



**Mental Health in  
the Workplace:  
Should I be  
Worried?**

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# Learning objectives

- ★ Understand the role and responsibilities of the employer
- ★ Recognise the signs of mental health problems
- ★ Learn some simple ways that you can improve your own mental wellbeing
- ★ Understand what is 'mental health'



**What Is Mental  
Health?**

# Myths

- ★ Mental health is only a problem for some people
- ★ Mental health isn't real
- ★ The only solution is medication
- ★ Mental illness is permanent
- ★ I can't do anything to help
- ★ Just think positive!

# Facts

- ★ 1 in 4 people affected
- ★ 1 in 8 days taken off sick
- ★ Medication is a last resort
- ★ Mental health – like physical health – changes over time
- ★ There's a lot that you can do
- ★ What is 'positive'?

# Ups and Downs

★ Mental health changes...

- Stress
- Anxiety
- Family
- Finances
- Relationships

★ And all of this affects you, too

# From mental illness to mental health

- ★ This isn't just renaming the problem
- ★ This is a focus on prevention rather than cure
- ★ Prevention is generally cheaper, faster and more reliable

# Is it just the latest thing?

- ★ Mental health is getting more media coverage
- ★ You wouldn't question the need for physical healthcare
- ★ You are more than a body
- ★ Many physical conditions are caused or made worse by stress
- ★ We are beginning to understand this better – hence the coverage



# What is healthy?

- ★ We have a standardised model of the human body
- ★ We don't have such a model for the human mind
- ★ Normal = typical
- ★ Healthy = able to function
- ★ Achieve your goals, free from conflict



The role of the  
employer

# The employer's duty of care

- ★ To provide a safe working environment
- ★ Physically safe
- ★ Psychologically safe
- ★ Google research
  - Project Aristotle

# Help for employers

## ★ Health and Safety

- Both physical and psychological

## ★ ACAS

- Make sure the working environment is safe
- Protect staff from discrimination
- Carry out risk assessments

# Stress

- ★ Multiple causes of stress at home and in the workplace
- ★ Stress is a main cause of depression
- ★ Depression impacts on relationships, quality of life, productivity
- ★ We must act to prevent medication

# Stress in the Workplace

- ★ Many people spend more time with their colleagues than with their families
- ★ The workplace may not always be the cause of stress
- ★ There is an opportunity to support
- ★ And a duty of care

A bright yellow speech bubble is centered on a dark gray background. The bubble has a rounded top and a pointed tail at the bottom left. Inside the bubble, the text "What can I do?" is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font.

**What can I do?**

# The Most Important Point to Remember

- People suffering from mental health issues don't know it
- It's like a filter has been put over the world
- They won't know unless they become aware of external signs
- The outside world has become more threatening, more isolating



# The most important point to remember

- ★ People suffering from mental health issues don't know it
- ★ It's like a filter has been put over the world
- ★ They won't know, unless they become aware of external signs
- ★ The outside world has become more threatening, more irritating

# The simple reason

- ★ The only person in the world who can never see you is...
- ★ You
- ★ There is no 'self awareness'
- ★ You will only ever experience your own view of the world
- ★ We can only be aware of others
- ★ We can become aware of our effect on others

# What can I do?

## ★ Look out for...

- Changes in behaviour, mood
- Changes in communication
- Changes in their standard of work
- Changes in their focus on tasks
- Seeming tired, anxious or withdrawn
- Changes in eating and drinking
- Increase in absence or lateness

# What can I do?

- ★ They may not realise anything has changed
- ★ Check in with them
- ★ Speak to HR or a manager
- ★ Talk informally
- ★ Offer support
- ★ Give them time and space
- ★ Be there – it can take time

# Anxiety

- ★ We all worry
- ★ It's a function of our goal setting ability
- ★ We don't know that we're worrying
- ★ We *think* we're predicting the future
- ★ Anxiety is endless, looped worry

# Anxiety

- ★ When you worry, you think you're predicting the future
- ★ You 'know' what's going to happen
- ★ You 'know' how a conversation is going to end
- ★ You 'know' how someone will react
- ★ You are trying to protect yourself
- ★ Worry and anxiety are self defeating
- ★ Both prevent you from finding out

Imagine  
something  
that hasn't  
happened



Act as if  
it is  
happening  
**now**

Imagine  
something  
that hasn't  
happened

Imagine  
it being  
**BAD**

Act as if  
it is  
happening  
**now**



Imagine  
something  
that hasn't  
happened

Imagine  
it being  
**GOOD**

Act as if  
it is  
happening  
**now**

# Ending Worry

- ★ What are you worrying about?
- ★ You've got nothing to worry about!
- ★ Don't worry!
- ★ It will be fine!
- ★ You'll be OK!

Ending  
Worry

**LIES!**

What are you worrying about?



Don't worry

It will all  
fine!

You'll be OK!

# Ending Worry

- ★ What do you **imagine** is going to happen?
- ★ Is that what you **want** to happen?
- ★ What do you **want** to happen?
- ★ Well, imagine that then!

# In their shoes



- ★ We get used to how people behave
- ★ When this changes, we say that they are “not themselves”
- ★ Their behaviour might not make sense
- ★ Ask yourself, “What must they be seeing and hearing for their behaviour to make sense?”

# In their shoes



- ★ If a colleague snaps at you
- ★ You might think “Well that was rude, I was only trying to help!”
- ★ “What must they be seeing and hearing for their behaviour to make sense?”
- ★ Did they interpret your offer of help as an attack?
- ★ Were they trying to push you away?

# Remember

- ★ Ask yourself...
- ★ “What must they be seeing and hearing for their behaviour to make sense?”
- ★ How must the world look to them ?
- ★ If the world looked that way to you, what would you do?
- ★ What support would you need?



**What can we  
all do?**



# What can we all do?

## ★ Access to information

- Make it easy for people to get help
- Confidential conversations
- Lead by example
- cpd.works
- MIND
- ACAS

# Take care of yourself too

- ★ Ask someone you trust to tell you about...
  - Changes in behaviour, mood
  - Changes in communication
  - Changes in their standard of work
  - Changes in their focus on tasks
  - Seeming tired, anxious or withdrawn
  - Changes in eating and drinking
  - Increase in absence or lateness

# What can we all do?

## ★ Stay connected

- Social isolation is a major factor in depression
- We need constant social interaction
- Not everyone has that at home
- Particularly difficult for remote workers
- Check in regularly

# Benefits of good mental health at work

- ★ Better working culture
  - Google research
  - Psychological safety
  - Employer branding
- ★ Increased productivity
  - Reduce sickness absence
  - Add £8bn to UK economy
- ★ Reduced stress

# Learning outcomes

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