

# A Guide for Managing Employees Reporting Thoughts of Self-Harm

People management can involve challenging scenarios and the COVID pandemic is significantly compounding these challenges. Managers are encouraged to seek advice when dealing with challenging personalities, behaviours or employees who may be dealing with mental health issues. What do you do if an employee wants to self-harm?

**Please call our client services team to organise a Manager Assist consultation on: 1300 687 327**

## A GUIDE FOR MANAGING EMPLOYEES REPORTING THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM

Alongside other suicide awareness/prevention programmes and HR policies, the following guide is offered to assist managers in responding to employees who indicate risk of harm to self by partnering with health professionals who are trained to deal with people who have mental health issues and are able to assess and respond appropriately to risk.

- If you're a manager, an employee could present as being at risk of self-harm via one of two ways:
- The individual discloses to you directly that they are struggling with thoughts of self-harm.
- You're informed through a third party that an individual has disclosed risk.
- Once risk is disclosed the primary concern becomes the employee's physical safety. Discussion around thoughts of self-harm **DOES NOT INCREASE RISK.**

### Scenario one:

If the employee says that they are not at risk now but are having thoughts of suicide or are distressed and have had suicidal thoughts in the past, then:

Indicate that you are very concerned for their wellbeing and that, as a duty of care, you need to support them to access professional support.

### Actions:

- Encourage your employee to contact the Converge EAP service or request consent from the employee to call Converge on their behalf. Once on the phone, ask for an urgent EAP telephone consult to be provided for the employee (be sure to advise Converge that you are concerned about an employee's safety and would like a telephone consult ASAP). Please provide your contact details as well. CVI Client Services **1300 687 327**

### OR

- If this conversation occurs after hours, assist the employee to call a crisis line (see contacts below).

### OR

- Request that you speak with their next of kin or someone who may be physically present with them. If this is possible, guide the next of kin to physically accompany them to their GP or phone their GP for an immediate telehealth session.



If they are alone, stay on the call with the employee while either you or they make the call to EAP (the employee may still need support, even if they've given consent for you to make the call on their behalf). Follow up a week later to check that the client has/is receiving support.

## FIND OUT MORE

## A GUIDE FOR MANAGING EMPLOYEES REPORTING THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM

**NB:** During a phone call to external support, such as EAP, the representative will ask whether the employee requires immediate support. Some employees who indicate they are at risk, can be reluctant to communicate urgency; an employee could minimise their symptoms, and/or present as very calm, while communicating that their need is not urgent. It's common for people in this situation to feel that they're unfairly burdening others by communicating their distress.

**It's critically important to be aware of this, so you can remain vigilant while providing support. Stay on the call with the individual while they make the call, to ensure that immediate support is received.**

If an employee refuses the above support, request consent from them to contact their emergency contact and explain your concerns to them instead. We also strongly suggest that your organisation contacts a health professional.

### A GUIDE FOR BOOKING AN APPOINTMENT ON BEHALF OF AN EMPLOYEE

If an employee is not at risk of self-harm but is wanting a manager or support person to make an appointment on their behalf, Converge client services will proceed with the booking as long as the caller can communicate the client's consent and awareness of this, either verbally, via email or directly with the person sitting next to them. Client services can also proceed if a manager asks them to ring a client to book an appointment, as long as the manager can confirm the client's awareness and agreement to this. Once again, this can be communicated verbally or via email.

#### Scenario two:

If the person says they are at risk now, pursue the actions:

#### Actions:

- Indicate that you are very concerned for their wellbeing, and as a duty of care, you need to contact their GP or local hospital.

#### OR

- If they decline, you will need to phone the police or ambulance. When there is risk of self-harm or suicide, consent is not required as the primary focus is on physical safety.

#### OR

- If the employee leaves your presence or terminates the call, then call police and request a welfare check. Ensure that you have the employee's contact details, including an address, to provide Emergency Services at the time.

**If an employee is offsite and has called and disclosed immediate risk or you have a belief that they may be in the process of making a suicide attempt CALL 000 immediately.**

The services below can be contacted at any time on any day of the year.

#### Emergency Services 000

**Converge International** 1300 OUR EAP (1300 687 327)  
[www.convergeinternational.com.au](http://www.convergeinternational.com.au)

**Suicide Call Back Service** 1300 659 467  
[www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au](http://www.suicidecallbackservice.org.au)

**Lifeline** 13 11 14  
[www.lifeline.org.au](http://www.lifeline.org.au)

**Beyondblue** 1300 224 636  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Mensline Australia** 1300 789 978  
[www.mensline.org.au](http://www.mensline.org.au)

**Kids Helpline** 1800 551 800  
[www.kidshelpline.com.au](http://www.kidshelpline.com.au)

**Black Dog Institute**  
[www.blackdoginstitute.org.au](http://www.blackdoginstitute.org.au)

**Headspace** [www.headspace.org.au](http://www.headspace.org.au)

Your local GP, or mental health professional.

## FIND OUT MORE

 1300 our eap (1300 687 327)

 [info@convergeintl.com.au](mailto:info@convergeintl.com.au)

 [convergeinternational.com.au](http://convergeinternational.com.au)

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