

Mental Health Awareness

Background

Mental health problems are extremely common and 1 in 4 of us will be affected in any one year. By being aware of mental health issues and talking about them, stereotypes can be broken down and recovery can be aided. 9 out of 10 people with mental health problems experience stigma and discrimination in their everyday lives and most of this stems from negative and ill –informed media.

A-Z of Mental Health Issues

Abuse, addiction and dependency, anger, anxiety and panic attacks, bipolar disorder, borderline personality disorder, depression, drugs, eating problems, hearing voices, obsessive compulsive disorder, paranoia, phobias, postnatal depression, post traumatic stress disorder (PTSD), psychosis, schizophrenia, seasonal affective disorder, sectioning, stress and suicidal feelings.

Employee Wellbeing

There are various factors which can affect your mental well being. For example if you experience:

- Childhood abuse, trauma, violence or neglect
- Social isolation, loneliness or discrimination
- Homeless or poor housing
- A long term physical health condition
- Social disadvantage, poverty or debt
- Unemployment
- Caring for a family member or friend
- Significant trauma as an adult, such as military combat, being involved in a serious accident or being a victim of a violent crime

If you experience low mental wellbeing over a long period of time you are more likely to develop a mental health problem. Therefore as an employer it is important to recognise any early warning signs and offer support.

Supportive Measures

In addition to promoting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace, employers have an important role to play in supporting staff that are experiencing mental health problems. This involves supporting employees in the workplace and supporting them back to work after a period of absence. Ensure that you:

- Open up a conversation. Typical questions may include:
 - 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're usually on time. 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 anywhere else?
- Make reasonable adjustments. Examples may include
 - allowing an employee time off to attend medical appointments
 - modifying a job description to take away tasks that cause particular difficulty
 - offering flexibility in working hours/patterns, i.e. reduced hours or working from home
 - transfer of workplace
 - social or cognitive support
 - training
 - providing support to overcome barriers to returning to the workplace
- Conduct return to work interviews
- Keep in contact with employees whilst on sick leave
- Offer rapid access/support schemes
- Implement therapeutic returns (phased returns and robust return to work plans).

Further Information

Support for employers can be found here;

- Connect Five
- www.time-to-change.org.uk
- Wiltshire Mind 01225 706532



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