



Embedding mental  
health in your  
people strategy

# WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

- “Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises their own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to their community.”

The World Health Organisation

Mental Health includes our **emotional, psychological** and **social wellbeing**.

It **affects** how we **think, feel** and **act**. It also helps **determine** how we **handle stress, relate** to **others** and **make choices**.

Just like physical health, **EVERYONE** has **mental health**, and it **needs looking after**

Think of mental health as a continuum ranging from good to poor mental health.

.At different points in life, we are at different points on the spectrum

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- The CIPD's 2016 Employee Outlook: Focus on mental health at work survey found 54% of people reporting poor mental health said that this was due to a combination of work and non-work issues, 37% said their poor mental health was just down to personal issues outside of work, while 7% said their poor mental health was the result of work alone (CIPD 2016).

# Why is mental health important?

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People with good mental health tend to feel in control of their emotions, have positive interactions with others, and feel they can perform well at work

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Poor mental health and stress are leading cause of long-term sickness absence

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Mental health manifests in mood disorders (depression or bipolar disorder), anxiety disorders , personality disorders and psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia.

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Businesses and HR must be proactive in promoting and sustaining good mental health for ourselves, colleagues, and people we manage

- Costs of poor mental health at work – key facts Thriving at Work: the Stevenson-Farmer review of mental health and employers found that, in addition to the human costs of mental illness, the ‘economic costs to employers, directly to Government and to the economy as a whole are also far greater than we had anticipated’ (Stevenson and Farmer 2017).

The review commissioned new analysis from Deloitte on the costs to employers of mental health illness, which amounts to a cost per employee of between £1,205 and £1,560 per year – between £33 billion and £42 billion a year (Deloitte 2017).

This is made up of:

- absenteeism cost: £8 billion
- presenteeism cost: £17 billion to £26 billion
- staff turnover: £8 billion

# Mental Health Continuum Model

Healthy

III



## Healthy

- Normal fluctuations in mood
- Takes things in stride
- Good sense of humor
- Consistent performance
- Normal sleep patterns
- Physically and socially active
- Behaving ethically and morally
- Confident in self and others
- Limited or no alcohol/gambling



## Reacting

- Nervousness, irritability, sadness, overwhelmed
- Displaced sarcasm
- Procrastination
- Forgetfulness
- Trouble sleeping
- Low energy
- Muscle tensions, headaches
- Intrusive thoughts
- Occasional nightmares
- Decreased social activity
- Regular alcohol use/gambling



## Struggling

- Anxiety, anger, pervasive sadness, tearfulness, hopelessness, worthlessness
- Negative attitude
- Difficulty concentrating
- Trouble making decisions
- Decreased performance or workaholic tendencies
- Restless, disturbed sleep
- Increased fatigue, aches and pains
- Recurrent intrusive thoughts/images
- Avoidance, withdrawal
- Increased alcohol use/gambling out of control



## Ill

- Excessive anxiety
- Panic attacks
- Easily enraged, aggressive
- Depressed mood, numb
- Overt insubordination
- Cannot concentrate
- Inability to make decisions
- Cannot perform duties
- Cannot fall asleep/stay asleep
- Constant fatigue, illness
- Absent from social events
- Suicidal thoughts/intent
- Alcohol, gambling or other addictions

# Common symptoms



## PHYSICAL

- Fatigue
- Sweating
- Indigestion or stomach upset
  - Joint and back pain
- Changes in sleep patterns
- Visible tension or trembling
- Nervous trembling speech
  - Chest or throat pain
- Constantly feeling cold

## PSYCHOLOGICAL

- Anxiety or distress
  - Feeling low
- Mood changes
  - Indecision
  - Tearfulness
- Loss of motivation
- Loss of humour
- Suicidal thoughts
- Increased sensitivity
  - Lapses in memory
- Difficulty taking information in
- Illogical or irrational thought process
- Distraction or confusion

## BEHAVIOURAL

- Increased smoking and drinking
  - Using recreational drugs
    - Withdrawal
    - Resigned attitude
- Irritability, anger or aggression
- Over-excitement or euphoria
  - Restlessness
- Lateness, leaving early or extended lunches
  - Working for longer hours
- Intense or obsessive activity
- Repetitive speech or activity
  - Impaired or inconsistent performance
    - Uncharacteristic errors
    - Increased sickness absence
- Apparent over reaction to problems
  - Risk-taking
- Disruptive or anti-social behaviour

# Why does it matter



The CIPD Employee Outlook survey shows how poor mental health can impact on performance and productivity if people don't take time off when needed or aren't properly supported at work (CIPD 2016). Feeling the need to turn up to work when unwell can potentially make someone's condition worse, depending on the individual case. Nearly all of the people with poor mental health said they had 'always' or 'sometimes' gone into work when experiencing stress, anxiety or depression, and the vast majority said it had affected their performance as a result of:

- taking longer to do tasks (64%)
- having difficulty making decisions (54%)
- finding it more difficult juggling a number of tasks (48%)
- being less patient with customers or clients (48%)
- putting off challenging work (42%)
- being more likely to get into conflict with others (37%)
- finding it difficult to concentrate (85%).

