



OCTOBER 2022 NEWSLETTER



World Mental Health Day 2022.

World Mental Health Day takes place on 10 October, and this year's theme set by the [World Health Organisation](#) is, "make mental health and wellbeing for all a global priority".

Mental health in the workplace:

Currently, 1-in-6 workers deal with mental health problems such as anxiety, depression or stress. When overlooked, these problems can lead to burnout, loss of concentration and poor decision-making limiting their ability to contribute meaningfully to their professional lives.

Stigma in the workplace:

The stigma and discrimination that we often fear regarding mental health can prevent us from reaching out for the support we may need. Stigma refers to individuals who are perceived in an adverse way due to their mental health,

while discrimination refers to those who are treated adversely due to their mental health.

Our mental health directly influences how we think, feel and act: it also affects our physical health. Our work culture and environment influence our overall physical and mental well-being. It is therefore important to foster an environment that is open to discussions and one that is approachable for anyone seeking help for their mental health.

How mental ill health and work-related stress can go together:

Work-related stress and mental health problems often go together, and the symptoms can be very similar.

Work-related stress can aggravate an existing mental health problem, making it more difficult to control. If work-related stress reaches a point where it has triggered an existing mental health problem, it becomes hard to separate one from the other.

Common mental health problems and stress can exist independently – people can experience work-related stress and physical changes such as high blood pressure, without having anxiety, depression or other mental health problems. They can also have anxiety and depression without experiencing stress. The key differences between them are their cause(s) and the way(s) they are treated.

Stress is a reaction to events or experiences in someone's home life, work life or a combination of both. Common mental health problems can have a single cause outside work, for example bereavement, divorce, postnatal depression, a medical condition or a family history of the problem. But people can have these sorts of problems with no obvious causes.

But what about the other 364 days of the year?

It's true that raising awareness about mental health shouldn't only just be one day out of a whole year – mental health isn't just a 24-hour event. Many individuals struggle with their emotional wellbeing. They either suffer in silence or don't receive the support they need and deserve to recover and manage their conditions effectively.

This is why it's really important that conversations are kept going all year round surrounding mental health and wellbeing.

Four simple changes that we can make to improve our mental health:

Reach In: We are all very familiar with campaigns which encourage us to reach out but any individual that has suffered with poor mental health will tell you that it's not as easy as it sounds. Mental health brings an onslaught of feelings such as unworthiness, helplessness, hopelessness, shame and guilt. Asking

Asking for help or support when the illness it's self has you believing that you are unworthy of help is a constant battle.

If you know somebody is struggling or seems to have gone quiet [Reach In](#).

Create self-care anchors and stick to them:

The messaging behind self-care has become convoluted and diluted but self-care is essentially health-care. It's the thoughts, actions and behaviours that future-you will thank now-you for; emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually. These change from person to person because we're all topped-up and drained by different things. In creating self-care anchors, we create a list of things that we'll do daily that are non-negotiable; a walk, speak to a loved one, taking breaks. Just as anchors ground and balance ships in the midst of stormy seas, self-care anchors can ground and balance us as the world around us is topsy-turvy.

Turn helplessness into hopefulness:

With anxiety being sky high, we can get caught in a negative thought loop where we're searching (without realising we're doing it) for confirmation of that scary thing – that's confirmation bias. During this pandemic we've not had to search high and low, it's been everywhere and anywhere. It's not that we want to fake-positivity-pave the way, we can simultaneously care about issues and create a more comfortable internal environment. We can do this by limiting our news consumption and choosing how and when we consume it. Audit our social media feed so that they're places we can learn, be uplifted and inspired.

Lower our self-expectations:

Our expectations remain high when our conditions have gone low and that's a mighty problem. It's unlikely that we're in an environment within which we'll bloom right now and so if we're dropping the ball, second-guessing ourselves, finding decision-making difficult, feeling tetchy, etc, then that's completely normal. In the face of such uncertainty, it's to be expected. Energy conservation is important for longevity, try to snatch micro-moments to top up your reserves and be mindful of whether you're expecting too much of yourself in a time that it's really just about survival. Give yourself permission to take the easier routes and options where possible.

Help and guidance is always available, I am always available for a discreet and non-judgmental chat and I can signpost you to the correct support to help your recovery processes. If you feel uncomfortable all the important information is located on my Mental Health board.

James Morgan IIRSM MIIAI AMRSGB