



SEEING BENEATH THE SURFACE

UNDERSTANDING MENTAL HEALTH AND OFFERING SUPPORT

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FOREWORD

By Richard Bate

Board sponsor for mental health, disability and wellbeing



It seems now, perhaps more than ever, we're hearing and seeing a lot about mental health. Business leaders, celebrities and even members of the royal family have been talking about their own experiences of living with mental health issues.

Although we can take comfort in these changing attitudes to mental health and mental health awareness, there is still much to be done.

One in four of us experience a mental health issue each year and many more of us know and care for family members and friends who are living with mental illness.

At Gowling WLG, we're motivated to create a workplace that is both healthy and supportive. We're strongly committed to diversity and inclusion, and we recognise that promoting mental health and providing psychological and social support enhances our ability to be a diverse and inclusive workplace.

As the board sponsor for our work on mental health, disability and wellbeing, alongside other board members sponsoring various dimensions of our diversity and inclusion work, I'm personally committed to using this role to promote awareness and understanding, to listen, feedback and foster an environment where everyone can ask for and get support when they need it.

I'm truly passionate about our people; about working with others to nurture an open and compassionate environment and helping them to cope with professional and personal concerns. We all bring something different and, with that, have the power to make a positive impact on the lives of our colleagues, clients and communities.

At Gowling WLG, we take this responsibility to our employees, our environment and our business partners seriously. Across the firm, we are devoted to supporting and bettering the welfare of all to make a tangible difference, allowing our people to excel in all aspects of their lives.

Through various initiatives, we continue to improve our mental health support structures to further develop our people-focused, people-first environment, be more inclusive and recognise the effects of mental health on a par with physical health.

Whether choosing to speak openly about our issues within our teams and support networks, or seeking out mental health professionals and peers confidentially, as a firm we are focused on fostering an approach to mental health that creates a safe and supporting network for all.

Nobody should face a mental health issue alone. At Gowling WLG we're constantly striving to ensure that nobody will.

OUR FIRM

At Gowling WLG we are committed to establishing and embedding a workplace culture that recognises the importance of wellbeing and cares about mental health.

In a high-pressured environment, it is important that we take time to create a balance that ensures we are maintaining good mental health, as well as recognising when we, and others, may need support.

At Gowling WLG, we offer a range of activities and networks to support us in maintaining good mental health, from physical sessions like yoga and massage, to practical webinars and mental health champions. All of these resources are there when we need them, but – for some – the most effective support can be conversation.

We want people to feel comfortable and well-prepared to lead a conversation about mental health. This will involve understanding mental health in its widest possible sense, challenging fears, misconceptions and beliefs that exist within the workplace, having the confidence to use language that is free from discrimination and actively positioning mental health on a par with physical health.

We have worked with Mental Health at Work to put together this booklet for you to use when you need it. It's here to enhance your understanding of mental health, attune you to notice changes in your own or others' mental health, and what to do if you are concerned or if somebody else needs support. We want to encourage open communication about mental health in the workplace, set out the preferred language and tone to use in relation to mental health for inclusion and parity, and address attitudes and myths around mental health and mental illness.

This booklet isn't here to offer medical advice, nor teach you how to counsel somebody through a mental health issue. It's here for you to refer to if you want to learn more about mental health, if you want to start a conversation with somebody else about a mental health-related issue or if you want to use the list of supportive resources for yourself or somebody else.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

Our mental health, and that of our colleagues, is a key determinant of the workplace environment as it affects employee confidence, engagement, productivity, and relationships. But what actually is 'mental health'?

Mental health is a measure of our state of mind and exists on a continuum.

When you feel well within your mental health you are likely to feel positive, confident, and engaged, and able to concentrate and focus. But our mental health isn't fixed or static. Where you are on the continuum will, in part, be determined by the circumstances in your life at that time, the pressure you are under at any given time, your support network and more.

A movement away from mental health indicates a change. It may be noticeable to others and it is something that we should pay attention to. We do not move from one end of the continuum to the other overnight. It may be that we move away from mental health but with the right support and some adjustments our health is quickly restored. But, when we are unwell with a mental illness, it will stop us doing what we could, should or want to be doing.

Mental illness isn't one thing. There are different types of mental illness, each diagnosis has a specific set of signs and symptoms just like physical illnesses do. A diagnosis of a mental illness isn't an exclusion from the workplace since it is possible for us to have a diagnosis and to be managing our mental health and to be well.

