

Mental Health Conditions and the Workplace

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Introduction



This seminar:

- Outline stress, anxiety and depression
- Highlight the importance of reducing the stigma that exists around mental health conditions
- State how as an organisation and as individuals we can support colleagues with a mental health condition
- Raise awareness of the information and support available

Definition of mental health:

“A state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

World Health Organisation¹

Definition of a mental health condition:

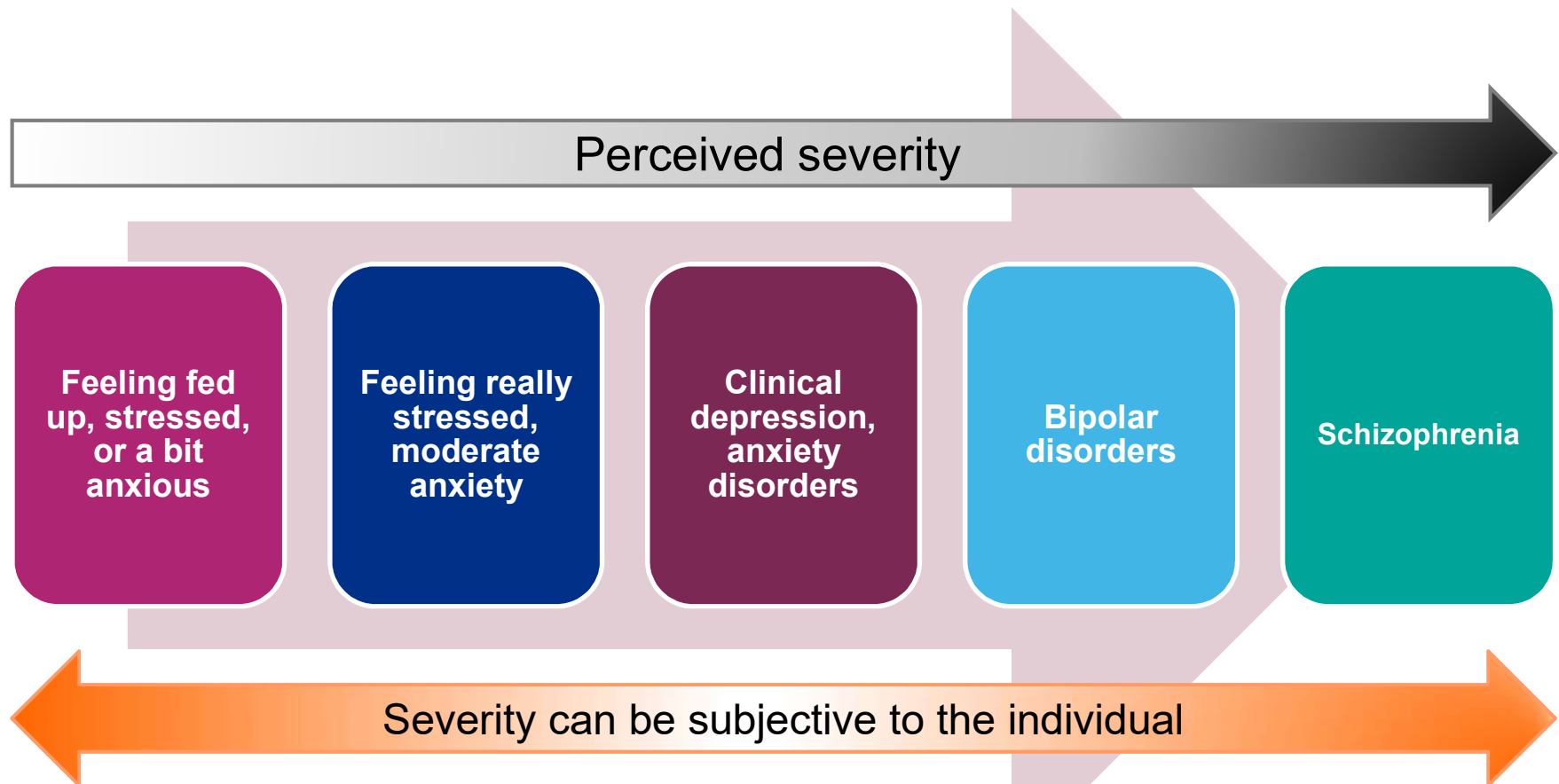
“A condition that affects a person's thinking, feeling or mood. Such conditions may affect someone's ability to relate to others and function each day. Each person will have different experiences, even people with the same diagnosis.”

