



**Mineral Products Association**

The Trade Association for the Aggregates, Asphalt, Cement, Concrete, Dimension Stone, Lime, Mortar and Silica Sand Industries



# Managers

Recognising and managing  
Mental Health and Wellbeing issues

Clear, Simple, Smart

Version 1.0

# Managing your own and a colleague's mental health and wellbeing

Work and other personal issues can have a detrimental impact on many people's lives. These may be experienced as feelings of isolation, anxiety, financial insecurity, emotional issues within your family, concerns about the future or changes in one's ability to enjoy the company of friends and other forms of relaxation. These pressures can lead to mental health and wellbeing issues which can be experienced by anybody; males and females, young and old, staff at all levels within an organisation.

Maintaining one's mental health and sense of wellbeing when coping with these stresses can be challenging and many individuals within the industry are struggling with this. Sadly, mental ill-health and suicides are particularly prominent in the construction sector. Within the industry, two workers take their own life every working day.

MPA member companies are keen to ensure that managers, supervisors and others have the basic information that will help them to recognise behaviour that may indicate that one of their colleagues is experiencing mental health or wellbeing issues and to outline how they may be able to support them.

MPA has been working in partnership with a mental health charity 'Mates in Mind' helping to raise awareness of mental health issues within the industry and provide tools and training for managers. Your company may already have in place procedures and training to support you in dealing with mental health issues, please check with your Line Manager or HR what is available.

MPA has produced an Employee Guide to help employees to recognise the signs of mental health issues, to understand some simple coping strategies and, most importantly, to appreciate that there are many ways in which they can be provided with support.

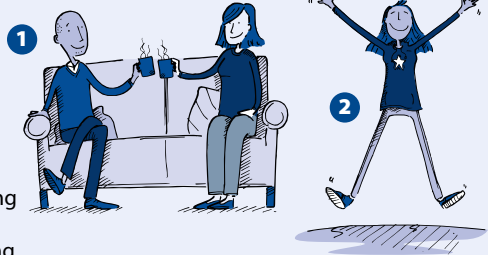
These two leaflets are complementary.



# Your mental health and wellbeing

**Simple coping strategies** - The NHS recommend 5 simple things to do that improve mental health and wellbeing that you may find helpful:

1. **Connect with other people** - Good relationships are important for mental wellbeing
2. **Be physically active** - Being active is not only great for physical health and fitness, evidence also shows it can also improve mental wellbeing
3. **Learn new skills** - Research shows that learning new skills can also improve mental wellbeing. This does not require studying or taking exams, it can be as simple as fixing a broken bike or becoming a better cook!
4. **Give to others** - Research suggests that acts of giving and kindness can help improve mental wellbeing
5. **Pay attention to the present moment (mindfulness)** - Most of us have issues that we find hard to let go and mindfulness can help us deal with them more productively. We can ask: 'Is trying to solve this by brooding about it helpful, or am I just getting caught up in my thoughts?'



## What to do if you feel you are not coping right now

If you are struggling today the following suggestions may be helpful:

- Speak to your GP, Manager or one of the other agencies listed on page 8
- Try not to think about the future – just focus on getting through today
- Stay away from drugs and alcohol
- Get yourself to a safe place, like a friend's house
- Be around other people
- Do something you usually enjoy, such as spending time with a pet.

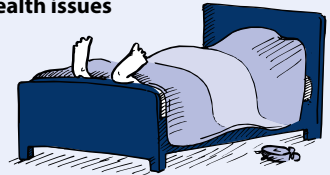


# How to recognise that a colleague may be experiencing mental health issues

It can be difficult to recognise that a colleague needs support coping with mental health issues, even though you may have noticed changes in their behaviour or work performance. Mates in Mind have identified the list below of behaviour that can provide an indication of this.

## Mates in Mind list of behaviour that may be a sign of mental health issues

- Appearing restless and agitated
- Appearing tearful
- Not wanting to talk to or be with people
- Indications they may be using alcohol or drugs to cope with feelings
- Not replying to messages or being distant
- Not wanting to do things they usually enjoy
- Indicating they are finding it hard to cope with everyday things
- Recent inability to concentrate on their work or in meetings
- Recent inability to complete any of their work
- New pattern of unexplained lateness or absences



## If you recognise these signs in a colleague what should you do?

- Remember that early intervention and support can be important in facilitating a quick recovery and return to a normal, healthy and positive life.
- Engage with the individual to help you better understand what is causing the change in behaviour and help them understand they are not alone.
- Advise them of the support that is available through your company, NHS or other organisations - see page 8
- Consider whether changes can be made in the way they are being managed – please see following page for indications of what might be reviewed.
- Understand what resources are available to support them and you in dealing with this.

# Providing support in the workplace

Detailed below are summaries of some of the organisations that provide guidance on how to manage your own and colleague's mental health and wellbeing. More information about the techniques and principles they are based on can be found by following up the references highlighted.

## HSE Advice on Managing Stress

Employees feel stress when they cannot cope with work pressures and other issues. Employers should match demands to employees' skills and knowledge - providing planning, training and support can reduce pressure and bring stress levels down.

HSE have produced a workbook '[Tackling work-related stress using the Management Standards approach](#)'. This is based around six main areas of work design that, if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence. Employers should assess the risks in these areas to manage stress in the workplace.

## What are the Management Standards?

- 1 **Demands** - Includes issues such as workload, work patterns and the work environment.
- 2 **Control** - How much say do the people have over the way they work?
- 3 **Support** - Includes encouragement, sponsorship and resources provided by the organisation, line management and colleagues.
- 4 **Relationships** - Includes promoting positive working to avoid conflict and dealing with unacceptable behaviour.
- 5 **Role** - Do people understand their role within the organisation and does the organisation ensure roles are not conflicting?
- 6 **Change** - How is organisational change (large and small) managed and communicated?

