

Our mental health is as real and vital as our physical health, but as our mental health is invisible, it can often go unnoticed or ignored. Thankfully, many employers like yours understand that treating an individual's mental health as an afterthought is simply not an option. Many leaders are actively raising awareness of - and reducing the stigma surrounding - mental ill-health in the workplace, so everyone can start bringing their whole selves to work.

The quality of our mental health affects how we think, feel and act in all aspects of our life, including our physical health and relationships among other things. That's why it is essential for us to talk openly about it and do what we can to actively support our own wellbeing.

There are many things that can cause our mental health to decline, both at work and outside of it; from an unmanageable workload, to a lack of managerial support or financial difficulties, to a breakdown of a relationship or a decline in our physical health. Some of us may already have a diagnosed mental health condition, some can be afraid to seek help or may not know where to start, and others may not even realise they are suffering with mental ill-health. Whatever your situation, your mental health is of immeasurable value, which is why understanding the quality of it is very important. So this guide provides some insightful mental health and wellbeing takeaways for you to consider and explore.

Why is it important for employers to support mental ill-health in the workplace?

Employees who are supported at work feel valued, and in turn, they offer more value to their organisation. If managers adopt a 'people-centric' approach they can work with their team members to get the best from each person and offer the right level and type of support that each individual needs. This may mean making adjustments for a short period of time, such as offering flexible working or reducing the workload, which - in the long run - helps to reduce absences and retain talented employees, as well as providing employees with the opportunity to truly flourish. This type of approach will help to create a healthy working relationship and working environment where taking care of people's mental health and wellbeing is a normal part of the company culture, and this will lead to greater business successes alongside making a genuine and positive difference to people's daily lives.

Employers also have legal obligations when it comes to the health, safety and welfare of their staff. This includes having a duty of care for employee mental health too, by ensuring that staff are protected from discrimination and entitled to reasonable adjustments if they disclose information about a mental health condition.



Mental Wellbeing

Regardless of whether someone has a diagnosable mental health condition or not, they can still experience periods of low mental wellbeing, which will have a negative impact on their productivity, their enjoyment of daily activities, and their quality of life, so they need support and strategies to improve things which is something leaders are in a position to provide. Experiencing low mental wellbeing over a prolonged period of time can cause someone to develop a [mental health condition](#). And even though we all have a bad day from time to time, as life has its natural ups and downs, if you are beginning to have more 'downs' than 'ups', it's best to work out what's going on and explore what options are available.



Stress

Long-term stress can be damaging to our mental and physical health. Sometimes it is difficult to distinguish between pressure and stress, but if you are feeling mentally and emotionally strained you are likely stressed and it should be addressed. You can take a look at our [stress busting tools](#) to give you some ideas to put into practice if you're interested.

Your employer will also have completed a stress risk assessment to minimise the impact of workplace stress on you and your colleagues. If you currently feel stressed in your role, please speak with your manager. Your stress may be easily reduced or resolved by undertaking additional training, delegating a task or two, or getting some flexibility with your deadlines.



In connection to stress and other forms of poor mental health, managing anxiety levels and building personal resilience is an effective way to protect and improve your quality of life. Building on these key skills can help you become better prepared for any challenges that arise, as well as help you make the most out of the good times too. If you're keen to develop your skills in this area, there's information available online and some fantastic [short online courses](#) to help you on your way.

Employee Actions:

What can you do to ensure you look after your mental health at work?

Be honest with yourself - self awareness is the first step to help you identify if you are experiencing any signs of workplace stress - e.g. are you struggling with your workload, are you skipping breaks, or are you suffering with any physical or emotional symptoms? If the answer is yes to any of these, consider making or requesting some adjustments, with the assistance of your line manager if necessary.

Take advantage of the resources given to you by your employer, such as booklets, Mental Health First Aider's, Employee Assistance Programmes, awareness training etc.

Complete a [Wellness Action Plan](#) to help you stay mentally well at work. You can complete it alone or ask for input from your line manager.

Complete a [stress assessment](#) for yourself to see where you're currently at.

Ensure you're taking regular mini breaks as well as your lunch break during the day.

Seek help from your HR department or line manager if your mental health is affecting your day-to-day work.

Further information:

[Mind](#) - mental health at work

[NHS](#) - looking after your mental health

iHASCO'S [Mental Health & Wellbeing guide](#)

For urgent mental health support visit the [NHS - urgent support page](#).