Mental health is your business

Equality and Human Rights Commission
Wales
Who do you see?

- 37 per cent of people would be unhappy if their close relative married someone with a mental health condition

- Only 40 per cent of people think that people with a mental health condition are suitable to be Primary School teachers
Time to Change?

- 92 per cent of people believe that admitting to having a mental illness would damage someone’s career

- 56 per cent of people would not employ someone they knew had depression from time to time
Employees attitudes

• 58 per cent had to leave a job because of lack of mental health support
• 31 per cent had been sacked or forced out of a job after disclosing a mental health problem
• 26 per cent demoted after disclosing a mental health problem
• 1 in 4 had job offers withdrawn after disclosing a mental health problem

(Mind website survey October 2008)
What is mental ill health?

- depression
- bipolar disorder
- obsessive compulsive disorder
- schizophrenia
- self-harm
- eating disorders

This is not a complete list and there are varying degrees of severity.
Why is mental health a workplace issue?

• Most people with mental health conditions are in paid employment and are almost as likely to be working as anyone else

• Employers should expect to find that at any one time nearly one in six of their workforce is affected by a mental health condition
Why is action needed in the workplace?

• 91 million days are lost each year due to mental health conditions

• The combined costs of sickness absence, non-employment, effects on unpaid work and output losses in the UK is £26 billion a year.

• After taking six months sickness absence, only 50 per cent of employees return to work
What employers can do

• Make your workplace a safe place where colleagues can discuss, disclose and ask for help

• Do this by:
  – Creating an effective mental health policy
  – Training staff
  – Building awareness through a workplace campaign
Why a policy?

• Help to **prevent** mental ill health – by early detection and intervention.
• Help to **recognise** that work is good for mental health.
• Ensure **provision** of services for those affected by mental ill health by fully utilising existing workplace policies, and by establishing a range of support as an employer and service provider.
Top ten tips

• Talk about mental ill-health - you can break down the stigma by talking about it
• Look out for signs of mental ill-health
• Ask the individual what they need - tailor adjustments to the specific needs and abilities of the individual
• Focus on what the person can do – not what they can’t
• Be flexible – some mental health conditions are episodic
Top ten tips

- Keep talking when an employee is absent or returning from sickness absence
- Offer more support when needed e.g. more 121s
- Allow variations in working hours
- Clearly communicate that support is available
- Keep up to date with the latest sources of help e.g. Gofal, Mind Cymru, Hafal, Time to change
Taking action works

- A good investment to retain skilled and experienced staff
- Staff will feel safe and supported – increasing their commitment to you as an employer
- You can reduce sickness absence and save money
Case study: BT

- BT doesn’t reject job applications on grounds on mental illness
- Mental health sickness absence is down by 30 per cent
- Stress claims have been reduced dramatically
- 75 per cent of long term absentees return to their own job
- Medical retirement rate for mental illness is down by 80 per cent
EHRC toolkit

• Digital story
• Practical tips and guidance for developing a policy
• James’ story – the business case for having a policy
Contact us

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