



# Supporting the Mental Health OF YOUR TRAINEES

## ! RECOGNISE warning signs in your trainees

There are a number of ways in which you can support your trainees and improve the workplace in order to reduce their risk of mental health issues and self-harm.

Be alert to warning signs of trainee distress, such as:

! poor concentration

! disappearing while on shift

! may lack insight

! inability to make decisions

! increasing use of alcohol or drugs

! low moods, increased anxiety or irritability

! poor attention to physical appearance

! colleagues raising concerns.

## TAKE ACTION

if you notice signs of distress or are concerned about one of your trainees:

### 1. Meet with your trainee and assess the immediate risk.

It is okay to ask about depression, suicidal thoughts, what support they have in place, if there are stressors outside training that they want to disclose, and if they have a GP or mental health professional who can help them.

### 2. Address practical issues.

If the trainee has identified training conditions that are contributing to their mental health issues, address practicalities that might alleviate some of the stress, such as rostering or taking leave. Speak with the Junior Medical Officer Manager or Director of Medical Services to find other practical responses that could help.

### 3. Do not diagnose. Seek agreement with the trainee that they will visit their GP. Be aware of the difference between being a supervisor and being a treating doctor.

Once you have screened your trainee, if you are still concerned encourage them to see their GP, who can then refer them to specialist mental health services.

### 4. Identify and encourage the trainee to access other internal and external support such as mentors, employee assistance programs or other specialist services

### 5. Agree on what support will be provided or accessed.

### 6. Document your meeting and any agreed actions.

### 7. Maintain confidentiality where possible.

### 8. Follow up with the trainee in one to two weeks, or as required.

## PROMOTE WELLBEING



Encourage trainees to have their own GP



Maintain a supportive and collegiate workplace



Respond effectively to complaints of bullying or harassment



Model appropriate behaviours



Provide mentoring programs



Provide information and training on wellbeing, mindfulness and resilience



Provide debriefings for critical incidents



## PROVIDE RELEVANT INFORMATION

Publish information about local support services that are available, including the RACP Confidential Support Program, which provides professional counselling services to Fellows and trainees, 24/7, on **1300 687 327 (Australia)** or **0800 666 367 (New Zealand)**

Have available the names and contact details of at least two GPs who are comfortable seeing doctors as patients

## SUPPORT FROM THE RACP

- complete RACP Supervisor Training Modules
- follow the Trainee in Difficulty Support Pathway
- complete eLearning Portal modules on Physician Self-Care and Wellbeing, Creating a Safe Workplace and Training Support.

## USEFUL CONTACTS



**RACP**  
Specialists. Together

RACP Confidential Support Program  
**1300 687 327 (AUS)**  
**0800 666 367 (NZ)**

Beyond Blue [beyondblue.org.au](http://beyondblue.org.au)  
This way up [thiswayup.org.au](http://thiswayup.org.au)

Find more information on support services available to health professionals on the RACP website at  
**[racp.edu.au/fellows/support-services-for-health-professionals](http://racp.edu.au/fellows/support-services-for-health-professionals)**