



“Let’s Talk Health”

Mental Health

DISCUSSION AID 

INTRODUCTION

This talk has been developed to assist the person facilitating the “Let’s talk health Week” topic on mental health. It provides pointers to get the conversation started and is not a full explanation of all health and safety requirements, related to this subject, and should not be relied upon as such.

What do we understand about the term mental health?

Everyone has mental health. We all have good days and we can have bad days. Sometimes the bad days can be prolonged and difficult to escape from.

The 2 pictures show different people, both are suffering with their health.

It is naturally easier for us all to relate to the person with the broken leg. They will wear a cast for 8 weeks and be close to full fitness.





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How can we help the person with poor mental health? * We will ask this question again *

There is no quick fix, there is no cast, there is no universal medicine.

The first step is - continuing our discussion on mental health, by doing these talks, and chipping away at the stigma of poor mental health. Reaffirm - It is not a weakness!

What does poor mental health look like and if people are putting on ‘a front’ how do we help?

The picture we have provided is for visual effect only. A lot of people suffer from mental health will appear as if nothing is going on, they will put on a front as a coping mechanism to get through the day.

Help by having these conversations, making it easier to discuss pressures our work colleagues, friends and family are experiencing. To let people know they are not on their own, there is help, there are options, there is hope!

Although difficult to identify, how would we recognise someone struggling with their mental health?

Unusually quiet / withdrawn, pre-occupied, their mind somewhere else, loss in personal appearance / care, missing work, change in attitude/ agitated, increased drinking, etc.

People are known to be creatures of habit, when a change in them occurs, there will be a reason.

If we recognise someone with poor mental health, what does that mean?

A lot of external factors could be causing additional pressures. This could manifest itself as depression, anxiety, elevated stress, suicidal thoughts.



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If we recognise someone potentially struggling what do we do?

Try to talk to them, ask them if they are ok. If we can get someone to talk, it is a fantastic first step. We shouldn't be wary of asking – what is the worst that can happen?

If someone needs help, will we be able to help?

[Insert name of the mental health first aider / chosen person in your company]

By ourselves, the likelihood is no. BUT, we can help them seek the appropriate help. The root cause or trigger for poor mental health is varied and complex. There will not be a single strategy that will work for all people. A common term used is 'Signposting'.

If we find ourselves in an emergency situation, again we will have to signpost to the most appropriate organisation which may be emergency services or lifeline.

Where do I find information of suitable organisation that will help?

If your workplace has mental health first aider, make it known who this chosen person is.

If not please put up posters of helpful organisations such as Mates in Mind, Inspire, Lifeline NI, community advice centres, Public Health Agencies, Samaritans, etc.

What happens after this talk and what do we put in place?

Continue the talk about mental health, even discuss amongst yourselves about this talk. Please remember, we don't know what anyone else is going through, whether it be health concerns, financial concerns, relationship worries, etc. Take time to talk and to listen to each other, we are all in this together, it costs nothing to show some kindness.

The message is; It is OK, not to be OK.