

Mental Health Awareness



“First Line of Defence”



Think **Bigger**. Be **Better**. Do **More**.

The Motivational Intelligence Company

Mental Health Awareness Toolkit

Welcome to mental health awareness training.

This short support programme is designed to enable participants to have a greater insight into managing their own stress levels and understand the impact stress has on others, including having an increased knowledge of suicide, depression, anxiety, self-harm, alcohol and drugs and psychosis.

Mental health awareness is targeted at supporting staff in the construction industry to enable them to better support their colleagues who are experiencing distress.

Along with the mental health awareness training session the worksheets are designed to give support and useful information around dealing with people in a crisis and how to look after your own well-being, especially around managing stress and the effects of COVID.

Page	Content:
3-4	Managing people in distress
5-6	Suicide and its effects
7-8	Depression and its effects
9-11	Managing stress and its effects
12-14	Anxiety and its effects
15	Self-harm and its effects
16-17	Alcohol and drugs (what to look for/The signs)
18-19	Psychosis: What is and its effects
20	Recovery (How long is a piece of string)
20	Looking after yourself – self-care
21-22	Useful Resources- We all need help

“Life is so much brighter when we focus
on what truly matters”

Anon

What matters to you?

(Write it down below)

A large, empty rounded rectangular box with a blue border, intended for the user to write their response to the question 'What matters to you?'. The box is positioned centrally below the question and the instruction '(Write it down below)'. It has rounded corners and a consistent blue outline.

Managing People in Distress



People become upset for any number of different reasons that are individual and relevant to them.

Distress can be a reaction to a common disturbing life experience such as receiving bad news or it could be a build-up of many events, causing overload and stress.

Whatever the cause of the emotional upset, the principles of helping are broadly the same. And they hold good whether you are helping a stranger, a friend work colleague or relative.

Q How do you help someone who is distressed?

When someone is distressed it can sometimes be difficult to know what to do for that person, this can be especially true if they are a colleague or client who you have just met.

Here are a few tips:

- ◆ The first thing is to **be a good listener**
- ◆ Give people time to talk
- ◆ Make eye contact appropriately, avoid staring
- ◆ Be physically still and relaxed, not agitated or using sudden body movements
- ◆ Offer non-verbal encouragement – “mmm” and so on. That can indicate that you are listening, and are happy to hear what the person has to say
- ◆ Avoid false reassurance, such as, “everything will be okay.” After all, it might not be. And even if it is, that is not how the person is feeling at that moment
- ◆ Watch how the person is responding. Listen and learn from what they tell you about how they are feeling
- ◆ Accept their response – avoid arguing or disagreeing with them if you think something else is advisable, such as help from another agency/service, calmly explain why.

Things that stop us being good listeners

Judging People: We have the tendency to make assumptions and judge people and this can effect our ability to really hear their message.

Thinking in advance your response or pre-empting what someone is going to say: This can lead to mentally 'tuning out' before the person has finished his/her sentence. In either case, it leads to misunderstanding, frustration, and possibly even anger and conflict.

Only hearing what you want to hear: by not accepting a person for who they are you risk only hearing the message you want to hear, not what is really being said.

Checklist for Active Listening

- ✓ **Look** – maintain good eye contact with the person who is speaking
- ✓ **Smile** – use body language and a friendly face to show you are listening
- ✓ **Listen without interrupting** – it's okay for another person to share their feelings. Don't interrupt. You do not have to feel the same way
- ✓ **Ask questions** – make sure you understand what has been said. Paraphrase to let the other person know what you have heard. E.g. "It sound like you are saying..."

Suicide

Q Are there any signs I should look for when talking to someone who may be thinking about suicide?

Believe it or not most people thinking about suicide will try to let someone know. There are several signs to watch out for, think of them as *invitations or indicators*.

The key to helping is watching out for these invitations or indicator and knowing what to do to help. Everyone is different so in some cases few or none of the signs will be evident.

Common signs might be:

- Someone talking about wanting to die, or having a way out
- Someone talking about feeling helpless, hopeless or desperate
- Shows changes in their behaviour or mood that is not characteristic such as being distracted, distant or sad
- Has been through a stressful life event or has suffered a bereavement and doesn't appear to be coping
- Has made a previous suicide attempt
- Is behaving in an unusual way such as giving away all their possessions, making arrangements for their pets etc
- Is uncharacteristically behaving in a way that may put themselves at risk i.e. drinking in excess, taking drugs risk taking behaviour etc

Q What do you do if you think someone is having thoughts of suicide or tells you they are having suicidal thoughts?

