



Case study no. 1

Title of Case study / Good practice	Good Morning, sunshine!
Keywords (meta tag)	Emotional intelligence, relational capabilities, empathy
Provided by	IDP European Consultants
Language	English
Case study	
<p>Mary is a very loving old lady, always with a smile on her face and ready to cheer-up other people, she has a word of comfort and care for all the occasions, she's always very open about her experiences and likes to share with others laughs, fun memories and joyful tips.</p> <p>Mary works at the welcome desk of your company, all employees know her and appreciate her company and positive attitude. She has worked with this company since the very beginning, she knows everybody and everybody knows about her shining spirit.</p> <p>She is used to greeting everybody with a warming <i>good morning sunshine</i> and during Christmas period, she bakes cookies and sweets for all people. Mary was the first person to welcome you in the office, she introduced you to your colleagues, and never forgets to wish you happy birthday.</p> <p>Overall, she's a really great person and you really wish there would be more people like Mary in this world.</p> <p>One morning, while grabbing your coffee ready to start your routine, you notice that Mary is not there. Very strange from her, considering how robust her work ethic is: Mary is always extremely punctual in her tasks and duties, and she barely missed a day at work in more than 10 years of service. This might be one of those day, isn't? Everybody can get sick, or have an urgent appointment...</p> <p>While eating your lunch in the cafeteria, you come to know that Mary will be out of office for a while due to what seem to be very delicate personal issues.</p> <p>Weeks pass by, and still no sign of Mary whatsoever. People start to get worry; it is very unusual from her to disappear with no communication in-between. Eventually, you and your colleague decide to ask the HR if there is something seriously concerning with her...he/she replies that nothing happened to her, but for this time being it is better to give her some space.</p> <p>Her/his reply is a bit unsettling: apparently, something happened for sure, but the HR does not disclose more details about it.</p> <p>One day – one of the many without Mary's good morning – you receive a shocking letter from the head of your company: Mary's youngest son, a brilliant college student in his 20s with a bright and promising future in front of him, lost a decade long battle against a very rare and aggressive disease. She took some time off from the office to spend with her son</p>	



his last two months of life, with a great pain in her heart she’s still pleased to inform that – all and all – it’s been a sweet goodbye and she will be back soon to work.

At the end of the note, there is only one request from her: no flowers, no letters, no need to come to the funeral (it is a private ceremony anyway), just a simple “taste of normality”.

The office cannot believe what they just read and all of your colleagues are visibly stunned. Turns out that only few people in the company knew about Mary’s conditions, in more than 10 years of flawless service she never spilled out any comment about her son’s disease, she talked all time about him with maternal pride in her eyes, but never a reference to what she was going through...

It’s a Monday morning, first day of her return to work. You see her on her desk...a sad look in her eyes, no glooming aura in her face.

Case questions:

1. Where do you even begin with...?
2. What to say?
3. What to do?

Reference Link (if any)	Own elaboration* <i>*This scenario is completely fictional. Any reference to real people and/or events is purely by chance</i>
Type of material	CASE STUDY

(Suggested answers on 2. page)



Suggested answers

This scenario is designed to be very tricky and emotionally challenging. Relating to someone else's pain is a very uncomfortable situation. However, Mary gave you a hint on how she wishes to be supported in her emotional recovery: she wants a "taste of normality", meaning, something that could help her in processing this difficult situation and get back on her feet. What could be normality in this case? *Derailing* others' perceptions from a focus to another.

Where do you even begin with...

Probably, you wish to greet her with the same good morning sunshine as always

What to say

Would you like a coffee or a cup of tea?

What to do

Smile, and demonstrate appreciation for what you take for granted