

# Colleagues in difficulty

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EXTRACT ONLY

This presentation is of a general educational nature and not personal or specific to your circumstances.

Individuals should seek advice concerning their own specific circumstances.

MIPS members may contact the MIPS Professional Services Division for clinico legal advice 24/7

**1800 061 113**  
**claims@mips.com.au**  
**[mips.com.au/claim](https://mips.com.au/claim)**

# Learning objectives

- Improved understanding of the issue of health practitioner ill health or difficulty
- Identify when a colleague is in difficulty
- Implement measures to reach out to assist colleagues

# If you have concerns what can you do about it?

- Approach the practitioner and ask 'Are you okay?'  
You may need to be respectfully persistent (but clearly supportive)
- Encourage the colleague to seek advice from
  - their supervisor / senior colleagues
  - Hospital Employee Assistance Program (EAP)
  - MDOs / MIPS
  - AMA member – Peer Support Service
  - Local Doctors Health Advisory Program (DHAS – 9437 6552)
  - JMO Support Line (1300 566 321)
- If colleague is senior and unapproachable talk to someone senior or your MDO about your concerns

# If you have concerns what can you do about it?

In extreme cases where you believe patient safety is at risk, consider your mandatory notification requirements.

You can discuss this (theoretically) with your JMO manager.

## **Notifiable conduct**

- a. *practised the practitioner's profession while intoxicated by alcohol or drugs; or*
- b. *engaged in sexual misconduct in connection with the practice of the practitioner's profession; or*
- c. *placed the public at risk of substantial harm in the practitioner's practice of the profession because the practitioner has an impairment; or*
- d. *placed the public at risk of harm because the practitioner has practised the profession in a way that constitutes a significant departure from accepted professional standards.*

# What is AHPRA's position?

## Good medical practice: a Code of Conduct for doctors

Some key relevant elements are:

- 6.3 Doctors' performance — you and your colleagues**
  - 6.3.1 Complying with any statutory reporting**
  - 6.3.2 Recognising /minimise the risks of fatigue**
  - 6.3.4 Taking steps to protect patients from risk posed by a colleague's conduct, practice or ill health**
  - 6.3.5 Taking appropriate steps to assist your colleague to receive help if you have concerns about a colleague's performance or fitness to practise.**

# Doctors' own health & wellbeing

- **AHPRA** – see 9.2 of the code (more later)
- **AMA & State Health Dept** resources & initiatives
- **MDOs - MIPS** has various risk education workshops, webinars , Practice Notes, OnDemand modules – a risk education own health & wellbeing theme.
- MIPS Constitutional object of membership – “honourable practice” includes maintaining your health & wellbeing to ensure appropriate healthcare

# AHPRA Code of Conduct

**9.2 Your health.** Good medical practice involves:

9.2.1 Having a GP *How many have one?*

9.2.2 Seek independent, objective, medical advice.....

**9.3 Doctors have a responsibility to assist medical colleagues to maintain good health**

9.2.4 Self-prescribing (or to friends/family)

*Don't do it - Now illegal in Victoria*



# State health Dept initiatives

## NSW – *Respectful Culture in Medicine Statement*

*-address unacceptable behaviour in the training of junior medical staff & to improve culture*

*JMO Support line (1300 566 321), Performing under pressure coaching, Wellbeing & support plan*

*Signatories – all Colleges, NSW Govt, AMA, ASMOPF*

# Publications to consider

## ***First do no Harm***

8 Principles for being a resilient doctor

1. Make home a sanctuary – stress free zone
2. Value strong relationships – so work on them
3. Have a good relationship with your GP. See her annually, preventively.
4. Control stress, not people – internal locus of control
5. Recognise conflict as an opportunity
6. Manage bullying and violence assertively
7. Make medical organisations work for you
8. Think legacy – how will be remembered at the end of your career? Depends on current application of ethics and honour.


## **EVERY DOCTOR      Healthier Doctors = Healthier Patients**

“ a golden book for doctors on mental well being and cultural change”. Dr Geoffrey Toogood

\*Both publications by *Leanne Rowe & Michael Kidd*

# Final housekeeping



- ✓ Sign In sheet
- ✓ Your Certificate of Attendance will be emailed
- ✓ MIPS' advisors are exempt from mandatory reporting call 24/7 on **1800 061 113**
- ✓ **[mips.com.au/health](https://mips.com.au/health)**
  - **My Wellness website** -Free access for all members 
  - **MIPS and Australian Unity** – discount on Australian Unity health products; includes access to non-AHPRA registered health coaches (allied healthcare practitioners)