Supporting a colleague

Be attentive. Notice the signs that someone might be struggling –changes in behaviour, attitude, health, relationships or performance.

Be curious. Ask open questions, you'll get a better idea of how someone's feeling if you avoid questions which can be answered with 'yes' or 'no'.

Be patient. If they're not ready to talk the first time you try, that's ok. Let them know you're there for them.

Be thoughtful. Pick an appropriate time and place when you will have privacy, long enough to talk, and will both feel safe.

Be a good listener – focus on the other person, try not to interrupt or offer a solution, and don't feel you need to fill a silence.

Be a bridge to support. Know what help is available and help colleagues access the support they need.

Be a problem-sharer not a fixer. Don't feel you have to have all the answers – ask what they need and help them with this if you can.

Be direct. If you're concerned someone is having suicidal thoughts, ask them about this. You won't make things worse and you can help them stay safe for now.

Be trustworthy. Do what you'll say you'll do and respect their confidentiality unless you think they're at risk

Be kind to yourself too. Have a look at our Staying Well tips and other resources on the Self-Care section of the Lifelines website.

Find out information and support at www.lifelines.scot