

## **Managing mental health – general tips for managers**

### **1. Go first**

Managers who talk about their own mental health make it safe for others to speak up about their own. You don't have to give them medical history. Just say you're human too, and when things come up for you, it's good to talk. That sends out the message that you're safe to talk to.

### **2. Learn about it**

You don't have to have had a mental health problem to support someone who has. You need to understand what they might be going through – and believe them when they talk about it. No one expects you to be an expert, but a little knowledge can really help you understand how sensitive and serious mental health can be. Watch out videos to help you understand the common conditions like stress, anxiety and depression.

### **3. Make work mentally safe – it's the law**

Teams perform better when they have a sense of security. Making time for discussion around problems can really help – they do NOT go away if we ignore them.

The Health & Safety Executive expect us to know and manage stress risk at work.

Have you thought about a stress risk assessment for your team or area to identify what could be a stress risk for your area?

### **4. It's not just about workload**

There are six stressors to watch out for at work. They are:

- My Role
- Sense of control
- Relationships
- Support
- Change
- Workload

### **5. Social support and connection is valuable**

Team events, getting to know each other, coffee breaks where we talk about life outside of work all count. It adds to collaboration, creativity and problem solving. But when people feel part of the pack or tribe, they are less stressed.

## **6. Physical safety helps mental health:**

- **Identify Physical Stressors:** Regularly assess the workplace to identify and mitigate physical stressors, such as high noise levels, poor lighting and dust.
- **Ergonomics:** Ensure that workstations and processes are ergonomically designed to reduce physical strain and discomfort.

## **7. Notice but don't diagnose**

Give yourself permission to notice when mental health comes up: a change in character, mood or behaviour may be a sign of poor health.

It's okay to say something. Make that cuppa, and have that chat.

## **8. If someone goes off sick with mental health**

Get in touch with them on day one. Ask if they need any support. Tell them you understand it must be difficult. Agree if you need to stay in touch with them. Ask what they want you to say to the team. Check in with HR.

## **9. Don't allow banter or bullying**

Mental health is a serious subject for many. When people are bullied because of their health, it makes their problem much worse, and can lead to harm. You don't want to run your team like that, so have a word with people who are quick to criticise.

## **10. Be the manager you'd like to have**

I don't want my manager to be my best friend. Or my therapist. But you CAN

- notice the signs
- have a chat about it
- signpost support

**Above all, be compassionate. Be ready to help. The ripple effects are so positive for workers and their families.**

**Watch our short videos on mental health to learn more.**