

# Supporting Your Teams Mental Health

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# You will work with someone who's suffering

- 1 in 4 people experience a mental health problem each year
- 1 in 6 experience a common mental health problem such as depression and anxiety in any given week
- 1 in 5 people have suicidal thoughts over the course of their lifetime
- 1 in 15 people attempt suicide over the course of their lifetime
- A 20% increase in common mental health problems e.g. depression and anxiety between 1993 and 2014 and this continues to rise

# The negative effects of poor mental health in the workplace

- Lack of engagement in one's work
- Productivity and job performance suffers
- Reduced physical capability and daily functioning
- Misaligned communication
- Poor decision-making



# A Framework For Supporting Your Teams Mental Health

- **RISE**
  - **Recognise**
  - **Instigate a conversation**
  - **Support**
  - **Ease work stress**
  - **Encourage seeking support**



# **4 Critical Concepts for Supporting Your Teams Mental Health:**

## **RISE**

**No. 1**  
**Recognise**

**How good are you at spotting someone  
who's struggling with their mental health?**

# Who is struggling? A, B or C?

- A - Jack is 34. He's recently joined the company. He is very attentive, delivers what's asked of him and always shows up on time. He seems a little nervous and edgy at times but otherwise is always smiling.
- B - Sarah is 28. She's been at the company for a long time. She's good at her job and is very reliable. Recently she's been coming in a bit late when normally she's very punctual.
- C - David is 54 and senior. You've noticed that he seems more angry recently with some sudden outbursts in the office and he's far more impatient than usual. You've heard he's going through a divorce.



**The Answer?**

**ALL of them.**

# **The Invisible Illnesses**

## High-functioning Depression

- Live with depression but functions highly
- What you see - Good job, partner, friends, "successful", constantly busy, high-performing, snappy or defensive.
- What you don't see - low mood, sadness, hopelessness, lack of energy, difficulty sleeping, Imposter Syndrome, frequently overwhelmed.
- Perfectionist, highly self-critical

## High-functioning Anxiety

- Live with anxiety but functions highly
- What you see - Good job, partner, friends, "successful", constantly busy, high performing, restlessness, snappy or defensive.
- What you don't see - excessive worry, obsessive thoughts, sleep problems, difficulty concentrating, easily fatigued, frequently overwhelmed

# Recognise the signs

- Not managing workload
- Missed deadlines
- Forgetful
- Coming in late or staying late in the evenings
- Increasing sick days
- Shut down/less communicative
- Changes in behaviour - losing temper or getting upset
- Problematic interpersonal relationships



**No. 2**

**Instigate a Conversation**

# Do's

- Think about the context and privacy
  - Meeting room or coffee shop
- Use simple open-ended questions
- Ask TWICE
- Give them time to speak
- Start slowly
- Let them lead
- Actively listen
- Think about your body language
  - Relaxed, open, eye contact

# Don't's

- Don't do it in the middle of a busy office
- Don't be somewhere where you will easily get disturbed
- Don't interrupt
- Don't force a conversation
- Don't cross your arms or look distracted
- Avoid having your phone with you or switch it on silent
- Don't try to diagnose or second guess their feelings

# Choose Honest and Open Questions

- You don't seem yourself lately. Is everything OK?
- I've noticed you've been late with a few pieces of work recently. I wanted to check whether everything is OK and if there is anything I can do to help?
- I saw you were quite upset yesterday [when you were talking to...], [on the phone]. Is everything OK?
- I've noticed that you've had more days off than usual recently – I just wanted to check in to make sure everything was ok and whether there was anything I could do to help?

