Mental health conditions: extent and impact

One in four people will experience some sort of mental health condition in the course of a year (Mind). Stress and mental health problems constitute one of the three major causes of long-term sickness absence (EEF Sickness Absence Survey, 2015).

Mental health problems account for the loss of 91 million working days each year (Acas).

Mixed anxiety and depression is the most common mental disorder in Britain (9% of people with mental health conditions) (Mental Health Foundation).

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Spot the signs

Right now, one in six workers is dealing with a mental health problem such as anxiety, depression or stress. Could you spot the signs?

- Changes in a staff member’s behaviour
- Inconsistency in terms of work outputs
- Difficulty making decisions
- Fluctuating moods
- Appearing tired, agitated or withdrawn
- Struggling to focus or task
- Moods

Returning to work after sickness absence due to mental health issues

Some tips on running the return-to-work interview:

- Explain the return-to-work process/procedures.
- Ask the employee how they feel.
- Reassure the employee that they are not expected to return to work without notice if they are not ready.
- Ask if there are any problems at work that might be causing stress.
- Listen and try to empathise with the employee.
- Discuss possible solutions and ensure you are aware of sources of available support.
- Don't push for answers straight away.
- Reassure the employee that they are not expected to return to work without notice if they are not ready.

Mental health: Break down the stigma

Open, honest and sensitive dialogue about mental health is key to removing the stigma that surrounds it. How can employers initiate this dialogue?

Invite employees to a quiet, neutral location to talk.

Don't push for answers straight away.

Be honest and clear and let them know what support is available.

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