

*Breathe Therapies*

# WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH TOOLKIT

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2020



**CORPORATE MENTAL  
HEALTH AND WELLBEING**

# WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY 2020

*Saturday October 10th*

## What is World Mental Health Day?

World Mental Health Day takes place on **October 10th every year**, with the overall aim of raising awareness of mental health issues and creating positive ripples that support and improve mental health.

The day provides an opportunity for you to speak out and add to a larger conversation that will be taking place both online and offline.

It's a great opportunity to engage your organisation in the ways you can address mental health and wellbeing in the workplace and to introduce new and proactive ways of improving employee mental health.

This year, World Mental Health Day falls on a Saturday. We advise you to use this document as a toolkit that can be implemented not only for the week after World Mental Health Day, but for every week after that.



# USING THIS TOOLKIT

The aim of this toolkit is to provide general information about work-related stress and mental health issues in the workplace and show how you can tackle these issues to help your employees to feel happier, less stressed and increase overall productivity.

Using the latest statistics, this pack informs managers and HR teams to ensure your organisation is up to date with mental health workplace regulations.



## **The legal implications:**

According to the health and safety legislation, mental health and wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing.

Therefore, being able to do a risk assessment to ensure the person will not get physically hurt is just as important as doing a risk assessment to ensure that there is nothing in the person's work that can cause negative impact on their mental health.

# WORK-RELATED STRESS

According to studies from the 2018-19 Northern Ireland Labour Force Survey, 16,000 people suffered from some form of anxiety, depression or stress that was made worse with added pressures from work.

It is evident that work-related stress is an issue that needs to be addressed.

However, it is important to note that an employer or line manager should not diagnose a worker's condition until they have consulted with the right professionals and conducted proper research.

While, this document only aims to provide a snapshot and should not be the only measure in place to tackle work-related stress, there are some helpful tips which provide more information to employers and HR teams on what measures they could implement.



By ensuring mental health and wellbeing resources are available to employees, it means that they may become less stressed and more engaged, which can boost productivity in the workplace and reduce work-related stress.

# REDUCING WORK-RELATED STRESS:

## START A CONVERSATION

Conversing and socialising with your employees is a fundamental part of creating a positive working environment as this makes it easier to have more important conversations, such as discussing at what points at work they feel most stressed.

Listed below are two of the main areas that cause work-related stress. Hseni have provided several points and conversation starters for managers or HR departments to explore with employees. Instigating a simple conversation is a great way to engage your workforce.



### Demands

- **Working patterns** - Allow regular breaks, discuss the work/life balance.
- **Workload** - Make time out for collaborative planning and team meetings.
- **Environment** - Try to reduce any unwanted distractions.
- **Conversation starters (to ask employee)** - "Does your workload feel achievable? What improvements would you suggest we could put in place to help with any issues discussed?"

### Control

- **Communication** - Allow employees to have some say over their tasks and hold 1-1 performance reviews.
- **Decisions** - Talk about the way decisions are made, allow and encourage people to participate in decision making.
- **Skills and training** - Talk to people about their skillset and what areas they would be best for.
- **Conversation starters (to ask employee)** - "Do you feel involved in how decisions are made? Do you feel you have a say in how your work is organised?"

Why not try working on some of the points mentioned above next time you are in the office or have a Zoom call?

To view more conversations starters and see how to work through work-related stress issues in these areas, please visit:

**<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/publications/talking-toolkit-preventing-work-related-stress>**

# WAYS TO MAKE A CHANGE: MANAGEMENT STANDARDS APPROACH

This approach ensures that managers, employees, their representatives and trade unions all work together to improve all areas of work and employee wellbeing.



There are 5 steps of the management standards approach. The steps entailed are quite similar to some of the points mentioned on the previous page, however, it is important to ensure the organisation is prepared in terms of informing your managers and trade union representatives

Having a team that overlooks the project is also vital to ensure a smooth process.

These steps involve:

1. **Identifying the risks** - Make sure to review the six causes work-related stress (e.g. demand, control - [see here](#)) and provide descriptions of good practice that will be implemented. For example, creating a schedule for fortnightly conversations with employees in regard to their wellbeing.
2. **Deciding who might be harmed and how to prevent this** - Data can be gathered to identify the areas within the organisation that may be excelling and areas of poor practice. These can be monitored and improved upon.
3. **Evaluating the risks** - Employers to explore any problems identified, then work towards how this can be remedied by checking with employees or conducting other methods of research.
4. **Record your findings** - Once you have made an action plan, review the timescale of each task. Work towards short, medium and long term goals for improving your workforce's mental health.
5. **Monitor your action plans** - Review and see whether any tweaking is necessary to ensure a sustainable culture change within the workplace.

This document only provides a snapshot of advice and resources that can help you to improve mental health and wellbeing within the workplace.

Any information presented in this toolkit can be viewed at:

**<https://www.hseni.gov.uk/managing-work-related-stress-and-mental-well-being-resources>**