It's reported that a fifth of us would ignore colleagues who return to work having been off or recently treated for a mental health illness, highlighting a lingering stigma around these types of issues. To add to this, only a third of 18-29 year-olds are comfortable talking with their manager about mental health issues compared to almost half of people in their 40s.

So why are some of us reluctant to talk about mental health with the same ease we describe physical health?



LANGUAGE THAT PROMOTES AN INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE

Stigma and a lack of understanding around mental health and terminology could contribute to our reluctance to talk openly to one another about our mental health.

It may be that some of the myths around certain mental illnesses leave us feeling afraid, nervous or worried that we might say the wrong thing or make someone feel worse. Or, perhaps, because we don't generally refer to our mental health within day-to-day conversations it feels a bit clumsy somehow.

Language is a key building block in promoting our people-focused and people-first environment. These are values that we can readily bring to life through our choice of words. We want to adopt and embed language that promotes an inclusive workplace that is safe and supporting for all. Here are some guidance notes to help you:

1. Remember: Person-first language

We want people to be known, recognised and rewarded for who they are and what they bring to the firm. A diagnosis of a mental illness must not define a person, nor should a person be labelled with a diagnosis. Put the person first: I have a diagnosis of depression, rather than I am a depressive; he lives with a diagnosis of schizophrenia, he is not a schizophrenic.

This approach isn't limited to how we talk about mental illness in the workplace, it runs true for physical illnesses too. I am not a cancer, but I am someone with a diagnosis of, and receiving treatment for, cancer. I'm also a mother, a football fan and a foodie. I am more than my illness.

11% OF EMPLOYEES SHARE A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE SPECIFICALLY TO A LINE MANAGER

2. Mental health isn't out there – it is right here and belongs to and affects you and me

Because of the training many of us have attended at Gowling WLG, we have become attuned to how easily we can talk about 'people with mental health issues' in the third person, describing 'what they need' and so on. To build a more inclusive workplace, we need to take even greater ownership of our mental health. Mental health isn't about them (with issues) and us (without) - we all have mental health. We all move along the continuum to a greater or lesser extent at any given time. Mental health is about all of us.

3. Stress is not a mental illness but an invitation for a conversation

Describing ourselves as stressed has become a common lexicon. The word 'stress' is a descriptor and not a diagnosis of mental illness. What do we really mean when we say we're stressed? Stress refers to the exertion of pressure. When the pressure is too great, this can lead to distress. Perhaps the overuse of the word leads us to not really hear or respond to it.

4. Promoting an inclusive workplace that is safe and supporting for all

Some references to mental illnesses have become a part of everyday conversation and we'd like to challenge this here at Gowling WLG. In jest, we might refer to someone as 'being a little bit OCD' because they keep their desk tidy or like to use a particular mug for their morning coffee. Or perhaps you've referred to your 'dementia setting in' as you forget something for a meeting. As we work towards promoting an even more inclusive workplace that is safe and supporting for all, we need to consider the impact these throw-away comments have in limiting open conversations and minimising illnesses.

KNOW YOUR COLLEAGUES AND NOTICE CHANGES

If you're concerned about somebody, it can help to focus and scale your concern using this list of questions.

Your responses will guide you towards the action you feel is most appropriate or needed.

WHAT SPECIFIC CHANGES HAVE YOU SEEN?

Behaviour, attitude, performance, mood, engagement.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PERSON'S LIFE CIRCUMSTANCES?

HAVE YOU EVER NOTICED THIS CHANGE IN THE PERSON BEFORE?

HOW SEVERE IS THE CHANGE?

Overnight/ rapid, over a period of time.

WHAT DO YOU KNOW ABOUT THE PERSON'S PHYSICAL HEALTH?

WHAT'S THE CONTEXT?

What else is going on within the workplace?

HOW CONSTANT IS IT?

Persistent throughout the day or just in the morning.

WHEN DID THIS START?

How long has it been going on for?

WHAT TO DO IF YOU THINK SOMEBODY NEEDS SUPPORT

Based on the answers to these questions, you may feel that it's necessary to do something to support the person in question. However, in the first instance, you might prefer to have a conversation with them to talk about how they are feeling.

You should never force somebody to talk if it's clear that they don't want to, but if you want to improve your capability and confidence to hold conversations about mental health, below are a few tips on how to go about it.

