

Mental Health: Top tips to support your colleagues



Mental Health: Top Tips to Support your Colleagues

Mental Health issues are not something we ought to treat lightly. Recent research by the ONS revealed that around 1 in 5 (21%) adults experienced some form of depression in early 2021 - an increase since November 2020 (19%) - and more than double that seen before the pandemic (10%).

For organisations, it's crucial mental health is prioritised as it affects employees' wellbeing and productivity.

Worryingly, the latest findings by Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) England found that a quarter of employees had not received a mental health check-in since the beginning of the pandemic, and 29% of those surveyed said they have never had a conversation with their line manager about mental health.

21% of adults experienced some form of depression in early 2021

Mental Health Awareness Week serves as a reminder for organisations to consider their mental health and wellbeing policies and initiate conversations not just with colleagues but also with loved ones. Organisations and HR teams must recognise that their duty of care not only extends to compliance and health and safety training, but to taking responsibility for mental wellbeing too.

1.

Remember to check-in

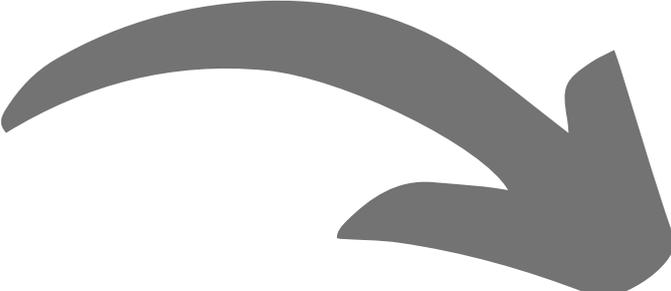
It may sound simple but checking in with your employees and colleagues to find out how they're doing is important. Many of us will simply reply with "I'm fine", but as a line manager, get to know your staff better and understand if they really mean it or if they're brushing off something they don't want to talk about. The fact that 41% of respondents revealed they had none or less frequent wellbeing check-ins is worrying.

Employers need to encourage their managers to regularly have a wellbeing check-in with their employees. The pandemic has taken its toll on most of us, and the anxiety around it has affected our personal and working lives.

41% of respondents revealed they had none or less frequent wellbeing check-ins

29% of those surveyed said they have never had a conversation with their line manager about mental health.





Encourage leaders and managers to undertake training

Organisations that provide the training and resources for their leaders and managers around mental health and wellbeing will be able to better support their employees overall with guidance.

Unfortunately, according to a study by IOSH, 62% of line managers are not receiving enough help from their organisation to support their staff's mental wellbeing. In addition, only 31% of respondents said they feel they have been sufficiently trained to recognise the signs of poor mental health in their direct reports. It's clear that organisations need to be doing more, and ensuring your leaders and managers understand the signs to look out for means they can start supporting their staff to get the help they need.





Support employees with mental health and stress training

Self-care goes a long way when dealing with mental health issues including stress and anxiety. Providing a training course for your employees to take part in can help them recognise if they need help or understand how to cope with it. Dealing mechanisms for stress such as learning to be better organised with work priorities or learning to communicate with colleagues and managers can be the first step in the right direction for them.



**It is recommended to
carry out at least 10
minutes of self-care
every day**



Create a mental health culture



3 Ways to Create a positive mental health culture

- 1. Talk about mental health**
- 2. Provide resources for employees**
- 3. Promote mental health awareness**

Creating a culture that is supportive of mental health in the organisation is important.

Put up posters around the office or in the kitchen about mental health and make it clear who they can reach out to if they want to discuss issues. Normalise discussing topics in the open, bringing up mental health in team meetings. This will make employees feel more at ease to discuss their worries more openly.





Go Outdoors

This year's theme for Mental Health Awareness Week centres around connecting with nature.

Over the past year with the various lockdowns, unfortunately, it's been hard to get out and about. Organisations need to encourage their employees to go for a walk during lunchtime (whether at home or in the office), stretch their legs and get fresh air. Not only is it good for them and encouraging exercise but having some reflection time in green spaces can bring a sense of calmness. This is ideal for those with stressful jobs.

Some useful numbers...

Samaritans 116 123
MIND 0300 123 3393
SHOUT Text 85258
CALM 0800 58 58 58
SANE 07984 967 708

If you or a colleague are experiencing a mental health crisis please call 999 immediately if safety is at risk



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