

Guide 4: Mental Health Guide

Information for Lancashire Schools' Head Teachers, Senior Leaders and whole school employees.

For urgent help see guidance at the end of this document: [Dealing with a crisis situation](#)"

1. Overview

We all have mental health just as we all have physical health and it's no surprise that when you consider how much time we spend at work, our workplace environments can affect our wellbeing.

This guide provides an overview of mental health issues which employees may experience and guidance on how you can get support at work.

2. Mental ill health

Most of us will, at some point in our lives, experience times when we feel particularly upset or anxious. It is when these feelings become more acute and affect our ability to carry on normally with life that we are considered to have a mental health difficulty.

Mental health problems can have a wide range of causes or a combination of factors. Here is some useful information from the NHS on this subject.

Possible causes of poor mental health <https://www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/possible-causes>

Some key points:

- Mental ill health is very common. About a quarter of the population experience some kind of mental health problem in any one year. It is important to remember that this is not a sign of weakness.
- Mental health issues can affect the way people think, feel and behave.
- Mental health can cause the individual to experience an extreme lack of self-confidence and self-esteem. Becoming socially and personally withdrawn is common. Although certain symptoms are common in specific mental health problems, no two peoples' experience is the same. Nor are people affected in exactly the same way when they are unwell.

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- Many people who live with a mental health problem, or are developing one, try to keep their feelings hidden because they are afraid of other peoples' reactions. There are also many people who feel troubled without having a diagnosed, or diagnosable, mental health problem; although that doesn't mean they aren't struggling to cope with daily life.

Useful information:

Here is some information which might be helpful.

Information details	Organisation	Website details
Various articles to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. Search the site to access the information.	Mind	www.mind.org.uk
Information about mental health and wellbeing	NHS	www.nhs.uk/oneyou/about-one-you
Taking care of your staff	Mind.org.uk	www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/taking-care-of-your-staff/

3. Taking care of yourself

If you need help, support, or someone to talk to; see the **Who to contact and self-help options** section 4 of this guide.

Here are some resources which offer support on looking after your wellbeing:

Information	Organisation	Link
<u>Your mental health:</u> podcasts, videos, inspiring stories and information about	Mental Health Foundation	www.mentalhealth.org.uk/your-mental-health

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getting help if you're struggling.		
How to be mentally healthy at work	MIND	https://www.mind.org.uk/search <i>Enter Mental Health at Work in the search box</i>
Moodzone	NHS	www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mood-self-assessment/
Sleep	NHS	www.nhs.uk/oneyou/every-mind-matters/sleep/

Healthy lifestyle

It is well documented that a healthy lifestyle can help reduce feelings of stress. Advice and support on a range of topics can be found below:

www.lancashire.gov.uk/health-and-social-care/your-health-and-wellbeing/keeping-physically-healthy

This site includes (for example) ideas on healthy eating, exercise/keep fit, help with reducing or stopping smoking, alcohol intake.

For employees who need help with drug and/or alcohol dependency, useful information is also included. Your schools' adopted Drug and Alcohol dependency policy is also a good source of information and provides a pathway to help in employment. This can be found on the HR section of the Schools' Portal.

Mindfulness and meditation

Mindfulness – Mindfulness and meditation are simple ways of taking 'time out' from the busyness of daily life and focussing on being in the moment. Studies have found that mindfulness can help to reduce stress and improve mood. More information can be found through the links below.

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Why not give it a try?

Information	Organisation	Link
Information about mindfulness	NHS	www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/mindfulness
Mindfulness: a popular App you may find helpful. During the COVID-19 crisis it is free for school staff.	Headspace (free for teachers and support staff)	www.headspace.com Free Headspace for teachers and supporting staff
Mindfulness and relaxation.	Lancashire Adult Learning	Lancashire Adult Learning
Mindfulness	Online Course	www.bemindfulonline.com
1 moment meditation	You Tube	www.youtube.com/watch?v=F6eFFCi12v8
Bedtime meditation	NHS	www.nhs.uk/conditions/nhs-fitness-studio/bedtime-meditation
Breathing Exercise for Stress	NHS	www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/ways-relieve-stress

Books: you can borrow recommended self-help books free of charge from Lancashire Libraries. This includes:

Reading for Health. www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/libraries/reading-for-health (link)

E-books and Audio books. There are also relevant eBooks and e-Audio books which you can borrow. You can use the search tool to find titles on a topic.

<https://www.lancashire.gov.uk/libraries-and-archives/libraries/digital-library/>

The Mental Health Foundation has downloadable books for free. Just follow this link.

www.mentalhealth.org.uk/publications

Apps. Here are a couple of links to some recommended Apps. Please be aware there may be charges for some of these Apps.

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www.orchh.co.uk/ (evaluated by the Mental Health Foundation)
www.nhs.uk/apps-library/category/mental-health

Audio guides: You can find a mental wellbeing podcast or audio guide to listen to in private.

www.nhs.uk/conditions/stress-anxiety-depression/moodzone-mental-wellbeing-audio-guides

There are also resources and signposting for other Wellbeing topics in the **Wellbeing section of the Schools' Portal**.