**No. 3**  
**Support**



# Do's

- Listen and respond appropriately
- Let them explain in their own words
- Give them time
- Be prepared for silences
- Show empathy and understanding
- Be vulnerable
- Admit when you don't know much about mental health, a condition or a diagnosis

# Don't's

- Rush the conversation
- Don't impose your opinions or ideas
- End up making the conversation about you
- Make assumptions about what they are feeling or how it is or might be affecting their work
- Talk too much
- Give uninformed or unsolicited medical advice
- Use performative empathy

# How To Respond Appropriately

- I'm really sorry to hear that things have been so hard.
- It sounds like you've been having a difficult time lately.
- I'm really pleased you've chosen to speak to me about this.
- How do you feel this has been affecting your work?
- Is there anything you do at the moment that helps you manage how you feel / your condition?
- Have you asked anyone for support or talked to anyone else about this?
- What kind of support do you think might help?
- What would you like to happen now?

# What NOT To Say

- It's all in your head
- Things could be worse
- Snap out of it, everyone feels this way sometimes
- But you have a great life and always seem to be happy
- Have you tried...X
- Everyone is a little down/gets depressed, it's normal
- Just try and be positive
- Don't worry, this will pass
- Suicide is so selfish
- You may have the same illness as my...



# Confidentiality

- There will always be concern that information will be shared
- Reassure them that you won't share information without their permission
- Let them know if there is anything that you need to pass on to senior management
- Check organisational policy on disclosure
- When do you break confidentiality?
  - A crisis or when the person is at serious risk of harm
  - Always inform them of your need to break confidentiality

**No. 4**

**Ease Work-Related Stress**

**Encourage Seeking Support**

# Offer Options

- Check what they need NOW
  - If they are very upset, ask whether they would like to continue the conversation later or another time
  - A break before going back to work
- Check what they need TODAY
  - Help with immediate/urgent work-related tasks
  - Meetings
  - Discussion with senior management
- Check what they need MOVING FORWARDS
  - Arrange a follow up conversation/check in



# How To Offer Options

- Would you like to talk about how we can help you now, or would you prefer to talk more another time?
- What do you think would help make things easier for you right now?
- Are you feeling OK to return to work or would it help to have a break and a walk or a cup of tea? Would it help to ask someone to go with you?
- What can I do for you? What do you need right now?
- Would it be helpful to look through our mental health and wellbeing policy together?
- It's common to feel like you have to handle things on your own – but it's always OK to seek help. Have you spoken to your GP about how you are feeling?

# Think About Next Steps

- Are they at risk of harm?
- What responsibilities cannot be met today?
  - Create a plan to ensure these responsibilities are met
  - Think meetings and urgent-important work-related tasks
- How can their workload and responsibilities be managed or reduced moving forwards?
  - Identify biggest causes of work-related stress and create a plan for this to be reduced or eliminated
  - What can be delegated? How can their workload be reduced?
  - What responsibilities can they not fulfil in the immediate future?



# **Creating a Culture of Gratitude**

# Gratitude

- Feeling appreciation for something, recognising that something is valuable to you and has nothing to do with its monetary worth
- Scientifically proven benefits of a regular gratitude practice:
  - More connected and intimate relationships
  - More positive emotions
  - Lower rates of depression
  - Increased motivation and engagement
  - Improved psychological and physical health
  - Better sleep quality
  - Improved self-esteem
  - Increased mental resilience



# Gratitude in the workplace

- Research demonstrated benefits of creating a culture of gratitude in your organisation:
  - Improved employee wellbeing (less stress and more positive emotions)
  - Fewer sick days
  - Higher job satisfaction
  - Increased trust, rapport and team work
  - Increased engagement
  - Better team morale
  - Stronger relationships
  - Improved motivation and performance



# Exercise: A Team Gratitude Practice

- Something you are grateful for at work and why
- Someone on the team you are grateful for and why
- Something in your life outside of work you are grateful for and why

**How can you implement this team gratitude practice into your workplace on a regular basis?**

***“Life doesn’t make any sense without interdependence. We need each other, and the sooner we learn that, the better for us all.” — Erik Erikson***

What did you find most useful today?

**Post in the chat**

# Thank you!

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