Notice and respond to your own discomfort

If you feel uncomfortable talking about mental health – ask yourself why. Try to refocus your discomfort and try to normalise the conversation, as if you were talking to somebody about their physical health.

Demonstrate genuineness to facilitate trust

If you demonstrate that you are genuinely concerned, and have the other person's interests at heart, they are more likely to trust you and open up to you.

Focus on listening and hearing

Take the time to listen, and also pay attention to the language and phrases that the person uses. This will allow you to really hear what that person is saying. Pay attention, also, to what is not being said.

Ask open and reflective questions

Ask open questions to encourage the person to talk freely if they feel comfortable.

Set and maintain boundaries

Don't try to fix or problem-solve. This is outside of your role. Listen and signpost the person to supportive resources and activities.

Stay as equals in the conversation

Ensure that you're talking to the person on an adult-to-adult level. Don't take on a 'parental' role, which will allow the other person to take on a 'child' role. Having a discussion adult-to-adult is the most effective way of dealing with the situation.

WHAT TO DO IF YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT SOMEONE'S SAFETY

If you are concerned about someone's safety in relation to their mental health here are some actions to take.

Once you've had a conversation with the person, you may feel that it's necessary to take immediate action.

It could be that you simply signpost the person to the relevant resources (which can be found at the back of this booklet), but you may feel that you need to do more to ensure this person remains healthy and safe.

IF YOU BELIEVE THEY HAVE ENDANGERED THEIR LIFE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ring 999 and stay with them until the ambulance arrives • Go to your nearest Accident and Emergency (A&E) department
AT IMMEDIATE RISK (STAY WITH THEM)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact your HR Business Partner • Contact EAP (Employee Care - 0800 917 9330) • Seek help from Occupational Health - contact HR Business Partner to arrange • Encourage them to ring the Samaritans on 0845 909090 (open 24hrs) • Encourage them to contact their GP for an emergency appointment or their out-of-hours service
UNUSUAL BEHAVIOUR/ DISTURBING OTHERS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Call your HR Business Partner • Call EAP (Employee Care - 0800 917 9330) • Seek help from Occupational Health - contact HR Business Partner to arrange



USEFUL LIST OF SUPPORT RESOURCES

At Gowling WLG, we want to create a workplace that is both healthy and supportive.

We recognise that promoting mental health and providing psychological and social support enhances our ability to create a truly diverse and inclusive workplace.

One of the ways we can help create a healthy and supportive workplace is by providing good, practical resources to all members of the firm, which ensures we are equipping our people with tools to help manage and maintain their wellbeing, as well as that of others.

We have a range of resources available to help support our mental and physical welfare:

Be Mindful e-Learning

Be Mindful is a four-week online mindfulness training programme developed by Wellmind Media Ltd and the Mental Health Foundation. Working in commercial partnership with a UK charity, the Mental Health Foundation and Community Interest Company, Maudsley Learning at Work, this course is the only fully online Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT) and Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) course.

Fully evaluated for its effectiveness and backed up by significant research studies from leading academic institutions, with Be Mindful we confidently give all Gowling WLG employees the opportunity to learn, practise and enjoy the benefits of mindfulness in their home and work lives.

Visit the Academy to find out more.

Mindfulness sessions

Mindfulness is the practice of paying attention to the present, your own thoughts and feelings and the world around you. Mastering the art of this can significantly improve your wellbeing, as well as enable you to notice early signs of stress or anxiety. It can also help boost focus, energy and concentration.

Our five-week mindfulness course, spread over five 90-minute evening sessions, introduces you to:

- What mindfulness is and how it can be a useful tool for managing your wellbeing;
- The main mindfulness practices, for you to explore in both the sessions and at home;
- Exercises looking at your relationship to stress and difficulty with a view to potentially taking a more skilful approach towards it; and
- Ways of living more mindfully and integrating mindfulness into your daily routine.

Daily home practice, videos and exercises are offered for you to complete in-between the sessions, along with audio and written course materials to enable mindfulness throughout the course and beyond.

For further information, contact Lucielle Cartwright, diversity and inclusion manager, or visit Connections.

Email: lucielle.cartwright@gowlingwlg.com

Phone: +44 121 393 2182

Mental health champions

We have mental health champions whose role is to listen and provide effective sign-posting. You can speak to any one of the team at any time about your mental health. All conversations are confidential.

Visit Connections to find out more.

