



# 6 TIPS FOR SUPPORTING A COLLEAGUE

## LISTEN



**LOOK.** Does your colleague appear, sound or act differently? Physicians are well-practiced at managing their outward emotions which can hide the impact of stress. The outward signs may be subtle despite the degree of distress.



**INQUIRE.** Ask your colleague how she or he is feeling. A simple “Are you alright?” goes a long way.



**START** a conversation. Tell your colleague what you have noticed and express your concern.



**TAKE** the **TIME.** It helps to make some time and space to listen, and make sure you are ready. While there won't be a perfect moment to start a discussion with your colleague, do try to find a safe space and make the extra time to allow for some discussion.



**EMPATHIZE.** Remember this is different than sympathy. Consider your colleague's experience from within her or his shoes. Don't be too quick to share your “I know just how you feel” stories. You may think you are demonstrating empathy by relating to their experience through one of your own, however, your colleague's concerns may get drowned out.



**NEXT STEPS.** As a helping professional trained to diagnose and cure, you may want to jump in, identify the problem, and offer a remedy. Offering support and listening can be more helpful than solving. It is an approach grounded in compassion.