



International
Wellbeing Insights
People, Culture & Wellbeing



Stress Management Society
from distress to de-stress

Mental Health Awareness

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WELCOME

Stress is the driving force that keeps us on our toes and ensures that we push to be the best we can be. However that is only valid up to a certain point. If we have too much stress and endless wear and tear, it can drive us into physical, mental and emotional exhaustion.

Certainly we can't avoid the problem. Situations arise on a day-to-day basis, which make physical, mental and emotional demands on us. There may be decisions that need to be made, deadlines that need to be met, and lessons to be learned.

Unreasonable stress affects one in five of the working population and after acute medical conditions it is the most common cause of long term sickness absence from work (CIPD Absence Management 2014).

Stress undoubtedly makes people ill. It is now known to contribute to heart disease, hypertension and high blood pressure, it affects the immune system, is linked to strokes, IBS (Irritable Bowel Syndrome), ulcers, diabetes, muscle and joint pain, miscarriage, allergies, alopecia and even premature tooth loss.

Therefore it is imperative to strike the right balance. As individuals, we must take stock of all aspects of our life and situations and learn to cope better.

Treat it early, and your prospects are good. Ignore the problem, and there is a risk that 'burnout' may become a permanent state of affairs.



UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH

Mental health is more important than ever and very much in the zeitgeist. Many of us feel under pressure to meet demands, perform life duties and maintain a certain lifestyle.

It is essential at both a personal and organisational level to promote and support wellbeing and mental wellness. Providing the right foundations will help create a more engaged, happy and high performing culture.

MENTAL HEALTH RESEARCH

- Mental health problems is a growing public health concern. The likelihood is that we all know someone who is affected by mental ill health – this could be a family member, friend or colleague
- Mental ill health in the workplace: 1 in 6 of us will experience depression, anxiety or problems relating to stress
- In the US, almost half of adults will experience a mental illness during their lifetime –
Source: MHFA
- Prevalent not just in the US, but around the world
- Mental ill-health naturally leads to absence, but Presenteeism (turning up to work whilst either physically or mentally unfit) accounts for double the losses of absences
- Working conditions and working environment can have a huge impact on mental health and equally, someone's mental health can have a significant impact to perform well in their job
- As part of an annual Gallup Poll the 2020 was officially the most stressful year in recent history, with a record-high 40% of adults worldwide saying they have experienced lots of stress
- Although work is good for mental health, a negative environment can lead to physical and mental health problems
- According to the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), mental illness is the leading cause of disability in the United States. Moreover, untreated mental health conditions cost the economy \$200 billion every year.

Source: Centre for Mental Health, WHO, Gallup

MENTAL HEALTH EVALUATION EXERCISE

Before we begin looking at mental health, it may be helpful for you to think about your own, how it affects your life and to share this with a partner.

1. WHAT DOES MENTAL HEALTH MEAN TO YOU?

2. WHEN YOU HAVE POOR MENTAL HEALTH—WHAT IS THE CAUSE?

3. HOW DOES IT AFFECT YOU:

A. MENTALLY? (HOW YOU THINK)

B. EMOTIONALLY? (HOW YOU FEEL)

C. PHYSICALLY?

DE-STIGMATISATION

There is still often a stigma attached to mental illness, often resulting from the stereotypes and prejudice that result from misconceptions about mental illness. Stigma is two-fold:

PUBLIC STIGMA

The reaction that the general population has people with mental ill-health

SELF-STIGMA

The prejudice which people with mental ill-health turn against themselves

There are three components to both public and self-stigma: stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination.

	PUBLIC STIGMA	SELF-STIGMA
STEREOTYPE	Negative belief about a group. i.e. incompetence	Negative belief about self. i.e. incompetence
PREJUDICE	Agreement with belief and/or negative emotional reaction. i.e. anger, fear	Agreement with belief and/or negative emotional reaction. i.e. low self-esteem
DISCRIMINATION	Behaviour response to prejudice. i.e. avoidance, with-holding employment/housing opportunities or generally just withholding help	Behaviour response to prejudice (fails to pursue work/housing opportunities)

It may be helpful for you to think and reflect on your own experience of self and public-stigma.

PUBLIC-STIGMA:

For example, men are often more likely not to reach out for help with their mental health. Why do you think this is?

WHAT IDEAS CAN YOU THINK OF TO HELP DRIVE PEOPLE TO START REACHING OUT FOR HELP?

