See Me

End mental health discrimination

Spotlight on…

Effective mental health training approaches

Effective mental health training that supports action and positive change, is one of seven key building blocks for creating a workplace environment inclusive of mental health and free from mental health stigma and discrimination.

It is important that workplaces invest in training, learning and development approaches that are accessible to all employees, target knowledge and skills gaps, and adapt to the various learning styles and working environments of employees and teams.

In terms of investment, a key area for employers to focus on is supporting the implementation of key mental health related policies and procedures across all levels of the organisation. This requires building the capacity of key employees to develop the knowledge, ability and confidence to promote mental health inclusion and challenge stigma and discrimination in the workplace.

Understanding effective training, learning and development approaches

All organisations are different and there are some key considerations to make when introducing capacity building for employees:

- All training should set clear expectations and boundaries to support inclusive and consistent practice across the organisation.

- Communicate why it's important that employees attend training, what will they learn and how will it help them (in their role) and the business.

- Ensure that line managers are trained to enhance their confidence, knowledge of mental health and mental health problems, and their skills in knowing what to do when an employee discloses a mental health problem.

- Encourage employees to attend sessions and allow them protected time during their working day to do so. This may involve reviewing workloads and priorities.

- Ensure development opportunities are available and accessible to all employees tailored to their role, shift patterns and learning styles or disabilities.

- Support employees to embed learning by building in time for reflective practice, following up with discussion sessions and arranging peer support.

- Evaluate the impact any training, learning and development are having on employees' practices, and review capacity building offer, as appropriate.

Training, learning and development should use peer approaches and include a focus on:

- Reducing mental health stigma and discrimination as a core element and stepping stone to mental health improvement activity.

- Enhancing knowledge, understanding and behaviour change relating to mental health and mental illness, and associated stigma and discrimination.

- Increasing mental health literacy, confidence to open conversations about mental health and signpost to local and national support.

- Building an understanding that people can and do recover from mental health problems.

- Increasing safeguarding, confidentiality and responsiveness.

- Investing in train-the-trainer approaches to embed effective capacity building approaches in the organisation and create sustainability.

Social contact should be embedded in all training, learning and development:

- Regular reviews should be carried out to ensure that training, learning and development opportunities have lived experience embedded, and/or that people with lived experience have the opportunity to be involved in their delivery.

- Social contact occurs when people who have lived experience of mental health problems have conversations with those that do not. Ideally, social contact activities would involve people with lived experience directly; however, social contact can also take place 'by proxy', using video, audio, literature, etc. where a person with lived experience tells their story to initiate conversations about mental health and its associated stigma and discrimination.

- All employees should have opportunity to engage in social contact activities as part of their training, learning and development.

- Social contact fosters a supportive atmosphere of trust and a safe space to challenge some of the taboos around discussing mental health at work.

What the See Me in Work programme identified

1 Awareness training should not be thought of as a magic wand. When planning how to make change, don't automatically start with training. Instead, first carefully assess what knowledge and skills gaps should be targeted, what are the most effective ways to address those, and put a strategy in place to introduce, get buy-in and roll out training, learning and development identified.

2 Training, learning and development should be considered as a part of a whole organisational approach to embedding mental health inclusion in the workplace.

3 Key policies, procedures and guidance for employees and line managers should be reviewed to ensure they are inclusive of mental health, prior to investing in organisational training, learning and development.

4 Training needs should be discussed with all employees as part of support and supervision and personal development.

5 Mental health inclusion training, learning and development should be holistic; complementing it with sessions on unconscious bias, active listening skills, resilience, emotional intelligence, etc. can lead to increased learning retention.

# Key resources and reading

Training available

- **Scottish Mental Health First Aid**
  2 day course to become a certified mental health first aider:
  www.smhfa.com/about/index.aspx

- **Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training**
  2 day course to become a certified suicide first aider:
  www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/training-courses/asist-applied-suicide-interventions-skills-training

- **Safe TALK**
  Half day suicide prevention training:
  www.prevent-suicide.org.uk/training-courses/asist-applied-suicide-interventions-skills-training

- **Healthy Working Lives** (including training for managers):
  www.healthyworkinglives.scot/Pages/default.aspx

- **See Me in Work e-Learning Modules:**
  www.seemescotland.org/e-learning

- **Heads Together (Online SME Employee Training):**
  www.headstogether.org.uk/programmes/workplace-wellbeing

- **Scottish Association for Mental Health (various workplace training courses):**
  www.samh.org.uk/get-involved/workplace/workplace-training

- **Scottish Recovery Network (various resources):**
  www.scottishrecovery.net/resources/lets-talk-recovery

This list is not exhaustive and there are many options for free online learning from various other providers.

Want to do more?

Support your workplace by downloading and sharing the Spotlight On videos and other social media resources.
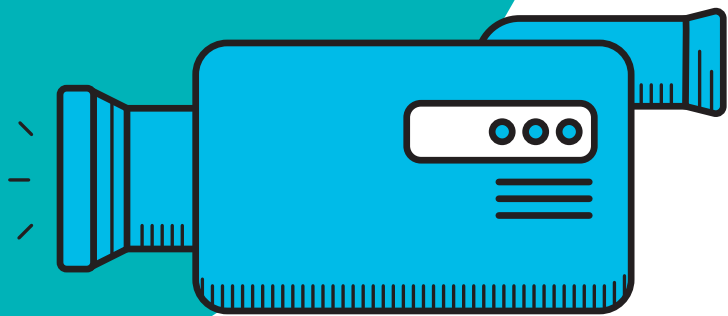
Join the conversation on social media and share what you or your organisation is doing to create a workplace inclusive of mental health and free from mental health stigma and discrimination.

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Find out how See Me in Work can help your organisation at:

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