National Alliance on Mental Health²



A spectrum of mental ill health

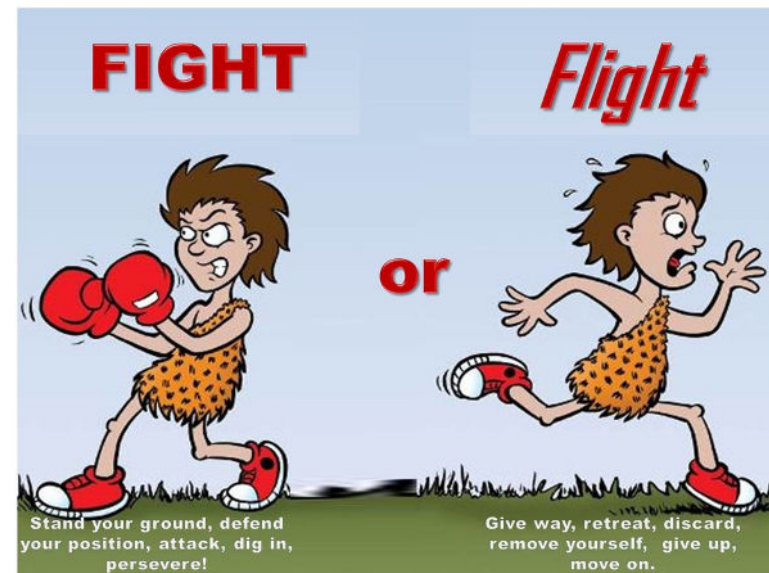
Anyone can suffer a period of mental ill health