SELF-STIGMA:

WHAT HAS STOPPED YOU FROM ASKING FOR HELP?

I.D.E.A.L.S: HOW TO APPROACH



IDENTIFY THE EARLY INDICATORS OF RISK OR MENTAL ILL-HEALTH

- SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

DEVELOP A CONNECTION

- AUTHENTICITY
- CONNECTION
- TOPIC

ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION

- ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS

ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE

- TO BE OPEN ABOUT HOW THEY ARE FEELING
- IT'S OK TO BE NOT OK

LISTEN EMPATHETICALLY AND WITHOUT JUDGEMENT

IT'S GOOD TO BE IDEAL, BUT LET'S MAKE IT PLURAL...FOLLOW UP!

SAFEGUARD, SIGNPOST AND SUPPORT

- DUTY OF CARE: KEEPING EVERYONE SAFE
- RELEVANT PROFESSIONAL HELP AND SUPPORT RESOURCES
- ENCOURAGE WAYS TO TAKE PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY FOR SELF-HELP

WHEN SUPPORTING PEOPLE, WHAT WOULD BE IDEAL?

- HOW CAN WE SHOW EMPATHY?
-

- HOW CAN WE LISTEN ACTIVELY?
-

IDENTIFY: RECOGNISING MENTAL ILL-HEALTH

COMMON MENTAL ILLNESS

- Often, people feel isolated and that they are the only one experiencing a mental health problem, however, there are some mental health problems that are common for people to experience (including depression, anxiety and stress)
- The signs and symptoms of mental ill-health are often different and can vary depending on the mental health problem. Generally, these symptoms will have an effect on behaviours, emotions and thoughts
- The signs and symptoms can display as physical problems—i.e. headache, back pain, nausea, muscle tension
- Some people can have more than one mental health problem: it is not uncommon for someone with an anxiety disorder to suffer from depression as well or vice versa. Almost half of individuals diagnosed with depression are also diagnosed with an anxiety disorder
- NICE describes 3 different levels of mental health problems that a person may experience at different times —mild, moderate and severe:

MILD	WHEN A PERSON HAS A SMALL NUMBER OF SYMPTOMS WITH A LIMITED EFFECT ON DAILY LIFE
MODERATE	WHEN A PERSON HAS MORE SYMPTOMS THAT CAN MAKE THEIR DAILY LIFE A LOT MORE DIFFICULT THAT WHAT IT NORMALLY IS
SEVERE	WHEN A PERSON HAS MANY SYMPTOMS, MAKING THEIR LIFE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT

Source: NICE, ADAA

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS INCLUDE (BUT NOT LIMITED TO):

- LOW ENERGY
- EXCESSIVE WORRYING
- CHANGES IN EATING HABITS
- EXTREME MOOD CHANGES
- WITHDRAWING FROM FRIENDS AND FAMILY
- AVOIDING CERTAIN SITUATIONS
- FEELING IRRITATED
- REDUCED CONCENTRATION
- DEPRESSED MOOD
- DISTURBANCES IN SLEEP
- DIFFICULTY DEALING WITH DAILY PROBLEMS
- HEADACHES, SWEATING, NAUSEA

Foundation, Mayo Clinic

DEPRESSION

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

The World Health Organisation (WHO) defines depression as:

“a common mental health disorder that is characterised by persistent sadness and a loss of interest and a loss of interest in activities that you normally enjoy, accompanied by an inability to carry out daily activities, for at least 2 weeks”

- Globally, it is estimated that 264 million people suffer from depression
- Many people who suffer from depression also suffer from symptoms of anxiety
- Depression has been cited as the leading cause of disability worldwide
- Costing over \$51 billion in absenteeism from work and lost productivity, depression has become one of Americas most costly illnesses
- Depression ranks among the top 3 workplace problems for employee assistance professionals

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- A LOSS OF ENERGY
- A CHANGE IN APPETITE
- SLEEPING MORE OR LESS
- ANXIETY
- REDUCED/POOR CONCENTRATION
- BEING INDECISIVE
- FEELINGS OF WORTHLESSNESS
- NEGATIVE THOUGHTS
- GUILT/HOPELESSNESS
- THOUGHTS OF SELF-HARM/SUICIDE
- FEELING LOW, TEARFUL
- LOSING PLEASURE AND INTEREST IN THINGS THAT WERE ONCE ENJOYABLE
- PROBLEMS WITH MEMORY
- BEING RESTLESS
- OFTEN LACKING CONFIDENCE
- SELF-CRITICAL
- LASTING FEELS OF UNHAPPINESS
- DEPRESSED MOOD
- FEELING IRRITABLE

Source: WHO, Mental Health Foundation, Mental Health America

ANXIETY

EARLY IDENTIFICATION

The American Psychological Association defines anxiety as:

“an emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure”

It is normal for everyone to have feelings of anxiety, but it becomes a problem when it becomes difficult to control. Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the US, affecting 40 million adults in the US aged 18 and older, which is 18.1% of the population every year.

