

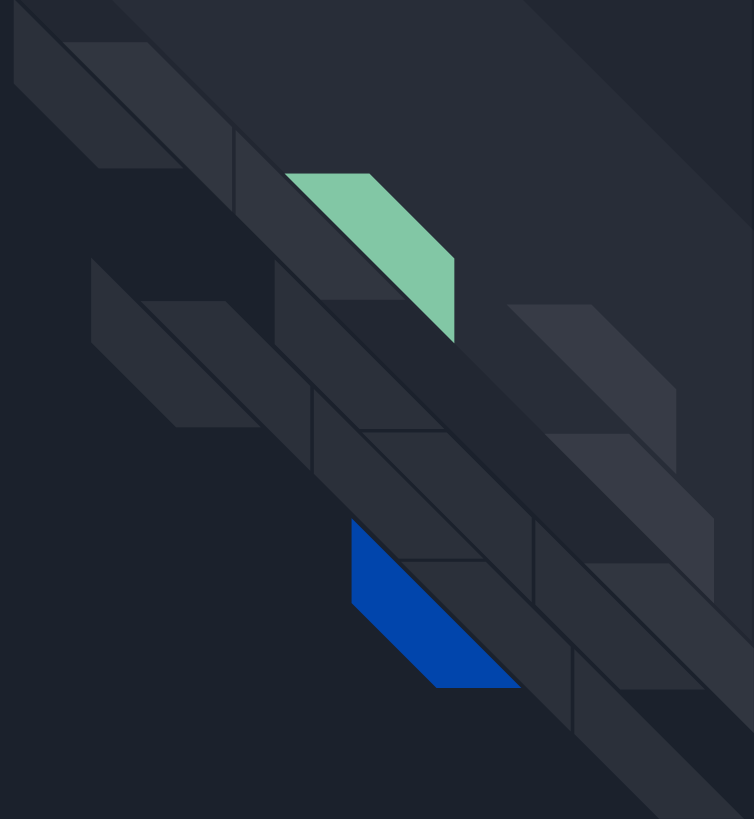
Empowering employees to take control of their mental health

This presentation has been edited for context
for my Portfolio

The Brief

How to optimise an office environment / processes to promote better mental health (preventative)

How a work environment needs to support someone in the event of a mental health challenge (supportive)



My Assumptions

- Stress/Anxiety/Depression
- People won't talk about it while it's happening
- People are embarrassed/feel weak
- People will struggle to find the line about when stress becomes unmanageable
- LGBT people will feel supported in the workplace





Stats

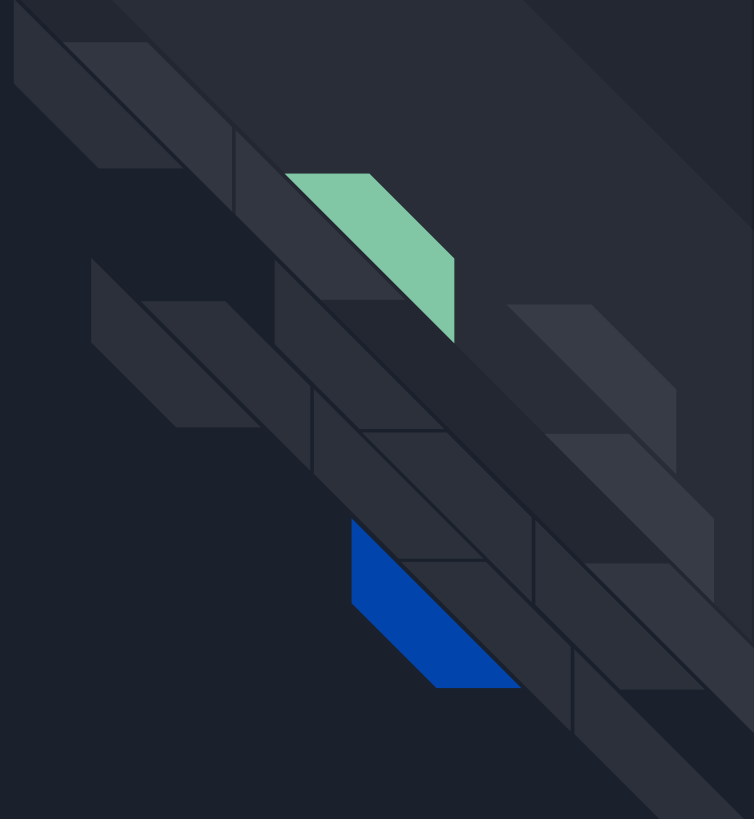
- Nearly half (43.4%) of adults think that they have had a diagnosable mental health condition at some point in their life (35.2% of men and 51.2% of women). A fifth of men (19.5%) and a third of women (33.7%) have had diagnoses confirmed by professionals.¹
- Women in full-time employment are nearly twice as likely to have a common mental health problem as full-time employed men (19.8% vs 10.9%).¹
- Evidence suggests that 12.7% of all sickness absence days in the UK can be attributed to mental health conditions.²

