How to 'HELP' your team

This is a simple but containing framework for conversations with staff in 1-1's or as a team when you have space to explore how people are, particularly if you, or they, have concerns about their wellbeing, and to make a plan to support them. It draws on your skills in, and our other resources on, communication. Real conversations are more fluid than a four-step process - the two "stages" in the middle are, in reality, interwoven - but thinking of it in this way may help to focus your interactions in a helpful framework.

<u>H</u>ELP: <u>How</u> will we think about how you are?

- Find somewhere private to talk. If you are using the telephone or an online platform, check that they have a private space from which to speak too. Check how much time you have together and arrange to keep this free from interruptions by bleep/telephone or other distractions, if at all possible.

- Open the conversation by briefly establishing what initiated this conversation. Assure them that this is their time to share how they are and to be heard and that your intention is to support them. Negotiate agenda, especially what all parties hope will come out of the meeting.

- Before you start, sensitively but clearly lay the terms of confidentiality (e.g. what would need to happen if you had concerns about safety to practice) and agree documentation.

"I wanted to talk to you about x because I'm aware that…"

"Tell me how I can help you most right now?"

"What would it be helpful for us to talk about…?" "What

were you hoping to get from this time together?"

H**E**LP: **Explore**

- Be gently curious to encourage them to safely share about the impact on their wellbeing and ability to practice safely around the issues raised by you or team member(s).

- Use advice or instruction sparingly. Avoid "if I were you"/"you should" type comments unless you feel someone's safety necessitates it. Your experience will be useful later when the situation is fully understood.

"What is the impact of x on you and those around you?"

"What do others not know that you feel that they need to about how things are right now?"

"I'm wondering how safe you feel in your practice right now …"

"Have you experienced feelings like this before? What helped or didn't help you then?"

"What are you doing to care for yourself/what works for you that we can build upon?"

HE**L**P: **Listen**

- Use your active listening skills to explore non-judgementally and without jumping to solutions yet. Saying nothing is helpful if you are focussed on your colleague's experience.

- Use empathy, reflection, checking-in and summaries to show them that they have been heard.

"Tell me if I have got this right…, I think what you are saying is…"

"Is there more? Go on…"

HEL**P**: **Plan**

- Summarise your understanding of the key points and check this fits with the person/group

- Make a plan together for addressing these issues. Support them to focus on what is in their control to manage.

- If you have a significant concern about their health, consider whether they are fit to be at work and ensure there are arrangements to access GP, Occupational Health etc. in place

- If it's a group situation and you have concerns about individuals, indicate that you'd like to follow up with them for individual support and follow the same framework on a 1-1 basis.

- Remember to set a check-in plan and keep to it (ensure this is handed over if you're off)

"I think lots of us are feeling just like you have shared right now…let's think together about what might be supportive for us to do now …"

"What might help you and the team right now? And in the future?"

"What could you do that's within your control?"

"What could I / the team/ the Trust do?"

"Would anything get in the way of this? What would help if that happened?"

"So let's just write down what we have agreed and how we will share this…"

"If the situation changes, please let me know."

(A resource pulled together by the Health and Wellbeing team at University Hospital Bristol and Weston)