

**Psychological  
problems mask  
their true face**

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A guide for managers

## **“Your partner for mental health in the canton of Solothurn”**

As managers, we can somehow sense that something is wrong. However, all too often we ignore that gut feeling and carry on as before. “That’s not like him at all,” you might think, or “She’s like a completely different person.” That’s precisely what the images in this guide express. Employees, perhaps even established high achievers in a team, can start to change. Psychological problems mask their true face.

Employees suffering from psychological stress can be demanding and can even overburden managers. That’s where we come in: we provide the services to detect and prevent mental health problems at an early stage via the Iradis business division as well as workplace integration services.

Moreover, we believe our mission is to enable you to identify and have the courage to tackle mental health problems in the workplace. This guide includes practical advice to assist you with your day-to-day work.

We wish you every success when you face these challenging management tasks.

IV-Stelle Solothurn



Karin Fiechter-Jaeggi  
Managing Director

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# Early detection

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## Overcome the crisis with the 5 Rs

If you're ill, you inform your manager and, if necessary, go to the doctor. That seems logical, but it isn't always the case with mental illness where those affected fear stigmatisation. It's also associated with a sense of shame and fear of losing your job. People with mental illness often try to hide their suffering.

Mental illness alters people's perception and influences their behaviour. It not only puts a strain on personal relationships, but on their working life too. Their performance may also deteriorate, and it isn't uncommon for interpersonal conflicts to arise.

We give managers the courage to tackle the issue with our tried-and-tested 5 Rs guide so that you can integrate early detection into your day-to-day management tasks. It's worth it: you'll maintain the team's productivity, reduce costs, and create a working environment built upon trust.

Our 5 Rs guide will help you to identify problematic developments affecting employees, address them in a solution-oriented manner, and minimise their impact on the company:

- **Realise**
- **Review**
- **React**
- **Require**
- **Remain active**

To help you even further: if our guide doesn't answer all your questions, just give us a call. We can give you straightforward support free of charge.





## Realise

### Watch out for the first signs.

You've been noticing something odd about your employee for quite some time, or their behaviour seems to have recently changed. It's likely that a problem is developing and the person's self-control may be affected, so it's important to be aware of the signs.

### What you need to do:

- Watch out for behaviours that are unfamiliar and out of character. Employees with a mental health problem can react in different ways: some may become insecure and withdrawn, while others become thin-skinned or quick-tempered.
- Evaluate their performance. Productivity often decreases, and employees become unfocused and unreliable and work at a slower pace. They can make unusual mistakes.
- Think about their behaviour in the team. Are agreements being neglected or circumvented? Has the employee behaved inflexibly or inadequately on a number of occasions? Are their reactions inappropriate?

## Early warning signs Being aware of the signals

### Ability to work

- Working chaotically with frequent breaks
- Change in attitude towards - or down-right rejection of - rules and routines
- Sensitivity to criticism
- Lack of planning and structure
- Lack of flexibility
- Accumulating a lot of overtime or working fewer hours than required
- Frequent short absences
- Decline and/or fluctuations in performance
- High error rate
- Slowing down, inefficiency
- Unreliability
- Forgetfulness
- Uncertainty
- Avoidance of certain tasks/activities
- etc.

### General state of mind

- Personal withdrawal
- Irritability and aggression
- Absent-mindedness
- Persistent sadness or dejection
- Mistrust
- Complaints about persecution or feeling watched
- Talking to themselves
- Insomnia, exhaustion, unexplained pain
- Restlessness or tension
- Neglect of clothing and personal hygiene
- Altered eating patterns
- Neglect of hobbies
- etc.

## Psychological stress has many faces

### Professional development pays off

Marco\* (51) has been working for 20 years as a warehouse employee and forklift driver at a logistics company. The nature of his role has changed over the last few years, and Marco has been struggling to get the hang of digital processing in incoming goods inspection and warehouse management. He can no longer keep up with his younger colleagues, and is worried that he might not be able to meet the requirements for much longer. These issues are troubling him more and more. He seems nervous and distracted, his self-esteem and motivation are in decline, and he's having increasingly frequent short-term absences. HR picks up on this, and the HR officer raises the issue with Marco's line manager who has noticed a similar pattern. Neither of them can come up with a good explanation, and they arrange a meeting with Marco where he talks about his concerns and existential anxieties. They work together to find solutions. They arrange for Marco to attend training sessions in warehouse management. Attaining this qualification improves his specialist knowledge and skills, thereby easing his anxiety. In turn, this increases his motivation and job satisfaction to the benefit of all involved.

\*Name changed