

# Increasing Awareness about Mental Health

A toolkit to help increase awareness about mental health among your employees



# Helping raise awareness about mental health among your employees

Dedicate this month to helping your employees become more aware of mental health issues. Mental health is an important part of overall health and wellbeing. It includes emotional, psychological and social wellbeing and affects thoughts, feelings and actions. Mental health determines how people handle stress and relate to others and the everyday choices they make. Being mentally healthy can promote productivity and success in work, school, parenting, caring and other important aspects of life.

## What's in the toolkit?

This toolkit provides all the materials needed to deliver a successful campaign to increase awareness about mental health:

- Campaign objectives
- Suggested timeline
- Email campaign series
- Awareness handouts and lifestyle flyers
- Campaign kick-off event ideas
- Prize strategy
- Employee evaluation

### Campaign objectives

- Explain how mental health impacts overall health and wellbeing
- Dispel common myths about mental health and mental illness
- Identify self-care strategies that could improve mental health and wellbeing in individuals
- Know risk factors for poor mental health
- List symptoms of mental illness in adults, teenagers and children
- Suggest ways to help support optimal mental health among children, teenagers and older adults
- Explain what depression is and how it is diagnosed
- Know how to find mental health resources and services
- Identify actions to take to help a troubled colleague
- Know ways to avoid workplace burnout and deal with a stressful work environment
- Know self-care strategies if you are a carer for a person with mental illness
- Understand the benefits of resiliency and how to build it

### Suggested timeline

The total campaign is designed to last a minimum of four weeks but can be shortened or extended if desired. See the attached email campaign series for email timelines and content.

#### Email campaign

**Pre-launch email** – Increasing awareness about mental health (Coming soon)

**Kick-off email** – Increasing awareness about mental health - Join us to get started

**Week 2 reminder email** – Challenge yourself to make your mental health a priority

**Week 3 encouragement email** – Practice mindfulness

**Week 4 employee evaluation email** – We want your feedback

## Awareness handouts and lifestyle flyers

Two types of educational information are provided for use during the campaign. Awareness handouts are intended to provide information about an aspect of mental health and raise self-awareness. The lifestyle flyers are generally more interactive and provide opportunities for employees to apply information about mental health and wellbeing in their everyday lives – at home and at work. Distribute both types of materials each week.

	Awareness handouts	Lifestyle flyers
<b>Week 1:</b> Start the conversation about mental health	What is mental health and why is it important?	Take charge of your mental health
<b>Week 2:</b> Who is at risk?	Common warning signs and symptoms of mental illness	Support for those who are most vulnerable
<b>Week 3:</b> Recognising depression	Depression – more than just “the blues”	Mental health services
<b>Week 4:</b> Support for mental health and wellbeing	Help for troubled colleagues	Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing

### Campaign kick-off event:

We recommend an onsite event to kick off the campaign. The event can be as big or small as you want, but it's an important opportunity to introduce the campaign theme to employees and to encourage them to participate in the challenge. If you are unable to arrange an onsite event, we recommend setting up a table in a common area for the distribution of materials. Keep materials well stocked for the duration of the campaign.

### Suggestions for kick-off event:

Announce the program “Increasing awareness about mental illness” at company-wide or departmental meetings.

- If your company has an employee assistance programme (EAP), invite a representative to explain the services provided and how to access them.
- Invite a representative from a local mental health service provider to give a brief presentation about resources available to employees.

## Employee challenges

### Individual challenge: Make your mental health a priority

Distribute the log for the individual challenge during the first week of the campaign. Employees are encouraged to use the information, strategies and skills introduced over the course of the campaign to take steps to optimise their mental health during the next four weeks.

### Group event (optional):

Organise a volunteer opportunity and invite employees to support a project that would increase awareness about mental health and wellbeing and promote teamwork among employees. Ask a few employees to serve as a committee to identify a community mental health need and organise the project. Here are a few ideas:

- Donate to a food bank.
- Visit patients in a local hospital or nursing home.
- Engage in community project - plant a tree or flowers or pick up litter.

## Prize strategy

Offering prizes for participation in the employee campaign is not required but it can increase participation. Consider individual prizes or a raffle for employees who complete the employee challenge or complete the evaluation survey.

Some ideas for individual prizes that support mental health and wellbeing include the following:

- Personal journal
- Relaxing music
- Gift certificate for a massage, manicure, pedicure or other salon service
- Scented candles
- Body lotion
- Voucher for a yoga class
- Personal time off
- Flowers or a plant

## Employee evaluation

A brief evaluation survey is available to collect feedback, ideas and information from employees who participated in the campaign. Participant feedback is valuable for planning future campaigns

## Campaign content

### 1. Start the conversation about mental health

#### What is mental health and why is it important?

- Test yourself (quiz)
- Conversation starters

#### Take charge of your mental health

- Take care of your body
- Take care of your mind

### 2. Who is at risk?

#### Common warning signs and symptoms of mental illness

- Symptoms of mental illness in adults and teenagers
- Symptoms of mental illness in children

#### Support for those who are most vulnerable

- Children
- Teenagers
- Top tips for parents
- Older adults: How to help older adults

### 3. Recognising depression

#### Depression – more than just “the blues”

- What is depression
- Diagnosing depression
- Self assessment: Are you experiencing symptoms of depression?

#### Mental health services

- Talk to a GP first
- Other useful sources of mental health support
- Treatment and support

### 4. Support for mental health and wellbeing

#### Help for troubled colleagues

- Supporting colleagues
- Workplace bullying
- Workplace burnout
- Tips for dealing with a stressful work environment

#### Promoting positive mental health and wellbeing

- Practical ways to help
- If you are a carer
- Building resilience

### 5. Challenges:

- Make your mental health a priority

### 6. Employee evaluation

### Additional resources

Mind ([www.mind.org.uk](http://www.mind.org.uk)) provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. It campaigns to raise awareness, improve services and promote understanding. As well as providing mental health information on its website, it also offers helplines, professional training and a network of local support groups across England and Wales.

Time to Change ([www.time-to-change.org.uk](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk)) was set up by Mind in 2007 to end mental health discrimination and challenge stigma. Although it closed in 2021, its website has useful resources to help start a conversation about mental health.

Mental Health Foundation ([www.mentalhealth.org.uk](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk)) focuses on prevention, finding solutions for individual, those at risk and for society in order to improve everyone's mental wellbeing. It runs an annual Mental Health Awareness Week and its website contains information about mental health and how to look after it.

SANE ([www.sane.org.uk](http://www.sane.org.uk)) is a charity that aims to raise awareness, improve services and provide emotional support to anyone affected by mental illness. Its website has information on mental illness, care and treatment and self-help.

The World Health Organisation ([www.who.int](http://www.who.int)) works with governments across the world to put in place mental health policies, plans and laws that respect human rights and promote access to care as well as to employment, educational and other opportunities.

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