For each Standard there must be systems in place locally to respond to any individual concerns.

# Providing support in the workplace

## Mates in Mind

MPA committed to championing the [Mates in Mind](#) initiative, that starts the process of lowering the barriers that prevent people from seeking help – most of all, the stigma associated with talking about mental health. Their model supports better workplace mental health by bringing together four key elements:



- **Guidance and support:** offering guidance on specific employee issues to creating stress management policies through to connecting the workforce to appropriate support at the right time. Mates in Mind supports companies that create and implement a mental health at work plan.
- **Awareness and education:** helping to develop mental health awareness throughout the industry – from encouraging open conversation throughout the workforce to helping leaders and managers understand their roles in creating mentally healthy work environments.
- **Communication:** helping to ensure the organisation’s commitment to positive mental health and wellbeing remains visible and relevant. From targeted communication materials to supporting organisations in monitoring employee mental health and wellbeing.
- **Research and development:** developing industry-leading research to understand the nature and impact of mental health, and to ensure development of effective, robust and sustainable solutions.

## Chartered Institute of Personnel Development (CIPD) and Mind Guidance

The [‘People Manager’s Guide to Mental Health’](#) provides useful advice on mental health issues and how they can be managed in the workplace. It lists four early warning signs

- Employees taking a lot of sick days
- Mood swings, erratic and uncharacteristic behaviour
- Low employee engagement and poor productivity;
- High staff turnover.



# Training for managers, supervisors, team leaders and individuals

## Mental Health First Aid

Short courses are available that help raise awareness of mental illness, enabling people to support themselves and others to aid recovery. These are on offer from a number of organisations including [Mental Health First Aid England](#), [St John Ambulance](#) and [St Andrews First Aid \(Scotland\)](#).

These provide a number of skills: to approach the person, assess and assist with any crisis; listen and communicate non-judgementally; give support and information; encourage the person to get appropriate professional help; and encourage other supports. Ideally managers will have participated in a course so they can respond appropriately, if the need arises.

Failing that, if concerned, managers should strike up a non-judgemental conversation e.g. ask if everything is alright, and if there appears to be a problem, provide reassurance and encourage the person concerned to seek help.

## Suicide

Samaritans launched '[Small Talks Saves Lives](#)' together with Network Rail, British Transport Police and the wider rail industry to empower the public to use small talk to save lives on the railways and beyond - the basic principles are sound for use on works and with trespassers in quarries e.g. standing alone in an isolated spot, near the edge of a face, looking distant withdrawn or upset.

- **It's a small but simple thing:** If you think somebody might need help, trust your instincts and strike up a conversation. You can't make things worse, remember **SAM**;
- **Start the conversation:** Small talk is a great start. You can ask them if they are okay, introduce yourself and encourage them to talk. There may be some silences before they respond, but just try to be yourself.
- **Alert others:** You don't have to manage this alone. If you're at a train station, get the attention of a member of staff (some rail staff are trained by Samaritans), ask a passer-by to alert someone or call the police. Ask the person if there's someone you can call for them.
- **Move them to safety:** Encourage them to sit down somewhere safe and quiet. You can suggest a hot drink somewhere – there might be members of staff around to support. You could mention sources of help, including Samaritans and their GP, as well as friends and family. Do not however, make physical contact or place yourself in danger.

# Seeking help

**For individuals experiencing mental health and wellbeing issues their GP is the most appropriate initial point of contact to seek support and referral to other services. However, detailed below is information on other routes that an individual can follow.**

**Employee Assistance Programmes** - Many companies provide an employee assistance programme, intended to help employees deal with personal problems that might adversely impact their work performance, health and wellbeing – these generally include assessment, short-term counselling and referral services for employees and their immediate family. These are usually accessible 24/7 by phone.

**Other sources of help** - There are many specialist charities providing specialist support for a range of mental health issues – please see page on [Safequarry](#).

**Samaritans** - Confidential support for people experiencing feelings of distress or despair.

**Phone:** 116 123 (free 24-hour helpline)

**Website:** [www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

**In an emergency** - Where an individual life is at risk due to action they have already taken e.g. if they have injured themselves or taken an overdose, if you feel that you cannot keep them or yourself safe – **Please call 999 or go to A&E.**

## Mental Health Services

Some mental health services allow people to refer themselves - this commonly includes services for drug problems and alcohol problems, as well as psychological therapies (IAPT) services. Others require a referral from a GP to access them. Information on services can be found by using a postcode. If an individual has already been given a crisis line number to use in an emergency, it's best to call it. In other circumstances individuals would be best advised to approach their GP for advice.

- *England:* The NHS [Psychological therapies service](#) can be accessed without the need to see a Doctor. Local NHS urgent mental health helplines can be accessed by postcode at the following site [NHS Urgent Mental Health](#) - 24-hour advice and support care; for help to speak to a mental health professional, and an assessment to help decide on the best course of care.
- *Scotland:* [Citizens Advice Scotland](#) provides links to all services and sources of information that are likely to be required, including what to do in an emergency.
- *Wales:* [NHS 111](#) provides general advice on services. The [Mental Health Helpline For Wales](#) provides advice and also a Community Advice & Listening Line - 0800 132 737 or text help to 81066
- *Northern Ireland:* [NI Direct](#) provides directions to information on mental health support and services.



The Mineral Products Association is the trade association for the aggregates, asphalt, cement, concrete, dimension stone, lime, mortar and silica sand industries.

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