If you suspect someone is thinking about suicide, don't hesitate to raise the subject. Be direct but in a caring and supportive way. Reflect back to the person what you have heard and ask the question direct.

People often talk about feeling 'depressed' when they have hit a bad patch and are feeling down. Occasional mild depression such as this is natural and usually goes away given time. This is not true of severe depression.

Things you could look out for:

A person who is clinically depressed will have at least four of the following symptoms for at least two weeks;

- An unusually sad mood that does not go away
- Loss of enjoyment and interest in activities that used to be enjoyable
- Lack of energy and tiredness

People who are depressed can also have other symptoms, such as;

- Loss of confidence in themselves, or poor self esteem
- Feeling guilty when the not at fault
- Wishing they were dead
- Difficulty in concentrating or making decisions
- Moving more slowly and being agitated and unable to settle
- Having difficulty sleeping or sleeping too much
- Loss of interest in food, or eating too much - possibly resulting in weight loss or gain.

Q How can I help?

- Be a good listener
- Let the person describe their feelings
- Make it clear you care about them and how they feel
- Do not be critical of the person
- Don't use humour or try to jolly someone along
- Reassure them there are effective treatments
- Encourage the person to see their GP

Remember depression puts a person at risk of suicide as the symptoms can be so painful. If you are concerned ask the question about suicide.

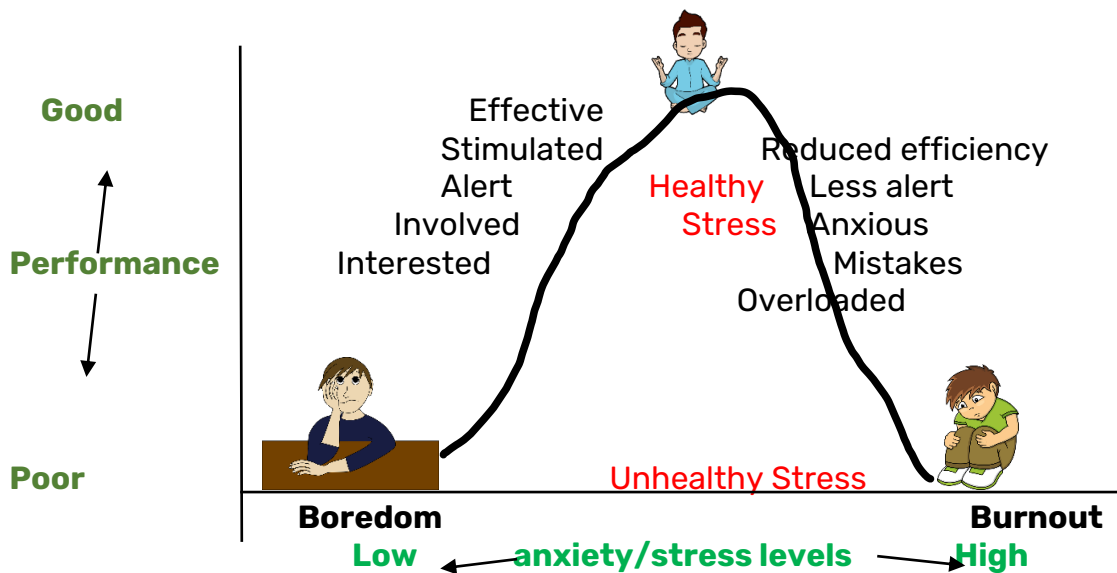
Stress

Stress is an everyday fact of life, it is essential.

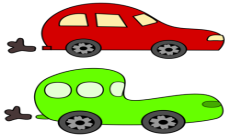
Stress is any change that you must adapt to and in our day-to-day lives there will be a continuous stream of potentially stressful experiences. Whether the stress you experience is the result of major life changes or the cumulative effect of minor everyday hassles, it is how you respond to these experiences that determines the impact stress will have on your life.

Try to think of stress like an increase in blood pressure, sometimes it is necessary but too much for too long and it becomes a problem.

Performance curve - where are you know?



Sources of stress



Your Environment

Weather
Pollution
Noise
Traffic



Physiological

Lack of sleep
Poor diet
Illness
Lack of exercise



Social Stressors

Deadlines
Financial problems
Demands on your time



Thoughts

Your brain's interpretation of changes and when to turn on fight or flight response

Positive ways to cope with stress

- Do some type of physical activity
- Talk to friends or family and ask for support
- Take time to relax, take time off and get away from work
- Take up a new hobby or interest
- Keep a healthy diet

At times of danger, the body automatically takes charge by triggering a set of changes that bypass out rational thoughts.

