Let's Talk
Mental Health

Everyone has mental health

- We all have mental health, in the same way that we all have physical health too. Our mental health affects the way we think, feel and behave, which is why it's so important that we take the time to look after our mental health and wellbeing and look out for one another

Advice for employees

- Many people still feel uncomfortable talking about mental health at work. It's personal and often a sensitive issue which people may not feel confident in talking openly about

What good will talking do?

- It can be hard to acknowledge or accept that you have a mental health problem; this is often the hardest step for someone

- It can be hard to know what to do to access support at work when you are experiencing a mental health problem

- It can be equally hard to know what to do to support someone at work who is experiencing a mental health problem

- It can help reduce isolation, and you will find you are rarely alone – you just don't know it until you start talking

- Talking is the first step in understanding what can be done to support someone. Indeed, if you are experiencing a short-lived period of anxiety, panic attacks or stress, talking with a colleague or friend may be all the help that is needed

Tips to help you talk about mental health at work

- Make time to talk to your manager, or someone senior that you feel comfortable talking to
- Be honest about how your work is being affected
- Be open to any ideas that may help you
- Consider making an appointment to see your GP
- Consider talking in confidence to your company's support services, if available
- Not everybody will completely understand – you are unique – but talking to various people will help give you different support, ideas and perspectives

Remember, the thought of what other people's response will be can often be worse than the reality, and it is often better to address any concerns and explore opportunities for support. Get other people to help and support you in making any changes – you might be surprised at what a difference this makes. The people we work with play a vital role in our everyday lives.

Mental health problems can feel overwhelming and this can stop us from doing the things that ordinarily keep us well, that we value and give us a sense of enjoyment in our lives.

Royal Bank of Scotland

To help your colleagues

- Be approachable
- Show you care
- Encourage them to talk
- Listen to what they say

Advice for managers

- Mental health problems are a personal and sensitive issue and often people may not feel confident in talking openly about their problems at work because of the associated stigma. As there is often no outwardly visible sign of a mental-health condition, this means providing the appropriate support can be difficult. But, remember you don't have to be an expert to talk about mental health. Use this link to help introduce yourself to mental health in the workplace.

What can I do as a manager?

- As a manager you may need to reach out to your colleagues and team members and make the first move in starting a conversation about mental health. Here are some tips to help you start that conversation:

Do	Don't
✓ Let the person know you are there if they want to talk	✕ Tell someone to pull themselves together – if they could, they would have by now
✓ Keep it confidential	✕ Diagnose or second-guess someone's feelings
✓ Make sure you have time to talk	✕ Be judgmental or make assumptions
✓ Be empathetic rather than sympathetic	✕ Grill anyone by peppering them with quick-fire questions
✓ Let the person share as much or little as they want	✕ Talk over someone about your own or anyone else's experiences
✓ Ask open questions to help you to understand	✕ Tell someone what to do
✓ Make a plan and review regularly	✕ Make promises that you cannot deliver
✓ Ask how they would like you to help them	
✓ Reassure the person that you will do your best to help them	
✓ Be flexible in your approach	

Practical support for managers

Being supportive through listening may be enough, but sometimes practical support is needed.

1 Here is a practical guide to supporting staff with a mental health condition.

2 Don't assume because someone has a mental health problem that they need to be off work and at home. Often this is the worst thing that could happen. One size doesn't fit all, so be sure to talk through alternative options.

3 Returning to work can be hard for individuals, both physically and emotionally. It's important that you demonstrate sensitivity, be professional and provide the support required for a smooth return. The Return to Work process is a vital element of managing absence and supporting your employees back to work.

4 If there are performance issues, acknowledge any issues in a non-blaming way and plan how to support someone to overcome them in both the immediate and longer term.

5 Think about and discuss whether any short-term adjustments could be put in place to help the person to manage their symptoms more effectively whilst at work and help them to continue to feel that they are valued and can make an ongoing contribution to the team and organisation.

6 You can direct colleagues and your team to resources and support services. Mind provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. For more information, go to www.mind.org.uk or call 0300 123 3393. You can also apply to the Workplace Mental Health Support Service, delivered by Remploy, found here.

Useful Resources and Contacts

To speak to someone or access mental health support, you can use the following resources:

Call:

Samaritans: 116 123

Mind: 0300 123 3393

Sane: 0300 304 7000
(16:30 – 22:30)

Visit Online:
- Mental Health at Work Gateway
- Mind
- Relate Live Chat
- The Money Advice Service
- Mental Health for Small Workplaces
- e-Learning Toolkit

- Create your own Wellness Action Plan
- Time to Change
- How to talk to your manager about mental health