

SUPPORTING

If you're a referee, the first step in supporting yourself when you're concerned about your mental health is to talk to someone you can trust about what and how you're feeling. If you're someone who comes into contact with referees and you think they're experiencing a mental health problem follow the **ALERT** acronym below to support them.

But be aware that many referees who may need support don't ask for it. Why? Because they're concerned their progress/appointments will be negatively impacted. So, if they do ask for support, the '**R**' in **ALERT** – for **Reassurance** – is particularly relevant.

ASK discreetly if the referee you're concerned about wants to talk about it. If they say yes, then it's about finding the right setting – somewhere private where the person feels comfortable and equal, e.g. a café or football club bar/function room when quiet.

LISTEN attentively. Ask simple, open and non-judgmental questions. Let the person explain in their own words how they're feeling. Try not to assume you already know what may have caused their feelings, or what will help.

ENCOURAGE people to seek advice, where appropriate. You're not expected to be a mental health professional.

REASSURE the person that they're not alone. Seeking help can feel lonely, and sometimes scary. Let them know there is support out there – and that you can help signpost them to the help they may need. Reassure them that your conversation is confidential and will not have a negative impact on their refereeing progress/ appointments. You're simply reaching out to a fellow human being. The fact that they're a referee is irrelevant.

TELL a specialist person if you think urgent action is needed.