# How can organisations support?

- Employees may need Assistance with the following;



Job stress

Physical Harassment

Personal/Relationship difficulties

Separation & Loss

Elderly/Childcare & Parenting Challenges

Balancing work, family & social life

Sexual Harassment

Financial/Legal Assistance

Substance Abuse

Domestic Violence

# What can organisations do?

Regular mental health surveys

Ownership

Open communication and providing the right support allows individuals and teams to perform optimally

Looking at HR processes and practices through a wellbeing lens

Remove the negative stigma around mental health and encourage conversations around mental health in the workplace. Categorise mental health in the same way as physical health (e.g. sick leave)

Adjustments e.g. change of work location, time off for appointments, temporarily changing duties, reallocating tasks etc.

**Employee Assistance Programs (EAP)** are employee benefit programs that assist employees with personal problems or Work related problems that may impact their performance, health, mental and emotional wellbeing.

# Embedding Mental Health in your people strategy

## EMOTIONAL AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Counselling and Psychological Assistance
- Domestic Violence Assistance
- Mental Health Survey, Focus Group – understand the current and future wellbeing needs of your people
- Talks/Webinars about Mental Health
- Employee and Line Manager training and development
- Appointing Mental Health first aiders/Ambassadors

## PHYSICAL HEALTH

- Providing/subsidizing Gym Membership for employees
- Periodic Health Talks/Webinars on Wellbeing, Wellness & Nutrition for staff

## OTHERS

- Financial Educational Programs
- Security Assistance
- Legal Assistance
- Career Advice/Personal Development
- Employee Engagement Activities

### Strategies/Policies to consider:

- **Health & Wellbeing Strategy**
- **Employee Assistance Program**
- **Remote Working Policy**
- **Domestic Violence and Abuse Policy**
- **Grievance Policy**



# How can managers support?

- How people are treated and managed daily is an important part of their well-being and engagement
- We bring our whole selves to work, both challenges and strengths
  - E.g. a sick child, or lack of sleep affects an employee even at work
- Line managers have a lot of power. Research has shown that line manager approach is the second main cause of work-related stress (CIPD 2018)
- Good line management can promote wellbeing, and identify early signs of poor mental health, and initiate early intervention



## A great manager

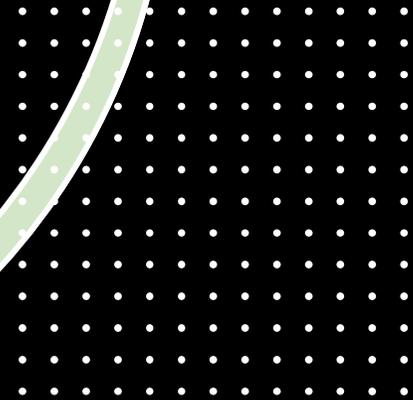
- Defined roles
- Clear expectations
- Work-life balance
- Stable, achievable goals

# Next Steps





Thank you



# How can colleagues support each other?

- Show your support
  - Don't avoid issues – if you know someone is struggling, let them know you care
- Ask how you can help
- Show trust and respect
- Be open-minded
  - Try not to be judgemental, and just listen

# How to have a conversation – private and confidential regular catch-ups

## Questions to ask:

- How are you doing at the moment?
- You seem a bit down/upset /under pressure/frustrated/angry. Is everything OK?
- I've noticed you've been arriving late recently and I wondered if you're OK?
- I've noticed the reports are late when they usually are not. Is everything OK?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- What would you like to happen? How?
- What support do you think might help?
- Have you spoken to your GP or looked for help?

## Questions to avoid:

- You're clearly struggling. What's up?
- Why can't you just get your act together?
- What do you expect me to do about it?
- Your performance is really unacceptable right now – what's going on?
- Everyone else is in the same boat and they're OK. Why aren't you?
- Who do you expect to pick up all the work you can't manage?