Good mental health

Everyone faces challenges in life that can affect our mental health. For many, recent times have significantly impacted the way in which we live and work; creating uncertainty, increasing our anxieties and depriving us of the coping systems we had, and have, in place.

Today, it is a sad reality that issues surrounding mental health, either as a short- or long-term condition, are often shrouded in shame and prejudice. However, if we are to learn anything from the Covid-19 pandemic, good mental health is as important as a person’s physical health, both in their personal and working environments.

Talking about mental health in the workplace

Many people experience mental health issues in silence, reluctant to tell colleagues of the challenges they are facing or to seek the help that they rightly need and deserve.

It is important that we, as employers or employees, create a workplace environment and culture in which people can speak openly and honestly about their mental health concerns without fear, discrimination or reprisal. In doing so, everyone will gain a better understanding of mental health issues, helping to create a more collegiate and people-focussed place of work.

Accessing the right support

Reaching out to friends, family and colleagues can provide excellent emotional support. However, there is also a considerable amount of guidance and support available from a range of mental health organisations.

To help registrants access useful information and support about mental health and wellbeing, the General Chiropractic Council has prepared this resource pack. It includes relevant guidance from a range of different sources and experts, as well as helpful tips and signposting to additional support services.

Finally, for some people, mental health issues can become complex, and require support and ongoing treatment. If you begin to feel your emotional health and wellbeing is starting to affect your life, I urge you to seek extra support and help.

Nick Jones
Chief Executive and Registrar
**Mental health facts and figures**

Mental health problems are a growing public health concern. They are prevalent not just in the UK, but around the world.

- Mental health problems are one of the **main causes of the overall disease burden worldwide**
- Mental health and behavioural problems (e.g. depression, anxiety and drug use) are reported to be the primary drivers of disability worldwide
- Major depression is thought to be the **second leading cause of disability worldwide** and a major contributor to the burden of suicide and ischemic heart disease
- It is estimated that **1 in 6** people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem.
Evidence suggests following these five steps can help improve your mental health and wellbeing. Trying these things may help you feel more positive and able to get the most out of life.

1. Connect with other people

Good relationships are important for your mental wellbeing. They can:
- Help you to build a sense of belonging and self-worth
- Give you an opportunity to share positive experiences
- Provide emotional support and allow you to support others.

2. Be physically active

Being active is not only great for your physical health and fitness. Evidence shows it can also improve your mental wellbeing by:
- Raising your self-esteem
- Helping you to set goals or challenges and achieve them
- Releasing endorphins which can help to positively change your mood.

3. Learn new skills

Research shows that learning new skills can improve your mental wellbeing by:
- Boosting self-confidence and raising self-esteem
- Helping you to build a sense of purpose
- Helping you to connect with others.

4. Give to others

Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve your mental wellbeing by:
- Creating positive feelings and a sense of reward
- Giving you a feeling of purpose and self-worth
- Helping you connect with other people.

5. Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)

Paying more attention to the present moment can improve your mental wellbeing. This includes your thoughts and feelings, your body and the world around you.

Some people call this awareness "mindfulness". Mindfulness can help you enjoy life more and understand yourself better. It can positively change the way you feel about life and how you approach challenges.

**5 steps to mental wellbeing - NHS (www.nhs.uk)**
Working conditions and environment can have a significant impact on your employees' mental health and overall performance. There are a few things that employers can do to address mental illness in the workplace, from promotion of a healthy work environment to supporting employees who experience mental health issues.

- **1 in 6.8 people** experience mental health problems in the workplace (14.7%)
- Women in full-time employment are nearly **twice as likely** to have a common mental health problem as full-time employed men (19.8% vs 10.9%)
- Evidence suggests that **12.7%** of all sickness absence days in the UK can be attributed to mental health conditions
- Better mental health support in the workplace can save UK businesses up to **£8 billion** per year.

(Mental Health Foundation)

**Resources**

**Complete guide to navigating mental health for small businesses**  
*Source: Federation of Small Businesses*

This guide offers advice and tips on how small business owners and the self-employed can approach mental health in the workplace.

[mental-health-campaign-guide (mentalhealthatwork.org.uk)](mentalhealthatwork.org.uk)

**How to promote wellbeing and tackle the causes of work-related mental health problems**  
*Source: MIND*

Mind has developed a three-pronged approach to help employers support good mental health in the workplace by:

1. Promoting wellbeing for all employees
2. Tackling the causes of work-related mental health problems
3. Supporting employees who are experiencing mental health problems.

This guide sets out simple, practical and inexpensive steps that any organisation can take, including how adjustments to an organisation’s culture can boost employee wellbeing and engagement.

[how-to-promote-wellbeing-and-tackle-the-causes-of-work-related-mh-problems_walesv2.pdf](mentalhealthatwork.org.uk)

**Mental health at work commitment**  
*Source: CIPD*

The Mental Health at Work Commitment provides a framework to help organisations put in place the key actions needed to support better mental health outcomes for employees, and links to practical tools to help implement each of the six standards. Signing the commitment sends a strong message to employees as well as the wider community that mental health is a priority for the organisation.

