

Wellbeing Newsletter

The transition into autumn edition

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Making People Better



In this month's newsletter we talk about how to speak with your manager about your mental health, giving yourself the best chance to stop smoking, how to help your body cope with the menopause, and negating the potential health consequences of home working.

This newsletter includes information about sensitive and potentially triggering topics.

How to talk to your manager about your mental health

One-in-six people in England report experiencing a [common mental health problem](#) (such as anxiety and depression) in any given week. And yet, many never discuss their mental health challenges with their employer. In fact, a study by [Mind](#) showed that of those who suffer poor mental health, just over half disclosed this to their employer.

Although there's a growing openness about mental health, there is still a significant stigma which may be making it difficult for you to open up to your manager, even if you know they can support you.

So to help ease the anxiety around the conversation, our mental health practitioners have shared four tips on how to effectively share mental health challenges with your manager at work.

Did you know



World Mental Health Day takes place on **Thursday 10 October**. This year the theme has been chosen as: "It is time to prioritise mental health in the workplace".



1. Approach with clarity and solutions

Preparation is key. Before the meeting, write down the points you want to discuss. This list should include specific stressors and how they impact your wellbeing and productivity at work. Having a clear outline will help you stay focused and convey your message effectively.



2. Schedule a private meeting

Timing and setting are really important. Arrange a private meeting with your manager during a relatively calm period. A quiet, uninterrupted environment will help to foster an open and honest dialogue. This ensures both you and your manager can focus on the conversation without distractions.



3. Articulate your concerns

When the meeting begins, express your concerns clearly. Focus on specific stressors and their effects on your work and health. For example, you might say, "I've been feeling overwhelmed by the constant tight deadlines, which is affecting my sleep and overall productivity." Being specific can help your manager to understand the gravity of the situation.



4. Identify solutions collaboratively

After outlining your concerns, shift to discussing potential solutions. Collaborate with your manager to identify adjustments that could help manage your stress. This might include flexible working hours, workload adjustments, or regular check-ins. For instance, "I think having a more flexible schedule could help me manage my workload more effectively."



Giving yourself the best chance to stop smoking

Everybody has their own personal reason for wanting to give up smoking. Some people quit to be healthier, some to get fit, some to save money and some for their families.

Whatever your reason, stopping smoking isn't easy, but there are things you can do to improve your chances of success. If you're a smoker, quitting smoking is one of the most important things you can do to improve your health - regardless of how old you are or how long you've been smoking.



Build and maintain strong support networks

Having trusted friends and family to lean on is crucial during tough times. Surround yourself with people who support your goal to quit smoking. Remove all reminders of smoking from your home and car, such as ashtrays and lighters.



Calculate your savings

If you smoke 20 cigarettes a day, quitting can save you over £2,700 a year. Think about what you could do with that extra money: pay off bills, take a holiday, or clear debt. Use this financial incentive as motivation to quit.



Keep yourself motivated

Write down the benefits of quitting smoking and remind yourself of them often. Saying them out loud can reinforce your determination and help you stay focused on your goal.



Find your local Stop Smoking service

Professional support increases your chances of quitting by threefold. Stop Smoking services offer trained advisers who can provide support and information on nicotine replacement products.

Why join the **Stoptober** challenge?

October each year marks Stoptober - the 28-day stop smoking campaign from Public Health England, which encourages thousands of people across the nation to quit smoking.

Research shows that if you stop smoking for 28-days, you are five times more likely to stop for good.

Need further help?

For additional help, contact the NHS Smokefree helpline at 0300 123 1044

Or, consult your GP for advice on quitting smoking.



How to show your body love through the menopause

While some women experience a problem-free menopause, most encounter symptoms that can range from mild to severe.

One of the most common symptoms is hot flushes, which impact three out of every four menopausal women. Other frequent symptoms include night sweats, sleep disturbances, vaginal dryness, irritated skin, increased urinary incontinence and infections, low mood, and reduced interest in sex.

The duration, severity, and impact of these symptoms vary widely among women but adopting a healthy lifestyle can mitigate the effects of menopause and help to maintain heart and bone health.

Did you know



90% of women get menopausal symptoms.

themenopausecharity.org

6 tips to help you through the menopause

To mark Menopause Awareness Month this October, our mental health practitioners have shared six things you can do to help your body better cope with the menopause.



Drink alcohol in moderation

Alcohol consumption can exacerbate hot flushes and is associated with a higher risk of breast cancer. It is advisable to limit alcohol intake to no more than 14 units per week, spreading consumption over three or more days.