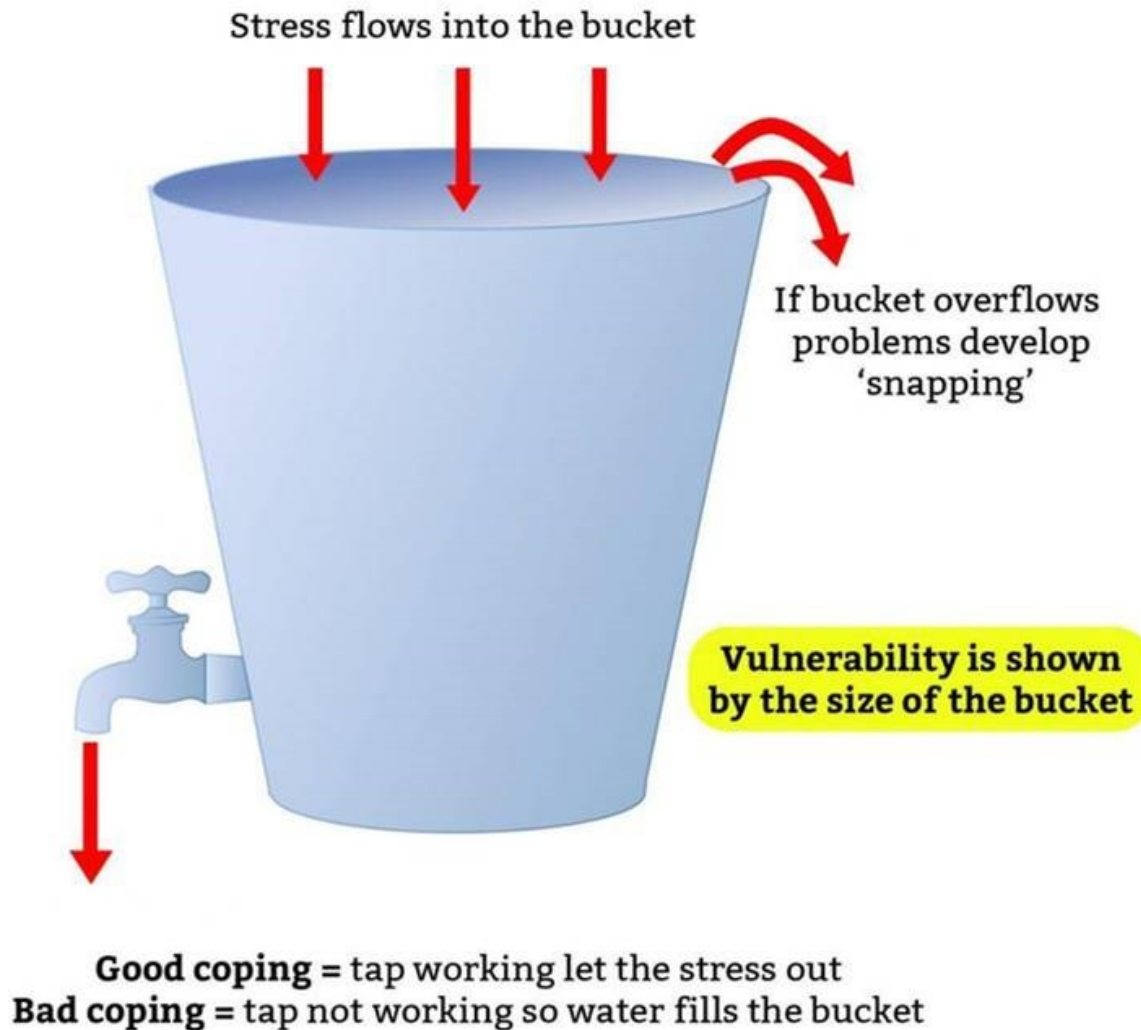
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What is 'Stress'?

- The adverse reaction people have to excessive pressures and demands placed on them
- Pressure can be motivating but also harmful
- Stress can cause several physical and psychological problems
 - Anxiety/panic attacks
 - Difficulty concentrating
 - Chest pain
 - Sleep problems
 - Increased use of alcohol



Our Stress Bucket



What is 'Anxiety'?



- A feeling of unease or dread
- It is normal to have feelings of anxiety or dread at some point in your life e.g. job interview
- Anxiety affects everyone differently. In some people their feelings are more constant and can affect their daily lives
- Anxiety can make a person imagine that things are worse than they really are, and prevent them from confronting their fears
- Anxiety is the main symptom of several conditions e.g. panic disorder, PTSD, OCD

What is 'Depression'?



‘Depression is a common and serious medical illness that negatively affects how you feel, the way you think and how you act. It causes feelings of sadness and/or a loss of interest in activities once enjoyed. It can lead to a variety of emotional and physical problems and can decrease a person’s ability to function at work and at home.’³