The recent study conducted during the pandemic shows that 1 in 3 adults are depressed or anxious due to COVID-19.

Anxiety disorder is an umbrella term with there being different types of anxiety disorder, including:

Generalized Anxiety Disorder
Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)
Panic Disorder
Health Anxiety

Obsessive Compulsive Disorder (OCD)
Specific Phobias
Social Anxiety Disorder

Anxiety disorders share some common signs and symptoms, but these along with the treatment method and severity of the anxiety disorder may vary.

SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS

- FEELING IRRITABLE
- REDUCED CONCENTRATION
- DIFFICULTY SLEEPING
- FEELING RESTLESS
- HEART PALPITATIONS (STRONG, FASTER, IRREGULAR HEARTBEAT)
- SHORTNESS OF BREATHE
- HEADACHES
- SWEATING
- CONSTANT FEELINGS OF PANIC AND FEAR
- A FEELING OF BEING 'ON-EDGE'
- NOT DOING THE THINGS YOU ONCE ENJOYED
- ACTIVELY AVOIDING CERTAIN SITUATIONS
- FEARS AND WORRIES THAT ARE OUT OF PROPORTION AND OVERWHELMING
- DIFFICULTY CONTROLLING YOUR WORRIES
- FEELING SELF-CONSCIOUS ABOUT EVERYDAY SOCIAL SITUATIONS
- FIXATING ON OTHERS JUDGING YOU OR BEING EMBARRASSED
- FEELING DIZZY OR NAUSEA
- DIFFICULTY GOING ABOUT EVERYDAY LIFE
- FEELING PANICKED—PANIC ATTACKS
- TENSE MUSCLES
- EXCESSIVE WORRIES

Source: American Psychological Association, NHS, Mental Health Foundation, WebMD, ADAA

UNDERSTANDING BURNOUT

The 11th Revision of the International Classification of Diseases 11 (ICD-11) defines burnout as

“a syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed”.

Moreover, according to the ICD-11’s definition, burn-out is characterized into three dimensions:

FEELINGS OF ENERGY DEPLETION OR EXHAUSTION

INCREASED MENTAL DISTANCE FROM ONE’S JOB, OR FEELING OF NEGATIVISM OR CYNICISM

REDUCED PROFESSIONAL EFFICACY

OTHER SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS OF BURNOUT:

- **COMPULSION TO PROVE ONESELF**
- **PUSH TO WORK HARDER**
- **NEGLECTING PERSONAL NEEDS**
- **INCREASED PERCEPTION OF CONFLICT**
- **WITHDRAWAL FROM SOCIAL SITUATIONS**
- **A REVISION OF YOUR VALUE SYSTEM, SELF-WORTH BASED JOB**
- **DENIAL OF PROBLEMS AND/OR BELIEVE THAT OTHERS ARE LAZY**
- **OBVIOUS BEHAVIOURAL CHANGES NOTICED BY OTHERS**
- **LOSS OF CONTACT WITH SELF**
- **FEELINGS OF INNER EMPTINESS**
- **LOW MOOD, DEPRESSION**
- **DISTORTED SENSE OF TIME**
- **MENTAL, EMOTIONAL OR PHYSICAL COLLAPSE**

I.D.E.A.L.S: DEVELOP A CONNECTION: A.C.T.

A.C.T.

Most interactions start with small talk, when was the last time you were in a meeting that didn't start this way? It's a natural way for people to connect. Start with a question that will build up to a conversation that meets the A.C.T. criteria:

A THERE'S AUTHENTICITY

WHAT DOES AUTHENTICITY MEAN TO YOU?

C THERE'S A CONNECTION

WHAT DOES CONNECTION MEAN TO YOU?

T THERE'S A TOPIC THAT WILL GIVE THEM TASTE OF WHO YOU ARE

WHAT ARE YOUR GO-TO SUBJECTS?

