



Mental health and the construction industry

go beyond

vgc

You are mentally healthy when:

- You realise your own abilities.
- You can cope with the normal stresses of life.
- You work productively and fruitfully.
- You make a contribution to your community.



Housekeeping

- Introductions
- Facilities
- First aid arrangements
- Fire arrangements
- Domestic arrangements
- Switch off mobile phones / pagers



Mental health and wellbeing

Course aims

- Introduce the concept of mental health and its role within UK health and safety legislation
- Understand the impact upon work and personal life
- Understand the impact on people physically
- The construction industry should acknowledge and address mental health problems



Source: equalengineers.com

Why consider mental health?

- The workforce is any organisation's biggest and most valuable asset.
- Poor mental health can result in low morale, poor timekeeping, lack of motivation, poor productivity and decision making.
- Employees who suffer from work-related stress may also suffer from anxiety, depression, increased illness and absence from work.

Why consider mental health?

Impact on the industry - pressures such as project deadlines increase the likelihood of mental health issues.

We are all aware of the image of the tough male who doesn't show emotion. One third of men say they would be embarrassed to see a GP for feelings of depression.

It can be incredibly hard for men in this industry to come forward and discuss stress and mental health with their boss.

Why consider mental health?

Work related stress can impact on work performance and personal lives:

- high blood pressure
- stomach ulcers
- increased risk of heart attack
- drug and alcohol abuse.

Work-related stress can develop from heavy workloads, long working hours, travel, family separation, fear of redundancy and job insecurity, financial and budgeting pressures, tight deadlines and high risk activities.

Mental health and wellbeing

Legal requirements

- [The Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations 1999](#) requires employers to assess work related risks, including stress.
- [The Health and Safety at Work Act 1974](#) makes employers responsible for the wellbeing of their workforce. It places a duty of care on employers to take measures to control risks.
- [The Equality Act 2010](#) protects people from discrimination in the workplace and in wider society – it aims to promote equal rights for everyone. Mental health is often not considered a disability, but if the condition has a serious impact on a person's day-to-day life over a long period, then it may be considered a disability under this law.

It is important for employers to recognise the problem and support their employees in offering guidance, raising awareness and ensuring that people do not feel ashamed or embarrassed to seek help.

Mental health and wellbeing

Reports show that:

- 1 in 4 people will experience a mental health problem in any year – poor mental health affects anyone
- 9 out of 10 people who experience mental health problems say they face stigma and discrimination as a result
- Stigma is a huge challenge in the workplace; 40% of employers view workers with mental health problems as a 'significant risk'
- 8 in 10 employers have no mental health policy
- Stress has forced 1 in 5 workers to call in sick; 90% did not feel able to tell their boss the real reason why

Mental health and wellbeing

Resources

- The HSE website includes a section on management standards for work related stress. These include six key areas of work, that if not properly managed, are associated with poor health and wellbeing, lower productivity and increased sickness absence - identified as the primary sources of stress at work.
- The CITB toolbox talks provide guidance for employers to train their staff in different aspects of fairness, inclusion and respect. The Fairness, Inclusion and Respect - Health, Work and Wellbeing toolbox talk in particular is tailored for mental health issues.

Mental health and wellbeing

What can you do?

Mental health is an issue that affects everyone. Awareness of the issues around mental health is vital in proactively supporting your workforce.

Employers have a legal responsibility to protect the health, safety and wellbeing of their employees at work, which includes assessing and minimising the risk of stress-related illness or injury.

Mental health and wellbeing

What can you do?

Managers should educate people who work on site, so that

- everyone understands mental health
- stigmas can be challenged and removed.

How?

- toolbox talks
- open door policy
- supportive literature
- visits arranged to site by a nurse or employee wellbeing adviser
- talks given by organisations such as Mind or Calm

Mental health and wellbeing

What can you do?

- Include the topic of mental health in all site inductions.
- Raise awareness of mental health when gathering medical details from the workforce.
- Whether people are working on site or in an office environment, there needs to be a clear message communicated to the workforce.
- Managers should remove the stigma associated with mental health by making mental health in the workplace as important as physical wellbeing.