Domestic violence champions

We are committed to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of our employees. If you feel you are a victim of domestic abuse, or you yourself feel you may be a perpetrator, help is available. You can contact one of our trained champions for an entirely confidential discussion and support. Their role will be to listen and provide effective sign-posting.

Visit Connections to find out more.

Energise You webinars

We have partnered with Energise You to bring you a series of webinars focused on mental health, wellbeing and resilience. The webinars are short 30-minute-long sessions with a different focus each month.

See the Daily Email or Connections to find out more.

MindApples online resources

MindApples is an online offering which can be accessed at any time, providing a new series of online modules as well as information tips and techniques for managing your mind at work.

Visit Connections to find out more.

NEARLY
30%
OF PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL
DISABILITIES WILL ALSO HAVE
A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE

68%
OF PEOPLE WHO ENDURE
DOMESTIC VIOLENCE WILL
ALSO BE DIAGNOSED WITH
CLINICAL DEPRESSION

On-site yoga

Looking after our physical health often has a positive impact on our mental health and wellbeing. We offer on-site yoga in both our Two Snowhill Birmingham and 4 More London offices.

Contact Richard Hinchelwood if you're interested in joining a course.

Qigong

Qigong is gentle exercise that focuses on the body's natural ability to regulate and regenerate itself to keep itself healthy. Whilst not dissimilar to Tai Chi, Qigong is good for health and wellbeing and involves precise movements, balance and controlled breathing.

Visit Connections to find out more.

Deskercise

The firm offers a 45-minute deskercise session focusing on exercises you can do whilst at your desk.

Book via the Academy.

Massage

The firm offers subsidised 15-minute express chair massage sessions (without the use of oils) on a monthly basis in both our Two Snowhill and 4 More offices.

Look out for the next sessions on the Daily Email.

AXA PPP

The firm provides single cover private medical insurance for employees under our AXA PPP Private Medical Insurance scheme, designed to get you the right treatment as fast as possible.

To join the AXA PPP scheme, please contact the AskHR team on AskHR@gowlingwlg.com and request a PMI Notification Form. Further information, including entitlement and cover costs, is available on Connections.

Doctor@Hand

Our Doctor@Hand virtual GP service, delivered by Doctor Care Anywhere, provides a way of seeing a GP by video or phone that's designed for the way we live and work today.

The service is open from 8am-10pm, 365 days a year, so all employees are sure of getting an appointment that suits them. Appointments can be booked at any time online, or on the Doctor Care Anywhere app, for same-day consultation, typically within two hours.

Preferential rates for Doctor Care Anywhere's direct to customer subscription and appointment memberships are open to friends and family members outside of our Doctor@Hand corporate schemes.

Visit Connections to find out more.

EmployeeCare

EmployeeCare is an Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) available to all employees, offering information and support on a wide range of topics that focus on the end goal of helping you lead and maintain a healthy lifestyle.

The free-to-access service offers 24/7, 365 days a year access to telephone counselling and up to four face-to-face or structured telephone sessions per issue per year, as well as confidential advice and support from experienced professional counsellors.

EmployeeCare also offers access to doctors and nurses who provide an information and advisory service to discuss personal concerns about medical conditions, treatment and general health and lifestyle issues.

Call EmployeeCare on 0800 917 9330 or visit Connections to find out more.

OUR NETWORKS

Our goal is for an increasing number of people from an ever-broader range of backgrounds to feel that this is a business where they have a vital role to play.

Our employee networks provide a supportive forum for us to engage with each other in the business environment. You can find out more about all of our employee networks on Connections.

Enable

Our disability, mental health and wellbeing network supporting colleagues with visible and non-visible disabilities and mental health issues.

OpenHouse

Our LGBT and allies network supports our LGBT employees and provides a link to other external networks that they may find useful. The group also works with HR to ensure appropriate support, guidance, benefits and policies are provided for our LGBT employees.

Family Matters

Our employee resource network supporting working parents and working carers at Gowling WLG in both London and Birmingham. The network is there to support those of us with family or caring commitments outside of work to help achieve a better work life balance.

EmBRACE

Our multicultural network, aimed at promoting and supporting the different cultures and nationalities comprised in our business and addressing the issues raised by a multicultural workplace.

THOSE WHO IDENTIFY AS
LGBT ARE

**2-3
TIMES**

**MORE LIKELY TO EXPERIENCE
MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES
(COMPARED TO HETEROSEXUALS).**

This high prevalence can be related to a wide range of factors including discrimination, isolation and homophobia.

