Muddy Boots Leadership

After the Hard Call

A supervisor’s guide to checking on your team after a crisis, a loss, or a day that went sideways.

The five questions

Treat these as a loose guide and put them in your own words. Ask one or two at a time, and let silence do some of the work.

1. **“Are you okay right now? What do you need in the next hour?”**
   Start with the basics: water, a quiet room, a ride home, or someone to cover their next appointment.
2. **“What would help you feel a little more settled today?”**
   Some people want a walk. Some want to finish their notes. Let them choose.
3. **“Who do you want to be around this week?”**
   Help them name a coworker, friend, or family member they can lean on.
4. **“What’s one thing you handled well?”**
   After a hard call, people tend to replay every mistake. Help them see what they got right.
5. **“What do you need from me over the next few days?”**
   Then do what they ask, if you can, and tell them plainly if you cannot.

When you don’t know what to say

- “That was a hard one. I’m glad you’re here.”
- “You don’t have to talk about it. I just wanted to check on you.”
- “It makes sense that you’re feeling this way.”
- “What can I take off your plate?”

Keep it voluntary. Skip the replay. Keep it private.

This is a supervisor check-in, not clinical or therapeutic care. Counseling and clinical support belong with your EAP, a licensed professional, or your organization’s crisis procedures.

When to get more help

Connect someone with your EAP, a licensed professional, or your organization’s crisis procedures if they seem unable to stay safe, have strong reactions that do not ease, are withdrawing from people, or are having trouble functioning at work. If you are ever worried about someone’s immediate safety, follow your organization’s emergency procedures right away.