Get regular exercise

Menopause can bring increased anxiety for some women. Regular exercise helps to convert stress into positive energy. A diverse exercise routine is ideal, incorporating activities like cycling, swimming, running, aerobics, and low-intensity exercises such as yoga.



Use grounding techniques

Hormonal imbalances during menopause can increase stress and lead to depression. Relaxation and grounding techniques, along with counselling, can be beneficial in managing anxiety and maintaining a positive outlook.



Eat a healthy diet

The decline in hormone levels, particularly oestrogen, during menopause can heighten the risk of heart disease and osteoporosis. So, it's really important to maintain a healthy and balanced diet:

- Consume at least five servings of fruits and vegetables daily
- Reduce intake of saturated fats and salt to manage your blood pressure
- Increase calcium and vitamin D intake to help strengthen your bones
- Consider dietary supplements to achieve nutritional balance
- Limit caffeine and alcohol to reduce hot flushes and night sweats.



Make use of health screening services

A late menopause can be associated with an increased risk of breast cancer. Take advantage of NHS screening services and monitor any changes in your breasts, seeking medical advice if necessary.



Stop smoking

Smoking has been linked to an earlier onset of menopause and can trigger hot flushes. Additionally, smoking increases the risk of developing osteoporosis and coronary heart disease, the leading cause of death among women.



Making People Better podcast

Menopause: the science, wellbeing impact & life changes

In this fascinating podcast, Dr Saadia Meyer from the Meyer Menopause clinic - discusses menopause with a look at the science, the impact on general wellbeing and how best to deal with the life change that many women experience.

[Listen here](#)



How to negate the potential health consequences of working from home

44% of working-age adults now work from home (a split of 17% purely home working and the remainder hybrid), which is significantly higher than pre-pandemic levels.

Although there are plenty of benefits to working from home, it can have a negative impact on both mental and physical health.



The potential mental health impact:

When it comes to mental health, the blurred boundaries between personal life and work life can lead us to feel more stressed and anxious. Whilst the lack of social interaction between colleagues can increase feelings of isolation and loneliness.



The potential physical health impact:

And in terms of physical health - working from home has been associated with reduced levels of physical activity, which can put us at an increased risk of cardiovascular disease and lead to a loss of muscle mass, strength, power and endurance. Other effects include the impact on metabolic health resulting in insulin resistance and increased risk of type 2 diabetes, reduced lung capacity, reduced tolerance to physical activity, and reduced immune function.

Musculoskeletal injuries and conditions can also be triggered and exacerbated by a sub-optimal ergonomic setup at home. In fact, research by Versus Arthritis showed that 81% of individuals who switched to home working during the pandemic experienced musculoskeletal pain.



Did you know

The first full week of October marks Backcare Awareness Week in the UK, a campaign run by BackCare (the National Back Pain Association). The charity has been educating people on how to prevent and relieve back pain for over 50 years.

8 strategies to reduce the impacts of working from home on mind and body



1/ Schedule a walk outdoors in your diary

Getting outside has been shown to release feel-good endorphins which, in turn, can reduce stress and increase motivation. Putting this in your diary will help to protect the time from being taken up by something else.



2/ Get involved in group exercise classes

Whether it be in person after work or virtual group classes. Research has shown that the social aspect of exercise can help support mental as well as physical health in those who work from home.



3/ Schedule in face-to-face meetings and away-days



4/ Arrange virtual get-togethers at work to promote social connectedness



5/ Arrange 'walk and talk' meetings

These can be done remotely on the phone, or, arrange to meet a colleague outside of the office.



6/ Arrange an optimal workspace

Create an ergonomic and organised desk layout that fosters productivity, promotes good posture, and minimises distractions.



7/ Try volunteering

Your company may offer volunteering opportunities or think about volunteering in your local community.



8/ Join or create a buddy system where colleagues catch up for a remote cuppa and conversation



Challenge of the month:

Spend 10 mins in natural daylight before you start work

On the last Sunday of October the clocks will go back an hour which marks the end of British Summer Time. From here we'll see daylight hours get shorter as we head towards the colder months.

Given how important light is in regulating our circadian rhythm - the body's internal clock - and how much harder we have to work to get it in Autumn and Winter, we challenge you to get outside into the natural light as soon as you can in the morning.

Spending just a short time outside, whether that's having a coffee or taking a short walk, could make a big difference to how you feel in the day, and your sleep pattern.

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