Priority is given to all physical functions which provide more power to face the enemy/danger or to flee.

We all have his inherent fight or flight response but now instead of just being triggered by extreme situations, it is triggered by different, seemingly less life threatening events. Many day-to-day situations can set it off – a change of home, a difficult boss, relationships, demanding children, traffic jams, etc.

Q When you are stressed how do you feel?

Draw your shaky man – note how you feel physically, psychologically (thoughts) and behaviour.



Anxiety

Anxiety is common and affects men and women of all ages and backgrounds. We can have anxious thoughts that cause us to have worries and fears, where we go over things again and again in our minds in a way that does not actually help resolve it.

Our feelings and emotions can become altered with anxiety too, ranging from milder feelings of emotional tension through to worry and anxiety, to very high states of panic that occur during panic attacks.

Physical symptoms that occur with anxiety can include muscle tension, tiredness, pain, disrupted sleep patterns and hot and/or cold sweats. As the symptoms of anxiety increase a full flight or fight adrenaline response occurs. Such physical responses can save our lives in threatening circumstances, such as when we step into the road and have a car horn sound at us, we jump back on the pavement and notice our heart racing and perhaps shaky, and once the threat has passed we are usually able to carry on with our lives as normal.

So, anxiety is a common human reaction to a stressful situation or event. It can be a positive thing and if we did not experience a certain amount of anxiety, we would find it difficult to keep going.

What is an anxiety disorder?

An anxiety disorder differs from normal anxiety in the following ways:

- it is more severe.
- it is long lasting.
- it interferes with the person's work or relationships.

People can experience anxiety in a general way when they feel worried about many different things for no obvious reason. This is known as **generalised anxiety** and can be very unpleasant. Sometimes people are dismissed as 'just worriers', when in fact they may have a real mental health problem that can be helped with the right treatment.

Other forms of anxiety include **phobias** when certain things or situations bring on an acute anxiety reaction. There are a number of different phobias ranging from social phobia when a person finds it impossible to take part in any social situations, to phobias about specific things such as snakes, spiders or height.

Panic attacks are very common and are easily helped by simple first aid methods. A person who has a repeated panic attacks and finds life increasingly difficult to cope with because of the attacks, is said to have panic disorder.



Q How do you treat someone who is having a panic attack?

If you are in any doubt about whether the person is having a panic attack, a heart attack or an asthma attack, or the person is very distressed, dial 999 and asked for an ambulance. You can get a bystander to do this while you move onto the next step.

- Help to calm the person by encouraging slow, relaxed breathing in unison with your own. You can help the person by gently raising your hand as you say 'breathe in', pause briefly at the top of the breath and then lower your hand as you say 'breathe out'. Each breath should last about three or four seconds and the outwards breath should be as full as possible.
- Speak in a slow, calm and gentle way reassuring the person that you know what to do and that they will feel better soon.
- Be a good listener, without judging.
- Explain that the attack will stop soon, and that they will recover fully.
- Assure the person that you will stay with them and keep them safe until the attack stops.

Symptoms of a panic attack

A person having a panic attack will have several of the following symptoms:

- Increased awareness of heartbeat
- Sweating
- Trembling or shaking
- Feeling of choking, shortness of breath or smothering
- Chest pain or discomfort
- Nausea or abdominal distress
- Feeling of unreality or detachment from themselves or their surrounding
- Feeling dizzy, unsteady, lightheaded or faint
- Fear of losing control or going crazy
- Fear of dying
- Numbness, tingling or pins and needles
- Chills or hot flushes

Self-harm

The phrase 'self-harm' is used to describe a wide range of behaviours. Self-harm is a coping mechanism for managing an emotional pain of some kind. Some acts of self-harm are quite well known, such as cutting or burning, or person can self-harm by abusing drugs and alcohol or having an eating disorder.

Self-harm is a personal response, and for some people can help with difficult emotions in the short term.

Sometimes as a way of coping with their emotions people turn to unhelpful behaviour such as excessive drinking, taking drugs, gambling or unsafe sexual practices.

For these individuals this might provide a temporary relief from the pain they are experiencing. They are also a way for the person to communicate that they are not okay and that their own feelings of self worth have dropped to a level that they do not care for their own safety.