[Mental Health in the Workplace | Factsheets | CIPD](mentalhealthatwork.org.uk)
For those with mental health conditions, being employed can be an important step to recovery, improving self-esteem and confidence and reducing psychological distress. Conversely, unemployment increases the risk of developing mental health problems, and is associated with increased rates of depression and even suicide. (Mental Health Foundation)

- Only half of people who struggle with mental health issues speak to their managers about their condition. (Mind)

RESOURCES

**Stress at work - Advice for employees with mental health conditions**

*Source: Health and Safety Executive*

If you already feel under pressure, it's hard to distinguish when 'stress' begins to affect your condition, making it worse or bringing on an episode. Many of the symptoms of stress and a mental health condition are similar. The main differences are the severity and duration of the symptoms and the impact they have on your everyday life. This guide provides advice on what to do if you feel you have a problem and how to help your manager identify the right support.

**Remember**

- Stress and mental health conditions do not affect everyone in the same way
- Your employer can make adjustments to ease your problems, but only if you give them a better understanding of your situation
- Discussions can be positive, create greater understanding and allow your employer to offer the support needed.

**Stress at work - Advice for employees with mental health conditions**

*Source: Health and Safety Executive*

**How to be mentally healthy at work**

*Source: Mind*

If your mental health condition is impacting your working life, it can be tricky to know what to do. This guide provides information on how you can be mentally healthy at work, with suggestions for what you can do and where you can get support if you experience poor mental health.

**How to be mentally healthy at work**

*Source: Mind*
Healthcare professionals have a responsibility to promote good mental health in order to support patients who may have a mental health condition. Just like in physical health, healthcare professionals can promote mental health by building relationships with patients, encouraging healthy behaviours and helping patients access support.

Wellbeing and mental health: Applying all our health
Resource: NHS

The following information below will help front-line health and care professionals use their trusted relationships with patients, families and communities to improve their mental health and wellbeing.

Healthcare professionals can provide advice and support to people of all ages and work to:
- Meet the patient’s mental health and wellbeing needs
- Help identify those at risk of poor mental health
- Prevent mental health problems from developing or worsening
- Prevent suicide.

When working with patients who have existing mental health conditions, they can:
- Ensure their physical health needs are met
- Support their social needs.

Wellbeing and mental health: Applying All Our Health - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Supporting a colleague with mental health conditions

Awareness of the physical and psychological signs that someone is struggling with their mental health and wellbeing means you are more likely to notice when a colleague is in need of support.

- 76% say colleagues are considerate of their mental wellbeing, and a further 69% believe the same of their managers (BITC and Bupa)

How to support mental health at work
Source: Mental Health Foundation

Talking about mental health can seem daunting. Conversations don’t always start easily but they often mean a lot to a person having a tough time. It all starts with asking someone how they are doing in a warm and authentic way – giving them a chance to realise that you are being sincere and friendly.

How can you support someone day-to-day?

Many people who experience mental health problems get through their difficulties and return to life exactly as it was. However, we can’t always assume this. Like with many long-term health conditions, people with mental health problems may need to make long-term or permanent changes in their lives or jobs to manage. Colleagues may need your support on an ongoing basis – don’t assume that they need special treatment but equally don’t assume that everything is fine just because some time has passed.

You could:

- Check in with colleagues informally to see how they are doing, and, if you manage someone, offer them the chance to discuss their mental health at supervision sessions
- Offer to be a mentor or coach, or just a friendly support on an ongoing basis
- Ask if there’s anything you can do to support a person in managing their condition. They might, for example, ask you to help them spot signs that indicate they may be becoming unwell.

how-to-support-mental-health-at-work.pdf (mentalhealth.org.uk)

Responding to unusual behaviour
Source: Rethink Mental Illness

If you have a colleague, friend or family member with a mental health condition, some of their behaviour might worry you. This factsheet suggests some ways to deal with unusual behaviour.

Responding to unusual behaviour (rethink.org)
Sometimes you don’t have all the answers, and if you find yourself faced with a situation you don’t quite understand, don’t be afraid to talk to the experts. Some places to find out more are:

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<td>Mental health - NHS (<a href="http://www.nhs.uk">www.nhs.uk</a>)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Rethink Mental Health</td>
<td>We are Rethink Mental Illness</td>
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<td>Mental Health Foundation</td>
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<td>Mental Health UK</td>
<td>Mental Health UK - Forward Together (mentalhealth-uk.org)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anxiety UK</td>
<td>National charity helping people with Anxiety - Anxiety UK</td>
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Mental Health Helplines:

- NHS: 111
- Samaritans: 116 123
- Mind: 0300 123 3393 to call, or text 86463
- Rethink: 0300 5000 927 (Open 9:30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday)
- Campaign Against Living Miserably (CALM): 0800 58 58 58