4. Who to contact and self-help options

You can contact your head teacher or any of the following support services. The table below begins with access to support for the most critical of needs and is followed by other sources of support:

Organisation	Further details	Website
For urgent help :-	see Dealing with a crisis situation in this guide	
NHS 111	For urgent care that is not life threatening. Or you could contact your GP.	
How to access mental health services (NHS)	There are a range of services available. You can refer yourself to some of them.	www.nhs.uk/using-the-nhs/nhs-services/mental-health-services/how-to-access-mental-health-services/
Self- Help		
Education Support Partnership	Education Support Partnership This organisation is a charity which provides a helpline and information for all staff working in schools. It is free, and includes a 24/7 confidential helpline with access to trained counsellors.	www.educationsupport.org.uk

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	Telephone 08000 562 561. Schools can also 'buy in' to their Employee Assistance programme should they wish.	
Wellbeing, Mental Health Helpline and Texting Service	Confidential support available 24 hours a day, every day. Freephone 0800 9154640, or text Hello to 07860 022 846.	www.lscft.nhs.uk/Mental-Health-Helpline
Mindmatter	Support includes online programmes and one-to-one therapy, to help people overcome common difficulties such as stress, anxiety and depression.	www.lscft.nhs.uk/Mindmatter
Silvercloud	Online resource providing immediate access to skills relating to managing symptoms of Stress, Anxiety and Depression. Also provides effective coping strategies.	www.lscft.nhs.uk/silvercloud
Able futures (Mental Health Support Service)	9 months free, confidential, 1 to 1 advice, and support from mental health professionals to help you cope with work while you manage a mental health condition such as anxiety, depression or stress. Telephone 0800 321 3137 .	https://able-futures.co.uk/mental-health-support-for-individuals/?qclid=EAlaQobChMI7oaaq87o7AIVDrh3Ch3vOAkCEAAYASAAEgK9zvD_BwE
Remploy (Mental Health Support Service)	9 months free confidential 1 to 1 advice and support for any employees with depression, anxiety, stress or other mental health issues affecting their work. Telephone 0300 456 8114 or email a2wmhss@remploy.co.uk	www.remploy.co.uk

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Cruse Bereavement Care	Free confidential support by telephone, email or face-to-face.	www.cruse.org.uk/get-help
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5. Helpful suggestions for Head Teachers and Senior Leaders

(a) Raising sensitive issues:

- Although mental ill health is very common, some people still find it difficult to talk about. Mind's guide 'How to support staff who are experiencing a mental health problem' includes helpful advice here: www.mind.org.uk/media-a/4661/resource4.pdf
- You could also use **Wellbeing Guide 2: Wellness Action Plan** guide, to prepare for a conversation on sensitive issues. There are further self-help resources in this guide which might assist.

(b) Stress management: Our wellbeing guide (3), 'Managing Stress', has more information on stress and mental health.

To help identify and reduce potential areas of stress, you can undertake a stress risk assessment. There is guidance in the Health and Safety pages of the Schools' Portal on work related stress.

Cases of stress-related ill health should be referred to your Occupational Health Service provider. An early referral (usually when the first fit note is received) is advisable, in order to access appropriate independent medical advice early on in the absence, so that you can identify the support which can be provided. Please also refer to your schools' adopted Sickness Absence policy for further information on managing short term and long term absences.

(c) Consider simple, practical and cost-effective changes: You could consider workplace adjustments including reassigning tasks, providing extra training or mentoring, adjusting role profiles or providing a phased return to work. Your Schools HR Manager will be able to provide you with further advice.

(d) Disability: If a member of staff has a mental health problem that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on their ability to perform normal day-to-day activities, (*which has either lasted for 12 months or is likely to last for 12 months or more*) they will meet the definition of disability under the Equality Act 2010. In these circumstances, there is a statutory responsibility to consider making reasonable adjustments for the employee. It is recommended that independent medical advice is sought from Occupational Health about the potential for

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reasonable adjustments. You may also wish to discuss what is practicable in your school setting with your Schools HR Manager.

(e) Wellbeing training courses:

There are various on-line training courses which might be helpful. Please see Guide 7: Training options. Courses offered include mindfulness and relaxation, stress management and personal resilience, 3 C's for Health and Wellbeing (which explores the three essential needs that underpin the quality of our general health and wellbeing.)

As a head teacher or manager, you aren't expected to have an advanced knowledge of mental health issues. Being aware of the signs of poor mental health, knowledgeable of the support available, "checking in" with individuals at appropriate times and taking appropriate advice is the best approach to supporting your employees.

6. Dealing with a crisis situation

If I need to help someone in crisis - (Remember, it's important to put your own safety first.)

- **If they are not safe by themselves** – if at all possible, stay with them and call 999 for an ambulance, or go with them to A&E. It might be appreciated if you can wait with them until they see a doctor.
- **If they can keep themselves safe for a little while** – you can get advice by phoning NHS Direct on 111, or you could help them make an emergency GP appointment to see a doctor. You can encourage them to call the Samaritans on freephone 116 123 (open 24 hours a day, every day of the year).
- If you are concerned about your colleague and you don't know where they are, for example they have not turned up at work, contact their next of kin or dial 999 and ask the police to carry out a welfare visit.

If I am in crisis and need help:

- Go to any Accident & Emergency (A&E) department.
- Call 999 and ask for an ambulance to take you to A &E (or ask someone else to take you to A&E).

If I need urgent help but don't want to go to A&E:

- Samaritans (Freephone 116 123 – open 24 hours a day, every day of the year)
- your GP surgery and ask for an emergency appointment

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- [NHS 111 \(England\)](#)

For further guidance please contact your schools' Senior HR manager