1. Stansfeld, S., Clark, C., Bebbington, P., King, M., Jenkins, R., & Hinchliffe, S. (2016). Chapter 2: Common mental disorders. In S. McManus, P. Bebbington, R. Jenkins, & T. Brugha (Eds.), *Mental health and wellbeing in England: Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey 2014*. Leeds: NHS Digital.

2. ONS. (2014). *Full Report: Sickness Absence on the Labour Market, February 2014*. Retrieved from [webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20160105160709/http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_353899.pdf](http://www.ons.gov.uk/ons/dcp171776_353899.pdf) [Accessed 28/07/16].

Discussion Guide

- Intros
- Day in the life
- Mental health in personal life
- Mental health experiences in the workplace
- Communication about mental health
- Technology use
- How would we improve an office space?



Interviewee Profiles

Ana

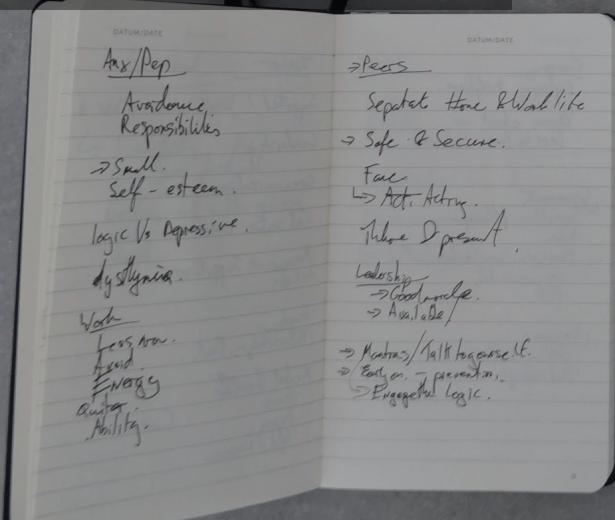
- Brazilian Mid 20s living in Dublin
- Working for big tech company
- Managing Portuguese speaking partners

John

- English mid 20s living in UK
- Working as a coach for call support staff for an ISP

James

- English late 30s living in UK
- Working for complaints department
- Focuses on health complaints - Can be distressing material



Ana

There is a concept of doing it all and people don't want to acknowledge this, by showing a weakness you open up the competition to each other.

The need of control that I have [is a challenge] and everything is a priority, you don't have the time to do anything and [you're] expected to be at your best and perfect all the time... it's a lot of pressure

[People] are unaware. There is a stigma around it. It is being talked about in a theoretical way but it's hard to raise your hand say I'm not feeling ok when you're expected to perform.

[By communicating the problem] Leaves your own head, changes perspective.

"I know you have too many priorities, but here's another priority for you"

They want to jump to a conclusion, and not necessarily hear what I have to say.

Bridging the gap between the theory and business.

Provide tools but also promote acceptance

Women in the workplace

Statement

- Women are still more responsible for looking after the home
- 60% Men vs 100% women
- Imposter syndrome

Why?

- Need to be humble
- Need to prove themselves a bit more
- Women don't need to talk about their accomplishments, bragging women are less hireable.

Why?

- We don't have examples, we don't have women who got there. "Am I in the right place? Am I doing the right thing?"

Why?