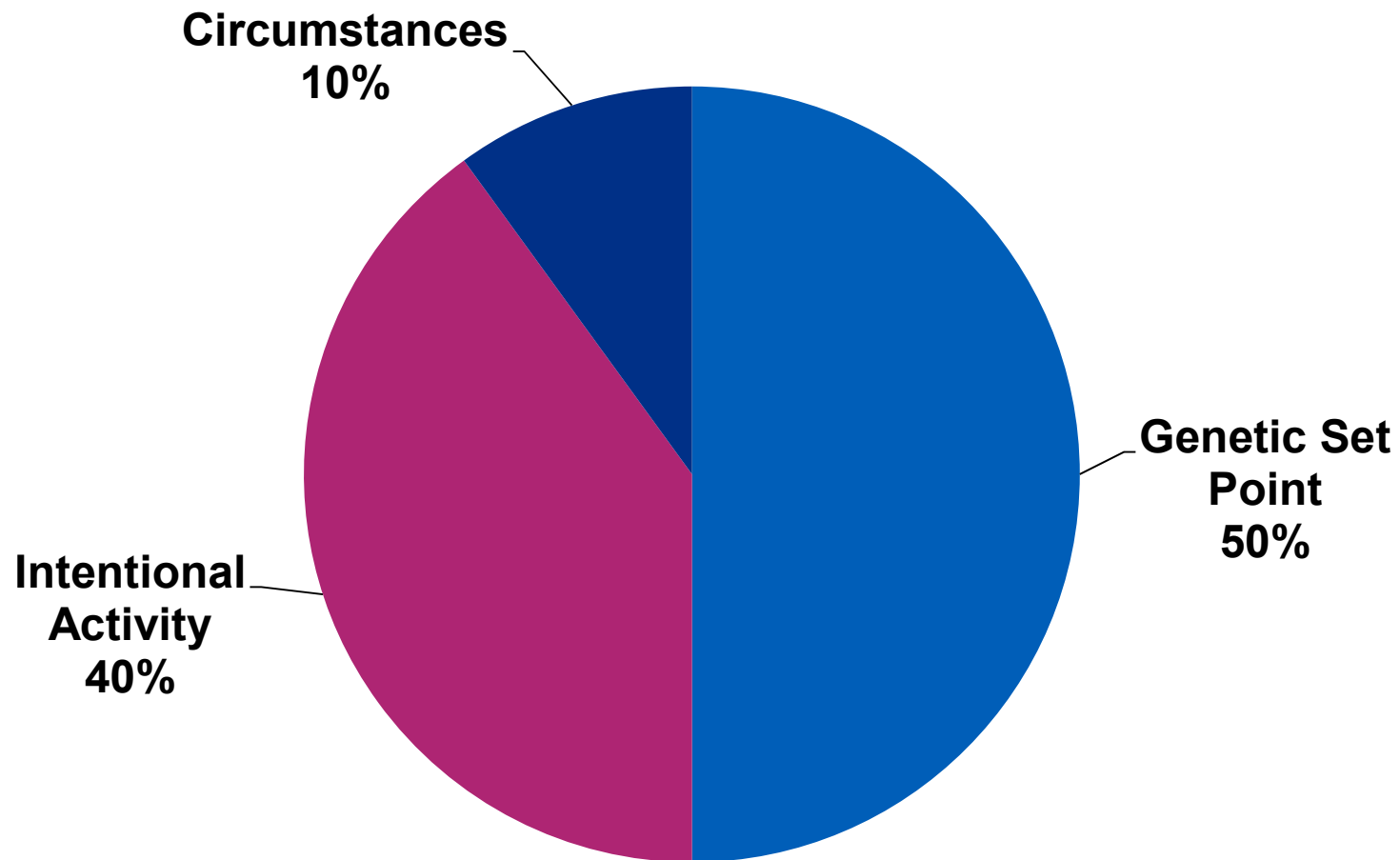
- **Mild:** in low spirit, makes everything harder to do
- **Moderate:** interferes with your every day life
- **Severe:** can be life-threatening. In 2017 there were 5,821 suicides registered in the UK (10.1 deaths per 100,000 population)⁴

Depression isn't just about feeling low...

- Fatigue/low energy levels
- Loss of interest or pleasure
- Feelings of guilt or low self-worth
- Disturbed sleep or appetite
- Poor concentration
- Gastrointestinal problems
- Increased headaches
- Self-harm
- Often co-exists with anxiety



What determines happiness?⁵



Lyubomirsky et al (2005)

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Health and safety at work: Summary statistics for Great Britain 2018⁶

