ECGE5001Q; Assessment 1, Jessica Rowe; 2108311 *Educating Mental Health Within The Workplace*

Rationale

Mental Health In The Workplace

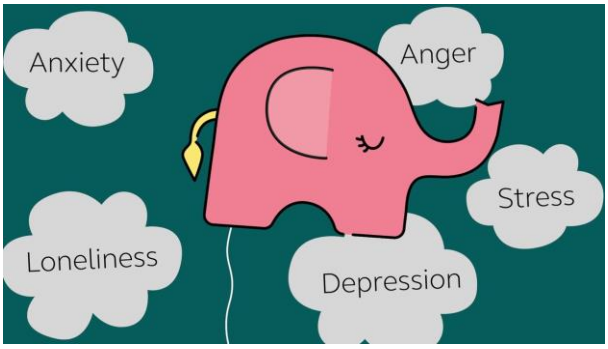
Despite the stigma, mental health issues affect one in four individuals each year (HSE, No Date; WHO, 2022). People's methods of thinking, feeling, and behaving may all be impacted by mental health issue (HSE, No Date; WHO, 2022). As a consequence of this, people's actions, communications, and responses may seem to be completely different to what is going on around them (HSE, No Date; WHO, 2022). In the last two years, we've dealt with a wide range of challenges, yet arguably the most startling and consequential one is the state of our mental health (Mind, 2021; Mercer, 2021; NHS, No Date).

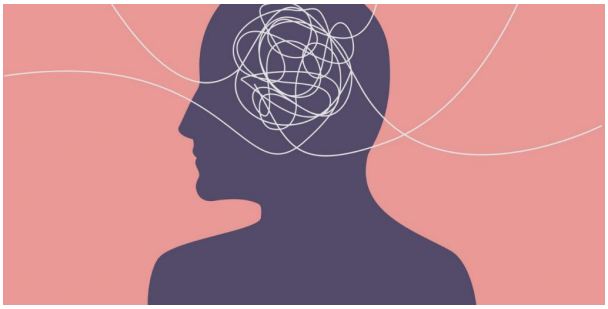
It has been shown that stable work may help people with poor mental health issues recover and reintegrate into society, as well as boost their self-esteem and general quality of life (WHO, 2022; Drake and Wallach, 2020). Safe and healthy workplaces reduce workplace stress and conflict as well as promote worker retention, performance, and productivity (Mind, 2021; WHO, 2022; Drake and Wallach, 2020; HSE, No Date). Where as on the other hand, an absence of adequate procedures and support in the workplace, especially for those who are dealing with poor mental health issues, may have a negative impact on a person's ability to perform and could also potentially prevent them

from being hired in the first place (Mind, 2021; Drake and Wallach, 2020), thus further diminishing their ability to enjoy their job and conduct their role adequately and efficiently (WHO, 2022; Mind, 2021).

The World Health Organization (2022) recommends that governments, businesses, and unions safeguard and promote mental health at work. Although the potential for exposure to psychosocial risks exists in every industry, some jobs and workplace settings put certain employees at a higher risk than others (WHO, 2022; Fernandes and Pereira, 2016). The mental health of those who work in health, humanitarian, or emergency services is frequently put to the test because of the likelihood that they may be exposed to traumatic experiences in the course of their employment (WHO, 2022; Mind, 2021; Fernandes and Pereira, 2016). Discrimination and inequality based on variables including colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation, disability, nationality, religion, age, or identity and may have a profound influence on poor mental health (Mental Health Foundation, 2016; Mind, 2021; Drake and Wallach, 2020), and the workplace can be a particularly toxic environment for this (Mental Health Foundation, 2016; WHO, 2022; Mind, 2021; Drake and Wallach, 2020).

Depression and anxiety are two of the leading causes of reduced productivity, which costs the global economy over a trillion dollars annually (WHO, 2016; Nobel, 2016). The World Health Organisation (2016) claim that around twelve billion working days are lost due to poor mental health each year (Who, 2016; United Nations, 2022). Those who struggle with severe and persistent mental health issues are discriminated against and excluded from employment opportunities (WHO, 2022; Mind, 2021; Drake and Wallach, 2020). Families, carers, colleagues, communities, and society as a whole are all impacted when an individual struggles with a mental health issue (Ahmedani, 2011; Mind, 2021; WHO, 2022).

