides in you, "I still don't have a clue about the resourcing software. It's stressing me out." He doesn't want to keep asking for help in case it looks like he's not up to the job.</p> <p>How might you help Ryan?</p>	<p>We can't tell if this is a behaviour change or if Ryan is prone to exaggeration. How likely is it that he actually doesn't have a "clue" or that he is medically "stressed"?</p> <p>Either way, someone who the business wants to promote needs help to get to simple practical actions to help him perform.</p> <p>Helping Ryan with the reality of his situation is a good next step.</p> <p>Questions like:</p> <p>"What kinds of things can you do with the resourcing software?"</p> <p>"What kinds of 'things' do you need to be able to use it for?"</p> <p>"Put these 'things' in order of biggest impact on your performance?"</p> <p>Turning to asking for help:</p> <p>"Who are all the people you usually ask for help?"</p> <p>"How many times have you asked each person in the last week?"</p> <p>"Is what you ask them things that you could reasonably be expected to know already?"</p> <p>"Have any of them indicated that they are upset with you asking them for help?"</p> <p>And now options for action:</p> <p>"What might you do about learning these things that have the biggest impact on your performance?"</p> <p>"And what might be a reasonable thing to do in terms of getting answers to your questions when they arise?"</p> <p>And then move on to actions:</p> <p>"What specifically are your actions from this conversation?"</p> <p>"By when?"</p> <p>"What support do you need?"</p> <p>"How confident are you that they will happen?"</p>

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	And finally reflection: “Scoring out of ten (where ten is high) What is your stress level now that we have talked?” “What will you score when you have successfully implemented your actions?”

End