# Why is it important we look at mental health?

Currently, at least one in four people will experience some kind of mental health problem each year and 9 in 10 people with mental health problems experience stigma and discrimination. For businesses this mean that one in five people take a day off due to stress and around £1 in every £8 spent on long-term physical health conditions is linked to poor mental health and wellbeing. With such a high number of the UK workforce suffering with stress related illness, it is disappointing to know that less than half of employees said they would feel able to talk openly with their line manager if they were suffering from stress.

If we focus on creating a positive, supportive and open work environment then employees will be better engaged in their work and motivated to provide the best patient care.

This toolkit has been created for managers to support employee's mental health. This toolkit will empower managers to look out for signs and symptoms in our employees and also provide practical support and initiatives that can be used in all departments. There will also be a comprehensive directory of services to signpost individuals.

# Contents

# How do I recognise if a colleague and/or an employee is living with a mental health issue?

When it comes to mental health, there are several things that may trigger the development of a mental health issue or episode. Significant life changes can sometimes prove stressful and may trigger mental ill health. However, these events are not prescriptive and not the same for everyone. Furthermore, sometimes there are no triggers to an episode of ill mental health.

## Personal

| Bereavement | Relationship Breakdown | Health Scares or Physical Illness | Having Children |
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## Changes at Work

| Starting a new job | Coping with an increased workload or a promotion | Poor relationships with colleagues or managers | Redundancy or fear of redundancy |
|---|---|---|---|

# Signs to Spot

## Physical

- Frequent headaches or stomach aches
- Suffering from frequent minor illnesses
- Difficulty sleeping or constant tiredness
- Being run down
- Lack of care over appearance
- Sudden weight loss or gain

## At work

- Increased errors, missing deadlines or forgetting tasks
- Taking on too much work and volunteering for every new project
- An employee who is normally punctual arriving late
- Working too many hours: first in, last out, sending emails out of hours or while on leave
- Increased sickness absence
- Being fixated with fair treatment and quick to use grievance procedures

## Emotional and Behavioural

- Irritability, aggression or tearfulness
- Being withdrawn, not participating in conversations or social activities
- Increased arguments or conflict with others
- Increased consumption of caffeine, alcohol, cigarettes or sedatives
- Indecision, inability to concentrate
- Erratic or socially unacceptable behaviour
- Being louder or more exuberant than usual
- Loss of confidence
- Difficulty remembering things

# Tools For Stress Management

The Trust intranet is a useful resource to use when looking to evaluate a member of staff's and colleague's stress levels. In particular, there are several easy-to-use stress risk assessment tools under Business > Health and Safety > Work Related Stress. The resources in this area will allow you to get a deeper look into how a colleague is feeling and so make adjustments accordingly.

Tools include:
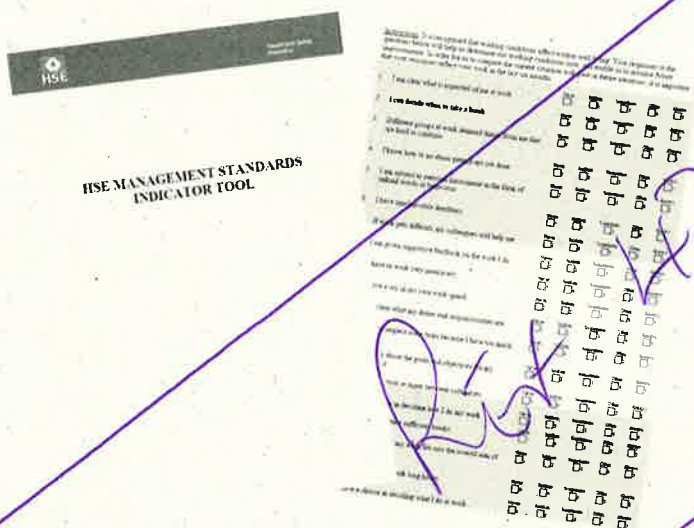
## The Health and Safety Executive Management Standards Indicator Tool

This is a list of 35 statements with multiple choice answers available. The simple statements allow an employee to give an overview of how they are feeling, where their stress is coming from and facilitate a more in-depth conversation with their manager.

## Stress Indicator Risk Assessment (SIRA)

This tool can be used after the initial indicator tool is used to get a deeper look deeper into areas the employee has raised as contributing to their stress levels and help to develop action plans.

## HR38 Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Policy

# How do I talk to an employee who I think is suffering with a mental health issue or who has recently returned from a period of mental health related absence?