OUR CLUBS

We have many groups and clubs that you can also get involved with, including:

The Book Club;

The Knitting Club;

Gowling WLG Choir;

Gowling WLG Band;

Football Clubs; and

Netball Clubs

Visit Connections or Workplace to find out more.

USEFUL WEBSITES & PHONE NUMBERS

If you're struggling with a mental health issue and need confidential advice and support, have concerns about a relative, friend or colleague, or simply want to talk to someone, the organisations listed here are available to support you:

MENTAL HEALTH ORGANISATIONS AND CHARITIES

Mind

Website: www.mind.org.uk

Contact: 0300 123 3393

Text: 86463

Provides advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem

Employee Assistance Programme (EAP)

Website: www.employeeassistance.org.uk

Contact: 0800 917 9330

An independent counselling and advice service, which is paid for by your employer. Speak to a Gowling WLG mental health champion for more information

Samaritans

Website: www.samaritans.org

Contact: 116 123

Provides emotional support to anyone in emotional distress, struggling to cope, or at risk of suicide

LawCare

Website: www.lawcare.org.uk

Contact: 0800 279 6888

Offers free mental health support to all in the legal community, including support staff and their families

Together

Website: www.together-uk.org

Contact: 0207 780 7300

Offers mental health support to those in need or looking for advice for others

The Centre for Mental Health

Website: www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

Contact: 0207 827 8300

Focused on improving the quality of life for those of us with mental health issues

Mental Health Foundation

Website: www.mentalhealth.org.uk

Contact: 0207 803 1101

Provides information and support for anyone with mental health problems or learning disabilities

British Association for Counselling & Psychotherapy (BACP)

Website: www.itsgoodtotalk.org.uk/therapists

Contact: 01455 883300

Therapist directory where you can find out more about counselling services in your area

PANDAS Foundation

Website: www.pandasfoundation.org.uk

Contact: 08432 898 401

PANDAS Foundation's vision is to support every individual with pre- (antenatal) or post-natal depression or postnatal psychosis in England, Wales and Scotland

Anxiety UK

Website: www.anxietyuk.org.uk

Contact: 08444 775 774

Works to relieve and support those living with anxiety by providing information, support and understanding via an extensive range of services, including 1:1 therapy

Depression Alliance

Website: www.depressionalliance.org

Contact: 0845 123 2320

Provide information and support to those who are affected by depression via publications, support services and a network of self-help groups

Bipolar UK

Website: www.bipolaruk.org.uk

Contact: 0333 323 3880

A charity helping those of us living with manic depression or bipolar disorder

CALM

Website: www.thecalmzone.net

Contact: 0800 58 58 58

The Campaign Against Living Miserably, for men aged 15-35

Men's Health Forum

Website: www.menshealthforum.org.uk

Contact: 0207 922 7908

24/7 stress support for men by text, chat and email

No Panic

Website: www.nopanic.org.uk

Contact: 0844 967 4848

Voluntary charity offering support for sufferers of panic attacks and OCD. Offers a course to help overcome a phobia/OCD

Age Concern

Website: www.ageuk.org.uk

Contact: 0800 009966

Freephone Infoline offering support and advice to older people

Lesbian and Gay Switchboard

Website: www.switchboard.lgbt

Contact: 020 7837 7324

Provides information, support and referral services

Relate

Website: www.relate.org.uk

Contact: 0300 100 1234

Offers relationship counselling, sex therapy, workshops, mediation, consultations and support

SUPPORT FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE**Young Minds**

Website: www.youngminds.org.uk

Contact: 020 7336 8445

Provides information and advice to those concerned about the mental health of a child or young person

PAPYRUS

Website: www.papyrus-uk.org

Contact: 0800 068 4141

Young suicide prevention society

Nightline

Website: www.nightline.ac.uk

Contact: Tailored to region/institution – see website for further details

A student-focused support line, run by students, offering confidential support and information

Childline

Website: www.childline.org.uk

Contact: 0800 1111

Freephone national helpline offering support to children and young people in trouble or danger

GENERAL SUPPORT**Citizens Advice Bureau**

Website: www.citizensadvice.org.uk

Contact: 0345 404 0506

Provides a free confidential advice service focused on helping people resolve money, legal, consumer and other issues.

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