I.D.E.A.L.S: ENGAGE IN CONVERSATION

HOW ARE YOU...GOING TO ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS?

Why bother asking a question that is almost guaranteed to generate no new information? That's why the question, "How are you?," is in need of a drastic makeover.

When asking "How are you?", 99% of the time—what is the response? "...alright"
Sometimes, the respondent doesn't even answer, they simply bounce the question back

Let's think about asking better questions, particularly in a way that shows you are genuinely asking about the person's life. Or better yet, in a way that shows genuine care and leads to new information that can inspire positive action.

SOME OF THOSE QUESTIONS MIGHT BE:

- "What's on the Bridge?"
- "How's your Bridge?"
- "What's your current state of mind?"
- "What are you looking forward to this week?"
- "What is going well this week?"



WHAT ARE EXAMPLES OF A MORE PRODUCTIVE QUESTION THAN 'HOW ARE YOU?'

HOW COULD WE USE THIS?

I.D.E.A.L.S: ACTIVELY ENCOURAGE & LISTEN EMPATHETICALLY

SYMPATHY: feelings of pity and sorrow for someone else's misfortune.

EMPATHY: the ability to understand and share the feelings of another.

How many times have you been amazed at how communication can go badly wrong?

How easy it is for the slightest gesture or tone of voice to be taken the wrong way?

It is important to put yourself in other people's shoes and provide emotional support. When engaging with your colleagues/friends/family, consider Professor Albert Mehrabian's communication model, which states the following percentages when communicating feelings or attitudes:

- **BODY LANGUAGE /FACIAL EXPRESSION ACCOUNTS FOR 55% OF MEANING**
- **• TONE OF VOICE ACCOUNTS FOR 38%**
- **WORDS ACCOUNT FOR JUST 7%**

Understanding someone's body language is vital when communicating and empathising with their current state.

PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT DOESN'T MEAN ACTING AS A COUNSELLOR OR THERAPIST, BUT MEANS YOU HAVE AN INTEREST IN MAINTAINING GOOD RELATIONSHIPS AND A PRODUCTIVE WORKPLACE, SO THERE ARE MANY PRACTICAL WAYS YOU CAN SUPPORT YOUR PEOPLE.



PROVIDING EMOTIONAL SUPPORT

RECOGNISE DIFFERENCES BETWEEN INDIVIDUALS IN AND APPRECIATE THEM

Embrace the traits that the individuals have e.g. approach an introvert differently to an extrovert to gain the best response from them.

LISTEN: create opportunities for them to tell you their opinions and feelings without judging or interrupting them.

ASK QUESTIONS to better understand the individual in front of you e.g. “do you prefer structure or flexibility”?

INFORM YOURSELF ABOUT MENTAL ILL HEALTH such as depression and anxiety in order to pre-empt any misunderstandings should colleagues approach you about this

PROMOTE AND EXEMPLIFY: role model good practice in personal resilience including work/life balance

USE A BUDDY SYSTEM to support younger, less experienced employees who may be less able to cope with emotional demands. Pair them up with an experienced ‘buddy’ within the company; someone they can turn to during the early stage of their career and ask for advice when needed

ESTABLISH REGULAR MEETINGS where employees can share and ‘offload’ their emotional issues and support each other. Peer support is a great mechanism to alleviate emotional stress

ENCOURAGE AN OPEN, HONEST DISCUSSION ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH, WELLBEING AND STRESS that acknowledges that it is not a weakness but common human trait

ACKNOWLEDGE that each employee has different levels of resilience/different bridge... and that...

WE’RE NOT ROBOTS - IT’S OK, NOT TO BE OK!

MY 30 DAY ACTION PLAN

ACTION ONE

What I am going to do...

How I am going to do it...

How I will know if it's been successful...

ACTION TWO

What I am going to do...

How I am going to do it...

How I will know if it's been successful...

ACTION THREE

What I am going to do...

How I am going to do it...

How I will know if it's been successful...

BUDDY SYSTEM SUPPORT

To implement positive behavioural change, we must form new habits - it takes at least 28 days to form a new habit. We must decide our actions, carry them out, support and be accountable to ourselves and each other.

Who will you make yourself accountable to over the next 30 days?

How will you stay in touch? How many times over the next 30 days?

NOTES

A large, empty rectangular area defined by a dashed purple border, intended for taking notes.



We provide a range of services across the UK and internationally. We are always happy to discuss how we can support you.

We look forward to supporting your wellbeing journey.

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We have supported many organisations, including:

