



**HEALTH  
EDUCATION  
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INSTITUTE**

# ARE YOU CONCERNED ABOUT A COLLEAGUE?

**Junior doctors are generally very astute at identifying peers who are struggling. Occasionally some individuals may work in ways that pose a serious risk to themselves, patients or colleagues.**

Peers are often very well placed to recognise problems when they arise. In many instances this may reflect illness, professional isolation or overwork but it is nonetheless important that issues are identified and addressed. Acting on a concern may be difficult but it is important to act on significant and genuine concerns.

If you are concerned about a colleague, a first step is to speak with them and ask them if they are ok. Sometimes the mere fact that someone has offered support can make the difference in someone taking the first step to accessing appropriate assistance through their GP or other support services.

If you are concerned about someone but feel uncomfortable about speaking to them directly, there are several other options available for you to consider:

- 1** You may want to confidentially approach a trusted senior colleague to discuss the situation (potentially without naming the trainee about whom you are concerned) to check your perceptions regarding the level of concern and possible next steps.
- 2** Alternatively the Doctors Health Advisory Service provides a confidential telephone service for doctors seeking advice in relation to their own health and wellbeing as well as those who are concerned about a colleague. The contact numbers are listed over the page.
- 3** You might also consider raising concerns about the trainee with those who have responsibility for the doctor concerned. Your DPET may be a good place to start.



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Try to avoid having multiple conversations with others (particularly your peers) about your concerns – this has the potential to become gossip and rather than assisting your colleague, may become a barrier to their seeking and receiving appropriate support.

## NEED URGENT ADVICE?

### DPET

**NSW Doctors Health Advisory Service:**  
<http://dhas.org.au/>

**NSW & ACT Help Line:**  
02 9437 6552

### JMO SUPPORT LINE

The JMO Support Line is a support and advice service provided by NSW Health for junior medical staff. Call 1300 JMO 321 or 1300 566 321 to make a confidential appointment.

Keeping in touch with colleagues who are struggling is important – just letting them know that their colleagues are concerned can be vital.

## WORRYING SIGNS

-  Depression, anxiety
-  Isolation, withdrawal
-  Change in behaviour, anger, and irritability
-  Change in appearance (lack of attention to hygiene, physical appearance)
-  Signs of addiction, smelling of alcohol



## RESOURCES

**NSW Doctors Health Advisory Service:**  
02 9437 6552  
<http://dhas.org.au/>

**Are you OK? JMO Health website:**  
<http://www.jmohealth.org.au>

**Australasian Doctors Health Network:**  
[www.adhn.org.au](http://www.adhn.org.au)

**NSW Health Bullying and Harassment  
JMO support line:**  
1300 566 321

**BeyondBlue (24 hours line):**  
1300 224 636  
[www.beyondblue.org.au](http://www.beyondblue.org.au)

**Lifeline, 24 hour support line:**  
131144

**Australian Medical Association (AMA NSW):**  
02 9439 8822  
[www.amansw.com.au](http://www.amansw.com.au)

**Australian Salaried Medical Officers Federation  
(ASMOF):**  
02 9212 6900

**Your Medical Defence Organisation**