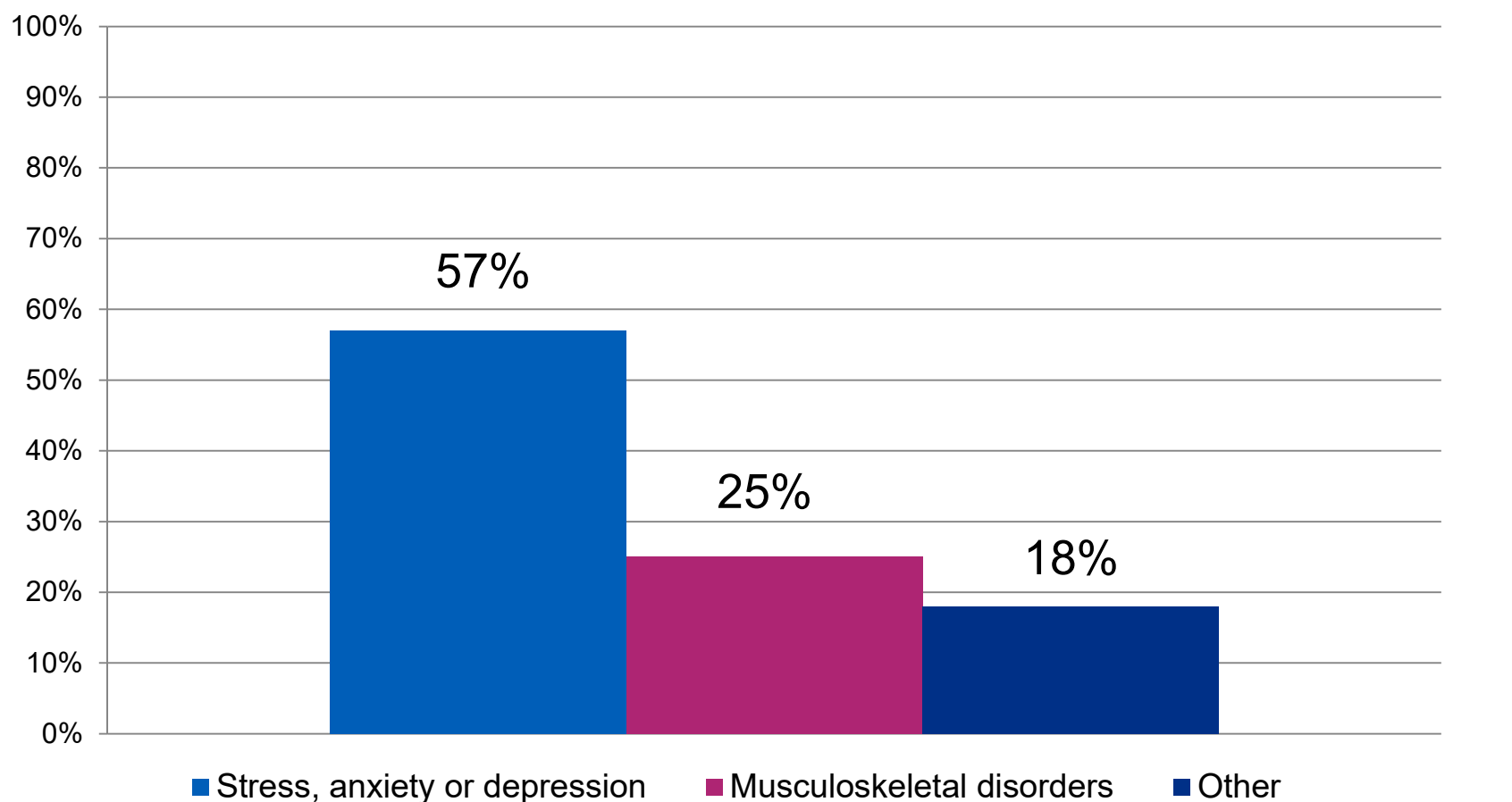
In 2017/18:

- 1.4million cases of work-related ill health
- 595,000 workers suffered from work-related stress, depression or anxiety
- 15.4million work days were lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety



