

Your Mental Health Matters

Factsheet



Your Mental Health Matters

Starting the year in lockdown wasn't ideal for many of us - the cold weather, home schooling and darker days have made this time feel a lot more challenging.

40% of people say the pandemic has exposed their poor work-life balance, which has had an impact on their mental health. It's important to take things one day at a time and look out for each other - now more than ever.

Better days are coming. Vaccinations are being rolled out and spring is just around the corner.

Time to Talk Day – 4 February

This year's focus is on the power of small, because however you have a conversation about mental health – whether it's a quick text to a friend, a virtual coffee morning with colleagues, or a zoom quiz with your nearest and dearest – it has the power to make a big difference.

The more we talk about mental health, the more barriers we can break down and together we can end the stigma around mental health.

Who will you talk to on Time to Talk Day?



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Early signs of someone who might be struggling with poor mental health

There are many symptoms of depression and anxiety, but everyone's experience will vary. **Some early warning signs are:**

- Poor concentration
- Being easily distracted
- Worrying more
- Finding it hard to make decisions
- Feeling less interested in day-to-day activities
- Low mood
- Feeling overwhelmed by things
- Tearfulness
- Tiredness and lack of energy
- Sleeping more or less
- Talking less and avoiding social activities
- Talking more or talking fast, jumping between topics and ideas
- Finding it difficult to control your emotions
- Drinking more
- Irritability and short temper
- Aggression

If you spot some of these signs in a family member, friend or colleague, use them as a way of noticing when you should check in and start a conversation about how they're coping. It's better not to make assumptions.

Conversation starters

If you're concerned that someone you know is struggling, starting a small conversation can make a huge difference.

Start by telling them that you've noticed they don't seem their usual self. Explain that you're worried about them and ask about what's bothering them. **For example:**

- "You don't seem yourself lately, what's going on?"
- "Tell me about what's going on?"
- "What's happening for you?"
- "I've noticed you've been very quiet, is there anything you'd like to talk about?"

Although your intentions are meant well, sometimes certain comments can do more harm than good and are best left unsaid. **For example:**

- "Cheer up." You can't just flick a switch and snap out of it. Mental illness shouldn't be ignored
- "I went through the same thing." Don't make it about you, it's not a competition
- "It's all in your head." Their problems aren't imaginary and this comment can be hurtful
- "But you always seem so happy." Many people hide their mental illness under a mask of happiness

"Are you okay?"

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How to respond when someone opens up

If you're talking openly to someone about mental health and they feel comfortable enough to share with you that they're struggling, it's a positive step. It's an opportunity to help.

Let them know you're listening

Give them your full attention and reassure them that you're taking them seriously.

"I'm so glad you're telling me about how much has been going on, and how you're feeling. Thank you for sharing this with me."

Show your support

Let them know that nothing changes how you feel about them.

"I'm right here for you. We'll get through this together."

Encourage them to keep talking

Listen actively by expressing curiosity and interest in the details.

"Wow, that situation sounds really difficult."

Ask about any changes in their life and how they're coping

"Have these thoughts led to any specific changes in your life, like trouble sleeping, or keeping up with work?"

Know when to take a break

It's a hard conversation, so make sure the other person knows they can stop when they want to.

"Are you okay to carry on talking about this?"

You're being a great person by having this supportive conversation, but you're not a professional

If they've told you they're thinking of suicide, it's a warning sign that they should speak to a mental health specialist.

"I really think talking to someone can help you gain some perspective and keep things from getting worse."



"You don't have to be an expert. Sometimes a text, a phone call, a walk (when current guidelines allow) or a simple 'how are you?' can make a real difference."

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Mental health starts with you

Take care of yourself and get the most from life. Making simple lifestyle changes doesn't need to cost a fortune or take up lots of time.

Protect and support your mental health with these ideas:

- Have a routine and set short-term goals. Stay in touch and arrange regular calls with friends and relatives
- Plan leisure time and exercise for you and your household. Head outside for a walk, discover online exercise classes, make a reading list and set yourself a challenge, plan themed movie nights in and learn a new skill or rediscover an old one
- Sleep is essential for our mental health. Keep track of how many hours sleep you get and practice good habits before bedtime to help you relax and unwind, like having a hot bath and a warm milky drink
- Look at your eating habits. Winter nights call for comfort food but too much can leave you feeling sluggish and affect your mental health. Enjoy a balanced diet packed with plenty of energy and mood-boosting foods like fruit and vegetables
- Reach out for support as early as possible. Get help with things like debt, finances or practical help with shopping for food or medicines. Worrying about these can have a negative effect on your mental health

Stay well at work

- Rest and recharge. Remember to take your lunch break
- Boost morale and hold a group activity like a walk (restrictions allowing) or an online quiz
- Set goals and take up a challenge, on your own or as a team
- Occasionally listen to calming music. It can help to manage stress and encourage relaxation
- Avoid working long hours. You may be working harder but productiveness and health can suffer
- Create clear boundaries between work and home
- Use a to do list at the end of the day to jot down what needs to be done tomorrow
- Ask for help if you need it



**"I need
some help"**

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Where to get professional help

Peer-to-peer support - Talk2Us

Fellow colleagues have volunteered to be available to chat to you in confidence about whatever might be on your mind.

This facility is accessible for all colleagues – whether you are working in our factories, working from home or supporting the business on furlough and would benefit from support, general advice, a listening ear, additional care or just someone to talk to about the weather– then get in touch.

You can call our volunteers on **01246 385290** or email them at **Talk2Us@greencore.com** (service available Monday to Friday, 8.30am – 4.30pm – an answerphone will be available to take your details outside these hours)



Help and support with Grocery Aid

Need advice with emotional, financial, or health problems?

You're not alone. Get the help you need, when you need it through our partnership with GroceryAid's by contacting their free, confidential 24/7 helpline on **08088 021 122** or visit their website at **www.groceryaid.org.uk**



Samaritans

The Samaritans offer emotional support 24 hours a day, in full confidence.
Call 116 123 or email jo@samaritans.org

Mind

Providing information on a range of mental health topics to support people in their own area from 9.00am to 6.00pm, Monday to Friday.

Call 0300 123 3393 or email info@mind.org.uk

Rethink Advice and Information Service

Specific solution-based guidance.

Call 0300 5000 927 email: advice@rethink.org

Anxiety UK

A helpline staffed by volunteers with personal experience of anxiety. 9.30am-5.30pm, Monday to Friday. **Call 08444 775 774.**

Citizens Advice

Free independent and confidential advice for a range of problems as well as providing information on your rights and responsibilities.

Step Change

Help and information for people dealing with a range of debt problems.

**Call free (including from mobiles)
0800 138 1111.**

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