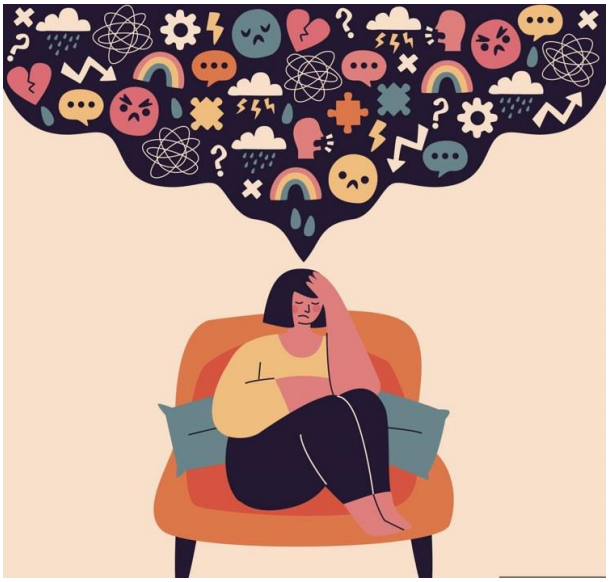




Proposal

Mandatory Mental Health Training

Currently there is no legal legislation that entails mandatory training for mental health within the workplace (Roach, 2022; Saint John Ambulance; Department for Work and Pensions, 2017). This submission proposes that business, companies and all employers should provide an annual online training course that is both current and comprehensive (Leka and Jain, 2020; WHO, 2005), with a refresher course to be taken every six months. Certain training courses are taken extremely seriously by employers (Chartered Trading Standards Institute, 2023), such as the challenge 25 training courses that are required for businesses that sell items with age restrictions (DrinkAware, 2023; Chartered Trading Standards Institute, 2023). There are courses on fire safety (Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974, 2018; UK Government, 2023) and allergy training (Food Standards Agency, 2020), yet there is nothing on mental health training (The World Health Organization, 2022; Mind, 2021). Therefore, by providing training on mental health to all workers, especially those in higher positions (Mind, 2021; Drake and Wallach, 2020; Work Nest, 2020; Wickens, 2022),Efforts are being made to lessen the taboo around conversations about mental health in the workplace among employers (HSE, No Date; WHO, 2022; Ahmedani B. K. (2011).



1 - (The CEO Publication, 2021)

WorkNest (2022) found that between June and August of that year, the vast majority of companies (79%) did not provide managers with training to assist the poor mental health and wellness of their employees, even though 93% of line managers are aware of their responsibilities regarding this issue (Wickens, 2022). This raises the question of whether companies are doing enough to assist the mental health of their workers in today's society (WorkNest, 2022), especially as concerns originating from the ongoing cost of living crisis persist (Andersen and Reeves, 2022; Wickens, 2022). Mental health training for managers is recommended by the World Health Organization (2022) so that they may better identify and assist staff members with poor mental health issues, this training has additional benefits, including improved communicational skills as well as a deeper understanding of the ways in which mental health is impacted by obstacles encountered at work(WHO, 2022; NICE, 2021).

2 - (Ponte, 2020)

After conducting a number of in-depth interviews with managers; researchers at the University of York and Kings College London, came to the conclusion that the mental health issues of a single worker may have a direct affect on the mental health of their co-workers in small and microbusinesses, and can swiftly spread across the whole workforce (Suter, Irvine and Howorth, 2022). The close social and physical closeness of people working in tiny businesses amplified the influence on co-workers. According to the findings of the research managers of small and microbusinesses had limited access to guidance and direction from occupational health and personnel management professionals (Suter Irvine and Howorth, 2022), despite this being the standard in bigger organisations (Suter Irvine and Howorth, 2022). Similarly, unlike in bigger organisations, tiny and microbusinesses do not often have the resources to transfer an employee who is experiencing mental health issues to a different department or even a different team (Suter Irvine and Howorth, 2022). University of York's Dr. Jane Suter stated that ***'When dealing with a colleague's mental health challenges, managers can often feel incredibly isolated. It can take an emotional toll on the managers themselves. Some feel that balancing everybody's needs is like juggling on a tightrope'.*** Dr. Suter believes it's crucial to stress the fact that many concerns related to employees' mental health in small and micro-businesses do not have easy solutions (Suter, Irvine and Howorth, 2022). The mental health issue of an employee could not even have been caused by the workplace; thus, it is impossible for a manager to remedy the situation on their own (Suter, Irvine and Howorth, 2022). There is a pressing need to invest more in managerial and leadership

capabilities (Suter, Irvine and Howorth, 2022). In a small organisation with a low personnel count—say 10—the sole owner-manager is the one who is responsible for shouldering all of the management tasks (Suter, Irvine and Howorth, 2022).

3 - (Getty, 2023)

By creating mandatory training for mental health for all workplaces the goal will be to educate and give knowledge to all employees and employers on how to address a mental health issue within their workplace (WHO, 2022, Wickens, 2022, Roach, 2022), mitigating a poorer turnover and employee sickness as well as helping those with their mental health within their workforce (Mind, 2021; WHO, 2022).

Poster

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