Health and safety at work: Summary statistics for Great Britain 2018⁶

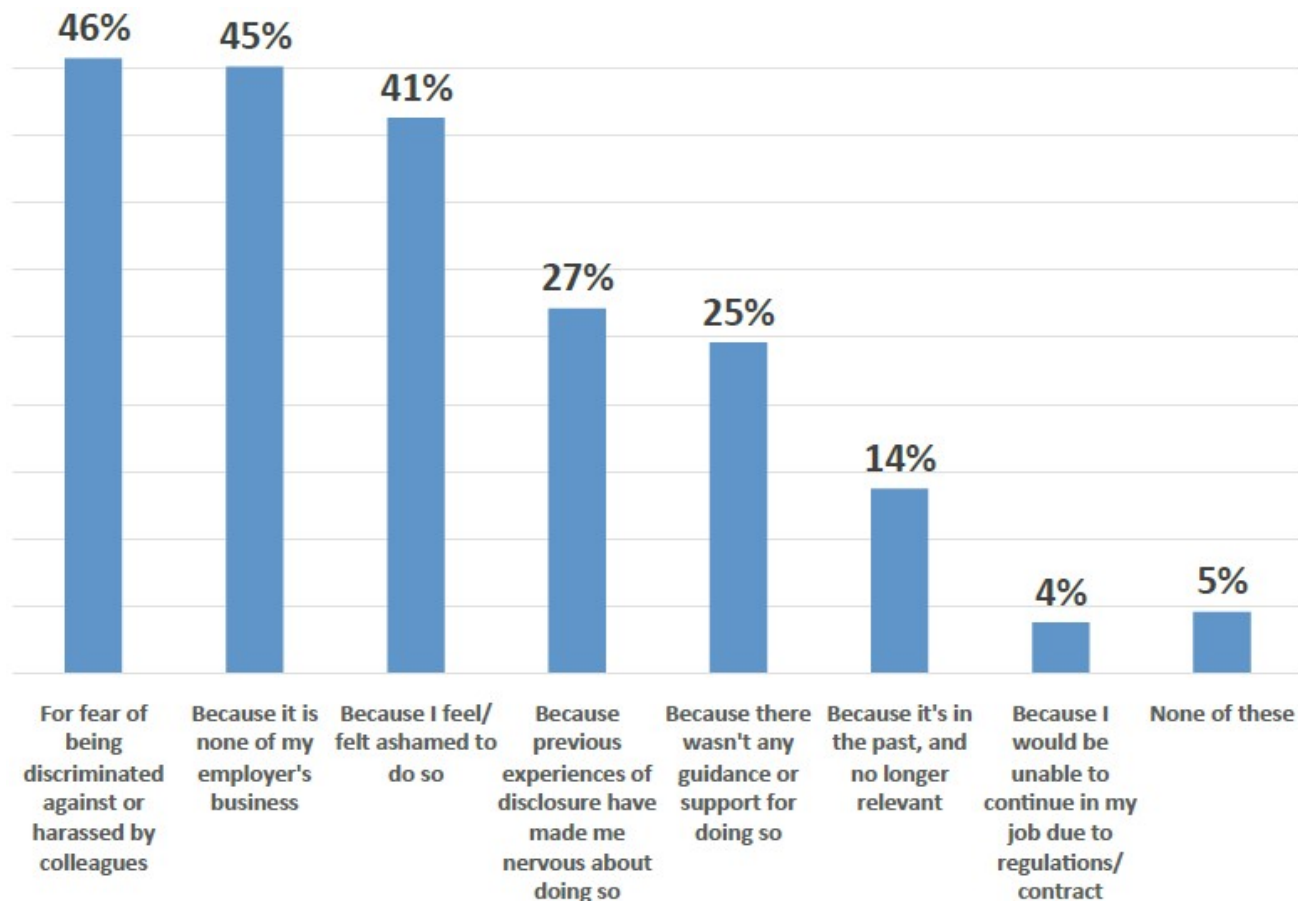
% of work days lost by type of ill health, 2017/18