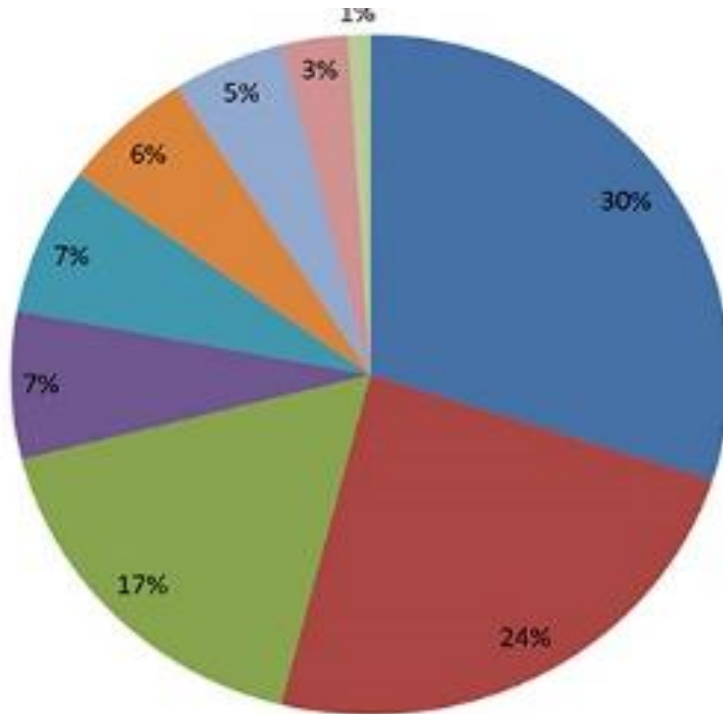
What can you do?

- Site managers should create a culture where anyone affected by mental health is able to come forward, know they will be taken seriously and that appropriate support and advice will be available.
 - lead by example
 - proactively interact with the workforce
 - do not be afraid to speak to someone who is displaying signs of distress
 - be as available and approachable as possible.

This will enable managers to spot potential problems and to effectively support staff members.

Mental health and wellbeing

Impacts on mental health at work



- Management attitudes and expectations
- Work deadlines and pressures
- Inflexible working hours
- Job insecurity
- Lack of training and opportunities for career progression
- Travel to and from site
- Family separation
- High risk activities
- Other

Mental health and wellbeing



Support system:
Construction Industry
Helpline, in partnership
with Considerate
Constructors Scheme.

- Supports construction workers with stress, depression and anxiety issues.
- A 'go to' place for construction worker issues outside any employee assistance scheme, available to all within the industry, especially small and medium-sized companies that don't have in-house initiatives.

Mental health and wellbeing

'Spotlight on...' survey - over 300 responses.

- 58% of participants have (or have worked with someone who has) suffered from mental health issues
- 63% felt unable to speak to anyone about these issues
- 33% stated that there is no support available
- 79% do not feel there is enough information and awareness available about mental health at work
- 47% do not know if their company has a mental health policy
- 77% have suffered from work related stress, with 71% being absent as a result
- 63% of stress sufferers were able to explain the true reason for their absence to management, with half of respondents experiencing support and understanding from their employers
- 66% of respondents benefit from an open door policy at work, providing a platform to highlight and discuss any issues affecting them.

Mental health and wellbeing

Construction Industry Helpline

(managed by the Lighthouse Club)

Support and advice on topics from occupational health and wellbeing to financial aid in times of hardship caused by accident, illness or bereavement.

24/7 confidential helpline - anyone working in the industry and their families.

Tel: 0345 605 1956

Mind

Advice and support to empower anyone experiencing a mental health problem. They campaign to improve services, raise awareness and promote understanding

Tel: 0300 123 3393

If you feel there may be an issue, do not be afraid to raise it.

go beyond

vgc

www.vgcgroup.co.uk