These behaviours can be a way of a person avoiding suicide, however, if prolonged it can increase the risk of accidental death.

Things you could look out for:

- Noticable change in someone's behaviour
- Change in the persons appearance or personal hygiene
- Person becoming withdrawn, not engaging
- Person becoming emotional (tearful or even angry)
- Increased alcohol consumption/drug taking
- Changes in diet (not eating/eating to excess)
- Being out of character (giving away personal things)
- Person stops looking after their pet they have had for years
- Person talks a lot about having a way out, death or dying
- Person is missing work
- Persons life history or recent life event (bereavement, relationship break up, historical abuse)

Alcohol and Drugs

Alcohol

Many people drink alcohol to relax, forget their problems and combat feelings of stress. However, the negative effect of alcohol is likely to increase stress. In the long run, drinking can worsen mental wellbeing and contribute to the feelings of stress, anxiety and depression.

People may use a combination of alcohol and drugs to deal with stress. Unfortunately, this can cause long-term damage and addiction.



Important facts about alcohol and mental health

- Alcohol use can lead to symptoms of mental health problems. Some people experience this with only a small amount of alcohol.
- Becoming dependant on alcohol to cope with life can lead to psychological problems.
- Getting drunk can lead to risky or embarrassing behaviour that leads to longer term problems.
- Heavy drinkers who stop drinking without properly trained support can experience psychiatric symptoms.
- Alcohol can make an existing mental health problem worse.
- Alcohol interferes with medication and can cause it to not work properly.
- As with all drugs, the body becomes accustomed to alcohol so that a person needs to drink more to get the same effect.

Drugs

Stimulant drugs stimulate the brain and central nervous system of the body, generally making the user more awake and more energetic. Stimulants tend to carry risks to the cardiovascular system, making users more prone to heart attacks or strokes.

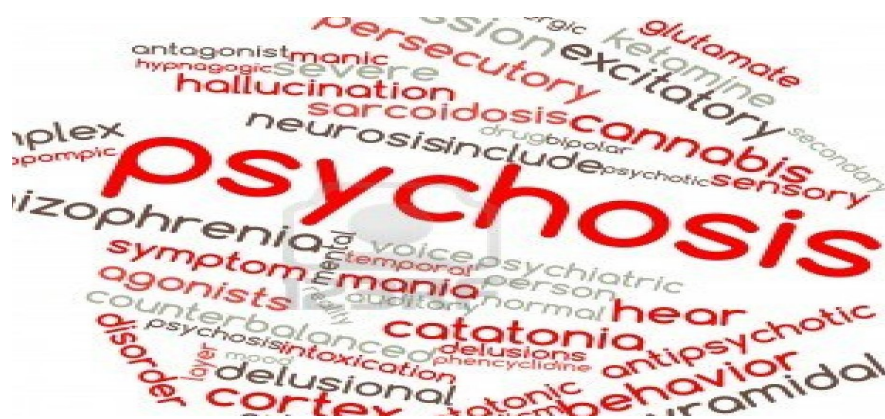


Depressant drugs are the opposite of stimulants – they suppress brain activity and the central nervous system, generally making the user calmer and sleepier. In high doses, depressants can cause the system to be suppressed so much that the user stops breathing, which can be fatal.

Hallucinogenic drugs do not necessarily stimulate or depress the brain, but change how the user perceives sounds, colours and the world around them. The user can see, hear and imagine things that are not real (hallucinate).

Stimulants, hallucinogens and depressants can all have a negative impact on a person's mental health. Once the initial effect of the drug has gone, the person can be left feeling worse than ever – both physically and mentally (hangover or 'come down').

Psychosis



Psychosis is an umbrella term for a range of disorders that share some common features. The two most common forms of psychosis are schizophrenia and bipolar disorder (manic depression).

Psychotic symptoms can also occur when people are in intensive care units suffering from serious physical illnesses; in elderly people with an acute infection; when people have a brain damage; and in people with alcohol and drug problems. People sometimes experience psychotic like symptoms when they are exhausted, or after a serious shock.

Bear in mind that not everyone who is experiencing psychotic symptoms has a mental illness.

Q How do I know if someone is experiencing psychosis?

It is important to learn about the early warning signs of psychosis so that you can recognise when someone may be developing psychosis. Although these signs may not be very dramatic on their own, when you consider them together, they may suggest that something is not quite right. It is important not to ignore or dismiss such warning signs - even if they appear gradually and are unclear. Do not assume that the person is just going through a phase or misusing alcohol or other drugs, or that the symptoms will go away on their own.