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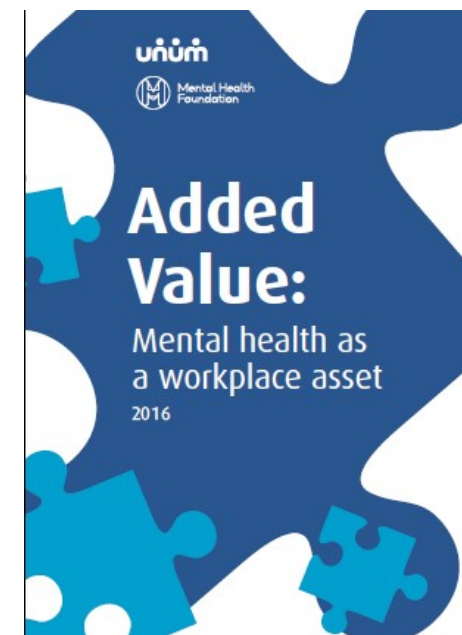
Added Value: Mental health as a workplace asset (2016)⁷

Reasons employees gave for not disclosing a mental health problem in the last 5 years (634 respondents)



Added Value: Mental health as a workplace asset (2016)⁷

- 86% (of 2,019 people) said their job and being at work was important/very important to protecting and maintaining their mental health
- Reported benefits of work included
 - Increased wellbeing
 - Improvements in self-esteem
 - Social connectedness
 - Having an identity
 - Having a purpose
 - Being valued by others



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Health and wellbeing at work (2019)⁸

- Annual survey of 1,078 UK organisations, 3.2million employees

The steps employers took to discourage presenteeism:



Base: 175

% of respondents whose organisation are taking steps

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Stigma

- There is still a lack of understanding about mental health and misconceptions persist:
 - ‘Sign of weakness’
 - ‘Can’t cope’
 - ‘Snap out of it’
 - ‘Cheer up’
- 50% of unsuccessful treatment is linked to medication non-compliance; in part due to societal pressure to not be on medication long term⁹
- Stigma makes people hide their mental ill health and discourages them from seeking help/support



Tackling stigma at work

- An organisation that promotes positive mental health and educates its staff can tackle stigma
- Staff who are able to talk openly about their mental health without fear of judgement or discrimination are more likely to:
 - Disclose existing mental health conditions
 - Seek help at an earlier stage
 - Support colleagues experiencing mental ill health¹⁰



About me...

- History of symptoms
- Getting the diagnosis
- Self-management
- Workplace adjustments



Mood Scale

This scale is not meant to be definitive but is an indicator of possible behaviours

Mania	10	Total loss of judgement, exorbitant spending, religious delusions and hallucinations.
	9	Lost touch with reality, incoherent, no sleep, paranoid and vindictive, reckless behaviour.
Hypomania	8	Inflated self-esteem, rapid thoughts and speech, counter-productive simultaneous tasks.
	7	Very productive, everything to excess (phone calls, writing, smoking, tea), charming and talkative.
Balanced Mood	6	Self-esteem good, optimistic, sociable and articulate, good decisions and get work done.
	5	Mood in balance, no symptoms of depression or mania. Life is going well and the outlook is good.
	4	Slight withdrawal from social situations, concentration less than usual, slight agitation.
Mild to Moderate Depression	3	Feelings of panic and anxiety, concentration difficult and memory poor, some comfort in routine.
	2	Slow thinking, no appetite, need to be alone, sleep excessive or difficult, everything a struggle.
Severe Depression	1	Feelings of hopelessness and guilt, thoughts of suicide, little movement, impossible to do anything.
	0	Endless suicidal thoughts, no way out, no movement, everything is bleak and it will always be like this.