- Makes it look achievable

John

You've acknowledged that there is something wrong. I know that people will listen, and just acknowledge how I feel

"I don't feel bad enough, not bad enough for me to warrant speaking about it"

It is evident in the way they lead, they spend a lot of time and effort making sure everyone has good morale. They put a lot of effort into being available.

It is regularly communicated if there is an issue and if we're doing a good job, so I feel quite secure in what I'm doing and safe.

I need to be there and present, if I'm not actually acting like I'm there and present, I'm not going to be. I never feel pressure to hide anything. If I act ok, I can get through the day

Paint by numbers, being treated as if it's a problem rather than supporting [the person].

I have to put all the energy in to appear ok, meaning when I go home I feel exhausted, so I might be a bit quieter at work.

The logical part of my brain tells me that's not the case, but it's not always the part of the brain that's in control for me.

James

It's got to be led by the person with the concern.... Supported by those around

You have to feel safe, you have to feel you're not gonna be judged, you have to feel like it's not going to go any further.

A lot of people don't understand it and think you'll just snap out of it. People don't know how to deal with friends who have a problem.

I don't think anyone on our team manages our mental health, we only step in when someone isn't feeling right

There is a massive expectation for [stress] in the job. They've realised in the last 2 years that that expectation isn't possible, they're trying to change a culture that's been embedded for years.

People try and tell you what to do when they don't fully understand how it's affecting you

You're given a deadline and despite delays the deadline doesn't move. They don't pause the clock on your leave. When I go back I know that 8 of my cases are still waiting for me.

They don't have a genuine view of what's going on at base level. It's very rose tinted as it goes through a manager chain.




Insight Statements

Conflicts

- Business and Personal needs are in conflict
- There is a disconnect between the initiatives and the actual dialogue.
- Everyone is different - everyone needs different treatment

Communication

- Acknowledgement and communication of the issue helps
 - People are guarded about who they share their mental health challenges with
 - There is a stigma around admitting to mental health
 - People in general are not proactively measuring their mental health.
 - Strong communication can negate issues
 - People don't know how to deal with a friend who has a mental health challenge
- 

How might we

give better insights to the leadership team on managing mental health?

How might we

promote more open and regular communication about mental health in the workplace?

Ideation

Prompt
conversation

Communication
Without
Judgement

Get talking
LIKE it's
the weather

Twitter
Meets
Blogspot
Anonymous.

Safe
Space

Breathing
Mix
ICE

Like
a cold
flu

Empowering
People to
Manage Their
Mental Health

Normalise
IT

Incentivise
Tracking

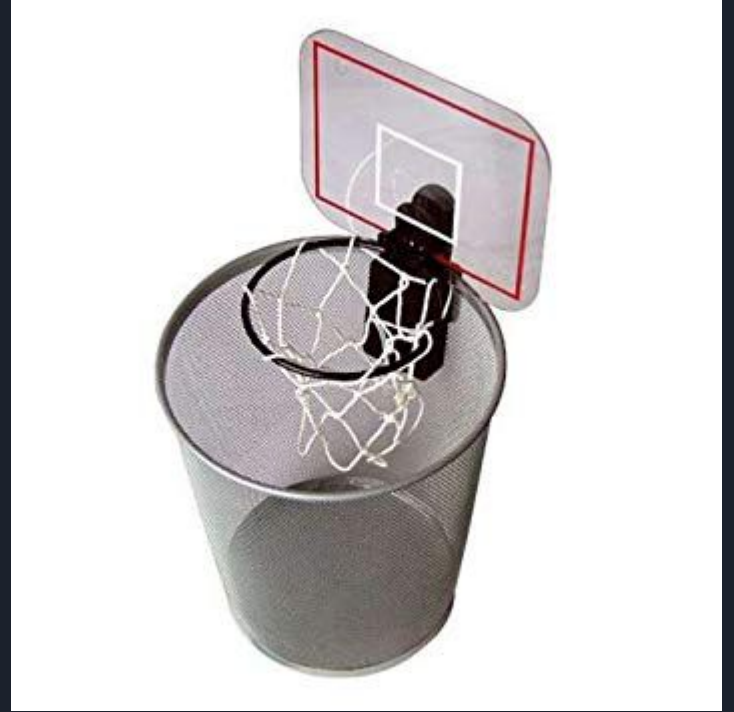
Peer
to
Peer

Providing
communications
tools



spit it out

say it





Spit it out

An anonymous posting board and conversation tool moderated by mental health first aiders.

