

The Space We Make:

A Guide for Talking About Stress at Work

If stress is a signal, workplaces play an important role in how that signal is heard and responded to. Creating space to talk about stress means understanding what's working, what's not, and where adjustments may be needed. When we talk about stress openly, we shift the focus from individual coping to how work is designed and supported.

Reframing Stress

A helpful mindset shift:

From: "How are you managing?"

To: "What about the work might be influencing stress right now?"

This shift helps normalize conversation and supports mental health by addressing root causes.

Questions to Open the Door

- "What's been feeling most demanding lately?"
- "Are there points in your week where things tend to pile up?"
- "What helps you reset when things get busy?"
- "Is there anything in your workload that feels unclear or harder than it should be?"

Making space to talk about stress at work is an ongoing part of creating psychologically healthy and safe teams.

How to Listen Well

When someone shares:

- Listen without rushing to fix
- Reflect what you hear to confirm understanding
- Thank them for being open

The goal is understanding, not perfection.

From Conversation to Action

Sometimes the solution is adjusting the environment.

Small actions may include:

- Clarifying priorities or expectations
- Adjusting workloads during peak periods
- Reviewing deadlines, meetings, or processes
- Following up to share what you heard and what may change

Even when change isn't immediate, transparency builds trust.



**Opening
Minds**

MENTAL HEALTH
COMMISSION
OF CANADA

If You Are in Distress

If you are in distress or supporting someone in distress, call or text 9-8-8 at anytime. If it is an emergency, call 9-1-1 or go to your local emergency department.