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Workplace adjustments

- CCG policies:
 - 'Managing Sickness Absence'
 - 'Flexible Working'
- Flexible working hours
- Changes to a person's role
- Moving a person's workplace
- Allowing time off work e.g. for counselling
- Support with adjusting the work/life balance
- Extra training, coaching or mentoring
- Increased guidance from their manager in managing their workload



Time to Change

<https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/>

CCG Contact: Michelle Smith

- 'Time to Change' is a growing social movement working to change the way we think and act about mental health problems
- Employers pledge to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination via their Action Plan



let's end mental health discrimination

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Because
ONE life lost
is **ONE** too many

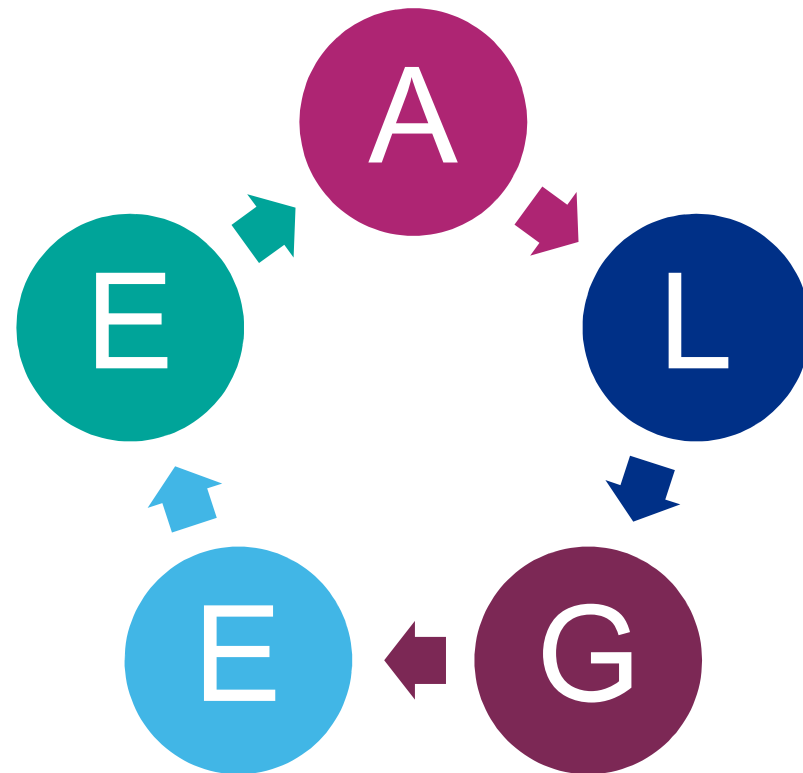
<https://www.zerosuicidealliance.com/about-us>

CCG Contact: Carol Slater

- Aims to improve support for people contemplating suicide by raising awareness of and promoting suicide prevention training
- The training:
 - enables staff to identify when someone is presenting with suicidal thoughts/behaviour
 - to speak to staff in a supportive manner
 - to empower staff to signpost individuals to the correct services/support

Principles of 'Mental Health First Aider'

- **A**pproach the person, assess and assist with any crisis
- **L**isten and communicate non-judgementally
- **G**ive support and information
- **E**ncourage the person to get appropriate professional help
- **E**ncourage other supports



Supporting your staff / colleagues

1. Help to abolish stigma – normalise mental health
2. Think about your terminology
3. Treat everyone as an individual
4. Talk to staff/colleagues normally
5. Actively listen
6. Offer help or support
7. Encourage them to seek help
8. Discuss workplace adjustments
9. Consider Wellness Action Plans (WAPs)
10. Encourage staff engagement in mental health training



Build your own resilience

Develop your skills to help you manage and gain greater control of your mental health



- Talk to others
- Don't be afraid or embarrassed to ask for help/advice
- Be kind to yourself: have realistic expectations of yourself, take that break
- Accept and embrace who you are
- Know your triggers
- Consider mindfulness
- Keep active

Build your own resilience



- Hobbies, arts and crafts
- Watch your nutrition and drink sensibly
- Relaxation techniques e.g. aromatherapy, massage
- Consider talking therapies/cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT)
- Don't expect everyone to know the right things to say

Conclusion

- There is no shame in having a mental health condition
- Don't be afraid to ask for help/support
- Actively talk about mental health to increase understanding and help reduce stigma
- Mental health illnesses can be just as debilitating as physical illnesses
- Treat everyone as an individual



Thanks for listening!



References

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