Tackling causes of mental health issues in the workplace

As an employer, do you know what's going on with your employees?

Here's part two of our brief summary of a <u>very useful guide written by MIND</u>, the mental health charity, that we think you will appreciate.

Research shows that when employees feel valued and supported, they tend to have higher wellbeing levels, are more committed to the organisation and they perform better too. By supporting staff wellbeing you can reap the benefits through better morale, loyalty and commitment.

Open and supportive workplaces benefit everyone – employees, employers and the bottom line.

Tips for Line Managers:

- **Lead by example** Employers and Line Managers should send a clear message that staff wellbeing matters. Actively encourage all staff to take lunch breaks and annual leave as well as working healthy hours.

- **Build confidence and raise awareness** Familiarise yourself with your mental health policies and practices and routinely publicise the ways that staff can seek confidential advice and support.

- **Normalise mental health** Keep in touch with your staff to check how they are getting on. Create space for them to ask questions, raise issues and to talk about home as well as work problems if they wish.

Workplace triggers:

- Long hours and no breaks
- Unrealistic expectations or deadlines
- Overly pressured working environments
- Unmanageable workloads
- Lack of control over work
- Inability to use annual leave
- Poor physical working environment
- High-risk roles
- Lone working
- Difficult interpersonal relationships
- Poor internal communication
- Poor managerial support
- Job insecurity
- Poorly managed change

- **Take stock** Include an agenda item at team meetings to discuss people's wellbeing together and what factors are affecting this. This will help normalise mental health and help staff think about their own and each other's.

- **Be available for your staff** Regular one-to-ones can help maintain good working relationships and build trust. Managers should also help staff manage workloads by ensuring clear definition of expectations and agreeing reasonable timescales.

- **Treat people as individuals** Treat people with respect, praising good work as soon as someone does it and offering support if there are skills gaps. Listen to your staff and be flexible in your management style to suit each team member and task. Ask them for feedback on the support you provide and what they need to help them achieve their goals.

- **Learning and development** Ensure your employees are confident, well-equipped and supported to do their job to a high standard. Rewarding them and developing their skills will build confidence in addition to providing formal training.

- **Develop a mental health strategy** A clear policy will set out how your organisation will promote staff wellbeing, tackle the work-related causes and support staff experiencing them.

- **Review policy and practice** Make sure your HR policies are joined up and inclusive of mental health. All staff should also be given information on how mental health is managed and what support is available as part of their induction training.

- **Train line managers to discuss mental health** Managers need training and clear guidance on how to support staff with mental health issues.

- **Normalise mental health** Ensure regular one-to-ones embed this and that staff wellbeing is monitored routinely.

- **Take stock of mental health** Look out for areas of the organisation or job roles where there's a risk of poor wellbeing – if timesheets show excessive hours, or if sickness absence rates increase in one area, this may indicate a problem.

- **Promote a good work/life balance** Encourage staff to work sensible hours, take their full lunch break and holiday entitlement. Senior leaders should lead by example in these areas.

- **Promote positive work relationships** Encourage staff social events, teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing and back this up with robust policies on bullying and harassment.

- **Foster employee engagement** Promoting two-way communication and involving staff in decision-making helps build trust. Seek out staff views and listen to what they say, take action to address any issues.

- **Listen** Ensure the voices of people with mental health problems are heard in staff forums, diversity networks and other structures within your organisation.

We hope you found this brief guide useful and informative

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