The only person who can diagnose psychosis is a psychiatrist, but a mental health first aider can be aware of the signs and can encourage a person to get professional help. The earlier a psychosis is identified, the more effective the treatment, and the better the chances of recovery.

Common symptoms when psychosis is developing:

- *Changes in emotion and motivation:* depression; anxiety; irritability; suspiciousness; blunted; flat; unexpected or unusual emotion; change in appetite; reduced energy and motivation.
- *Changes in thinking and perception:* difficulties with concentration or attention; sense of alteration of self, others or outside world (e.g. feeling that self or others have changed or are acting differently in some way); odd ideas; unusual perceptual experiences (e.g. a reduction or greater intensity of smell, sound or colour).
- *Changes in behaviour:* sleep disturbance; social isolation or withdrawal; reduced ability to carry out work or social rules.

Recovery

Every person's experience of mental health problems or illness will be unique, as will their recovery. Some individuals may only experience only one episode of a mental health problem or illness and never experience another for the rest of their lives, but others may have multiple experiences, of varying degrees, throughout their lives.

Recovery is being able to live a meaningful and satisfying life, as defined by each person, in the presence or absence of symptoms. It is about having control over and input into one's own life. Each individual's recovery, like his or her experience of mental health problems or illness, is unique and deeply personal process. It is important to be clear that there is no right or wrong way to recover.

Learning about recovery can help a mental health first aider recognise the importance of relating to a person who is in distress or unwell as more than just an immediate crisis to be dealt with. We can help the process of recovery by speaking to the person with respect rather than talking down to them, and to speak with hope and reassurance.

Looking After Yourself - Self-care



You wouldn't let this happen to your phone

Don't let it happen to you either

Self-care is a priority, not a luxury!

Relaxation Ideas

1. Talk to someone – call a friend. You can vent or just talk about your day to make you feel better
2. Pat or brush your pet with long, slow strokes. You'll both feel better
3. Play music and dance. No matter if it's a tango, ballet or your version of hip hop, just get up and groove to the music
4. Practice progressive muscle relaxation. Begin tensing, then relaxing your body, starting at the top of your head and continuing down through the neck, shoulders, arms, hips, legs and feet.

Resources

Links

www.samaritans.org

www.papyrus-uk.org

www.clearyourhead.scot

www.bbc.co.uk/sport/getinspired

www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio

<http://sleepcouncil.org.uk>

www.getselfhelp.co.uk

www.stresscontrol.org

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/coronavirus

www.headspace.com

www.calm.com

www.bigwhitewall.com (anxiety and depression)

Suicide Prevention

Samaritans – 116123

Breathing Space (Scotland) – 0800838587 (Mon-Thurs, 6.00pm till 2.00am/ Fri-Mon, 6.00pm till 6.00am)

Anxiety UK

Charity providing support if you have been diagnosed with an anxiety condition.

Phone: 03444 775 774 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 10pm; Saturday to Sunday, 10am to 8pm)

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Mental Health Foundation

Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities. Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Mind (England)

Promotes the views and needs of people with mental health problems.

Phone: 0300 123 3393 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm)

Website: www.mind.org.uk

Rethink Mental Illness

Support and advice for people living with mental illness.

Phone: 0300 5000 927 (Monday to Friday, 9.30am to 4pm)

Website: www.rethink.org

SANE

Emotional support, information and guidance for people affected by mental illness, their families and carers.

SANEline: 0300 304 7000 (daily, 4.30pm to 10.30pm)

Textcare: comfort and care via text message, sent when the person needs it most: www.sane.org.uk/textcare

Peer support forum: www.sane.org.uk/supportforum

Website: www.sane.org.uk/support

Cognitive Behaviour Therapy websites

Living Life to the Full – www.lltff.com

Moodjuice – www.moodjuice.scot.nhs.uk

The Power Within exists to help you and your team become a confident and a high performing business professional with the power to shape your future, grow your business and develop your personal and professional goals.



Learn the framework of self-leadership management and motivational development from an experienced business professional whose talent and ability has been proven in every marketplace he has worked, with practical insights and real-life stories. Your fellow learners are all open-minded professionals too, so you will grow your network alongside the other top performing business professionals.

Whatever stage you have reached in your career or business, you can always expand your knowledge and develop the mindset of a successful high-performance professional with personalised workshops and coaching all focused around the success formula framework.

The Motivational Intelligence Company