## Find an appropriate setting

Make a hot drink or grab a glass of water. It's a great way to ask someone a quick how are you?' and ask for a private meeting

Meeting outside the work area in a neutral place might feel less intimidating

Give yourself plenty of time so you don't appear to be in a hurry—10 minutes may be enough but if you need longer then go ahead

You don't want to be disturbed so turn your phone off or onto silent

## What questions could I ask?

- How long have you felt like this? Is it an on-going issue?
- How are you feeling at the moment?
- Do you have anybody that can support you?
- Is there anything we can do to help?
- Are there any work-related factors which are contributing to how you are feeling?
- Use the 'The Health and Safety Executive Management Standards Indicator Tool'

Ask?

## Listen don't hear

- Give the person your full focus and listen without interrupting. Listen to their words, tone of voice and body language—all will give clues to how they are feeling.
- Accept them as they are—Respect the person's feelings, experiences and values although they may be different from yours. Don't judge or criticise because of your own beliefs and attitudes
- Get on their wavelength—Place yourself in the other person's shoes and demonstrate to them that you hear and understand what they are saying and feeling.
- Listen non judgementally
- Be genuine and show that you accept their person and their values by what you say and do

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# Next Steps?

### Develop an Action Plan

Work with the employee to develop an individual action plan which identifies the signs of their mental health problem, triggers for stress, the possible impact on their work, who to contact in a crisis, and what support people need. Consider using Mind's Wellness Action Plan (WAP) available on the Intranet under Staff Room > Staff Health and Wellbeing > Mental Health Awareness.

### Keep the conversation going

Follow up and ask them how they are doing. Reassure them that your door is always open, and really mean it. It's particularly essential to keep in touch with an employee who is off sick following processes outlined in HR14.

### Give reassurance that there is support available

- From you, their manager
- From occupational health – support can be accessed by management or self-referral
- From staff counselling – number 0300 124 0104
- With training offered by UHNM (e.g. resilience training or 'stop stressing, start coping'). Book on with ESR or email people.od@uhnm.nhs.uk
- From charities—particularly around managing their own wellbeing
- Consider flexible working requests

### Is it more serious?

In some cases you may feel the issue is more serious and encourage the person to visit their GP for guidance .

# Promoting wellbeing in your department and preventing episodes of stress related illness

The PERMA model of Wellbeing aims to encourage positive wellbeing before employees become stressed.

| Positivity | Engagement | Relationship | Meaning | Accomplishments |

**How can you apply it in your department?**

## Positivity

- How can you incorporate a more positive atmosphere in your department?
- Consider putting up posters encouraging people to speak about mental health
- Lead by example
- Resilience training (look on ESR to book on or email people.od@uhnm.nhs.uk)

## Engagement

- How can you encourage employees to be more engaged at work?
- Could you implement a suggestion box to gather and act on feedback?
- Nominate engagement champions in your department
- Conducting worthwhile and effective PDRs
- Stating how staff's jobs align with the Trust's vision and goals
- Book of the month? Give colleagues some common themes to discuss

## Relationships

- How can you encourage better relationships in the workplace?
- Sign onto emotional intelligence training
- 'Be kind' weeks—get staff to nominate each other for good work or patient care
- Have an open-door policy with your staff but also encourage them to book scheduled 1:1 time with you to discuss concerns
- Nominate staff for Trust value awards—how many people in your department have all 4 values awards?
- Give detailed positive feedback frequently—can you set yourself a challenge to give positive feedback at least 5 times a day?

## Meaning

- How can you help employees to feel meaning in their work life?
- Consider collecting and displaying positive patient feedback
- Give effective and worthwhile PDRs which put into context the work the employee has been doing for the last 12 months and the positive impact they have had on the department

## Accomplishments

- How can you celebrate achievements in your department?
- Consider having a team member of the week/month
- Nominate staff for Trust value awards

**HR Business Partners**

Contact your HR business partner if you have concerns about the wellbeing of your staff and work with them to put actions plans in place.

**The Wellbeing Webpage on the Staff Intranet**

http://uhnm/staff-room/staff-health-wellbeing/

**Staff Counselling Service**

0300 124 0104

**The Samaritans**

https://www.samaritans.org/

116 123 —free helpline

**Remploy -** This free and confidential service is funded by the Department for Work and Pensions is available to any employees with depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues affecting their work.

https://www.remploy.co.uk/employers/mental-health-and-wellbeing/workplace-mental-health-support-service-employers

vocationalrehabilitation@remploy.co.uk

**Mind Infoline**

0300 123 3393 (9am-6pm Monday to Friday)

info@mind.org.uk

**NHS Sleep Self-Assessment**

https://www.nhs.uk/Tools/Pages/Sleep-self-assessment.aspx