The branding is light hearted to reflect the smaller issues but also to promote acceptance of mental health issues as part of everyday life.

How it works

- Users anonymously post their experiences from little to large and select if they are looking to talk about it or just wanting to express themselves
- A peer can then view a post and if they feel they can talk about it in a supportive way, request to have a conversation.
- The original poster sees the profile of the peer and accepts/declines as they see fit.

This helps cover a range of severities and encourages people to express themselves frequently

Leadership should have access and should review the key cases to get better insight into the real view of the workplace



Spit it out - What is it achieving?

- Promoting regular communication about mental health challenges
- Provides a trust based peer to peer network
- Give Leadership an accurate picture of the workplace
- Putting emphasis on normalising mental health discussion
- Lowers anxiety related to speaking out through anonymity
- Empowers person with the challenge to control how and with who they communicate their challenge with

Overall day color:



What did you feel today?



Write something about it



APRIL



MAY

What did you feel today?

- tiredness
- sadness
- emptiness
- anger
- stress
- anxiety
- fear
- nerves
- joy
- remorse
- happiness
- chill
- excitement
- love
- optimism

OFF THE RADAR: A FRIEND OR FAMILY MEMBER STOPS SOCIALISING

Distant and distracted; Is someone not acting like themselves? Change in appearance; someone may neglect to look after their appearance or personal hygiene, be overeating or starving themselves, so look out for changes in weight
Social media; a friend or colleague change their social media habits, posting more about certain subjects or going silent

WHAT TO DO:

Stay in contact, even if it feels like you're having to put in a lot of effort. Be patient.
Talk about everyday things, ask what's on their mind and don't change how you act around them
Listen without judging
Send a private message asking how they are doing or try to get in touch via other means

IF SOMEONE DOES OPEN UP

Don't shy away from the subject
You don't have to fix all of their problem, just being there will help
Don't treat them any differently, keep doing the things you normally do together
You don't have to be an expert but if they mention a specific condition, do some research and if they need further support suggest they talk to the Samaritans or their GP

START THE CONVERSATION

Mental health problems can start at an early age. One in 10 young people will experience a problem - three kids in an average classroom.

WHAT TO DO:

Talking about a family friend, relative or celebrity who has a mental health problem is a good way to start dialogue
It can be easier to talk side-by-side rather than face-to-face. Instead of a formal sit-down, speak while out shopping, cooking or in the car
Ask open questions (how was your day?) rather than ones that lead to yes or no answers that can shut down conversations

TIME TO TALK

If you feel like talking to someone would help with problems you are dealing with, don't delay. The truth is people close to you - and even work colleagues and others you wouldn't count as friends - will be happy to listen. They might not be loaded with the expertise you would get from the Samaritans or your local GP but chances are they will know someone else who has suffered from mental health problems, or may have experienced it themselves.

Instead of saying
"I don't have time"
try saying "it's not
a priority" and see
how that feels.




Colourful Conversation

Simple mood tracker with emotion tags that generates communication tips, which can be accessed at any time.

How it works

- Employees spend 2 - 5 mins thinking about their work day before they leave
- They log the result along with some emotions they can choose from or input themselves
- This generates suggestions of a bank of content snippets that provide helpful communication tools for both people with mental health challenges and those who want to support peers who have mental health challenges
- Reminders and notification are important.
- Leadership buy in is crucial - to lead the gamification of this and incentivise it and also to normalise it
- Leadership would be able to access aggregated data on moods and emotions



Colourful Conversation - What is it achieving?

- Promoting regular consideration of mood & mental health
- May help identify triggers of poor moods
- Helps those with mental health challenges communicate in an effective way
- Helps those supporting people with mental health challenges communicate in an empathetic way & creates a shared language.
- Allows leadership to see aggregated data for mood in the office



Learnings/Improvements

- Second listener to interview
- Collaboration
- Workshops
- Exercise with client about expectations

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Thank You

Any questions?

