

Wellbeing and mental health

Looking after your mental health is just as important as your physical health.

One of VGC's core values is **we look after each other**.

That includes mental as well as physical health and safety.

Talking about mental health can make people uncomfortable.

According to a report by the Office for National Statistics in 2017 – “The risk of suicide among male labourers, particularly those working in construction roles, was three times higher than the male national average”

Remember that when discussing mental health and wellbeing issues :

- Treat colleagues with respect. Joking can cause harm.
- People can get uncomfortable or upset.

At VGC we do our best to ensure everyone is well and mentally fit to carry out your work.

If you have a physical health issue, you go to your pharmacist, GP, dentist or optometrist for help. But people who suffer from hidden health issues like stress, depression and anxiety may feel unable to ask for help.

Every year one in four of us will experience a mental health problem.

Work-related stress in the construction industry can come from heavy workloads, long working hours, travel, being away from family, job insecurity, money worries, tight deadlines and high risk activities.



Questions

These questions below can help you understand if you are doing enough for your mental (and physical) wellbeing.

- Do I sleep well?
- Do I spend enough time with friends and family?
- Do I eat healthy food?
- Do I exercise regularly?
- Do I take suitable breaks?
- Do I spend time outside / close to nature / doing hobbies or sport?

Each 'no' answer suggests where you could look after yourself better.

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Signs that something could be wrong:

Behaviour	Physical signs
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Low morale • Poor timekeeping • Absent • Not motivated to work • Poor productivity and decision making • Felling stressed/mood swings • Using alcohol or drugs to cope 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Changes in appearance • Sudden weight gain or loss • Constipation / diarrhoea • Indigestion / heartburn / ulcers • Heart problems • High or low blood pressure

Do not neglect the things that keep you well.

It can be hard with the demands of work and personal life, but try to:

- Keep active
- Eat well
- Drink sensibly
- Avoid caffeine late in the evening
- Wind down before bed and avoid electronic devices, especially in the hour before
- Do something you are good at
- Take a break
- Keep in touch with friends and family
- Talk to friends and colleagues if you feel stressed – don't bottle it up!
- Ask for help

Support

1. Speak to your line manager. They can support with work challenges and direct you to a mental health first aider.
2. VGC has several mental health champions and three trained mental health first aiders. Call Fiona on 07464 919245, Kimberley on 07810 052 787 or Daniel on 07899 781 502 to chat in confidence
3. Part of the VGC employee benefit scheme is the freephone Construction Worker Helpline: 8am – 8pm on 0808 801 0373
4. Samaritans 24-hour free helpline: phone or text 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org
5. Contact your GP.

