

Mental Health in the Workplace

Corporate Toolkit

 **onebright**
mental health



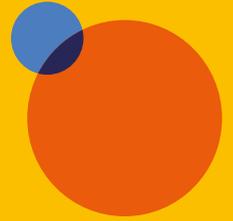
We are Onebright:



Onebright is now the fastest growing provider of private outpatient mental health services across a continuum of care and the largest in the UK for patient referrals. We remain exclusively focused on mental health – dedicating all our energy and investment into improving end-to-end services for your employees' mental health. We combine evidence-based therapies and a world-class clinical network with cutting edge digital technology to support over 40,000 people a year and counts more than 200 UK businesses as clients.

Mental ill health affects people in different ways, and at Onebright we understand that it is key to acknowledge and appreciate everyone's experience. Clinical expertise at scale combined with our technology means that we tailor support to each person's needs and can provide the best possible care to create a brighter future for all. We hope that this toolkit provides further insight into how you can offer better mental healthcare for your employees, regardless of who or where they are.

Conversations with the experts



Understanding Covid-19 Anxiety Syndrome



By Marcantonio Spada, professor of addictive behaviours and mental health at London South Bank University and CBT Therapist at Onebright

The concept of “COVID-19 anxiety syndrome” was first theorised by Professor Ana Nikčević of Kingston University and I last year, when we noticed people were developing a particular set of unhelpful behaviours in response to COVID-19.

Our latest research (June 2021) has shown that one in five UK participants score highly on the COVID-19 Anxiety Syndrome Scale. The scale identifies patterns of behaviour characterised by worry, avoidance, monitoring of threat (e.g., other people’s potential symptoms of illness) and symptom checking that keep the fear of the virus and/or falling ill in awareness.

Restrictions have eased, but not in the minds of those living with COVID-19 anxiety syndrome. Our research, reported by The Guardian, The Telegraph and Channel 5 News illustrated that just over half of the participants strongly endorsed avoiding public transport because of a fear of contracting the virus and 49 per cent avoided touching things in public spaces. More severe symptoms of the COVID-19 anxiety syndrome may also include agoraphobia

and obsessive cleaning. An inability to complete or focus on tasks, problems with sleeping, and a loss of interest in connecting with friends and family can be further signs that support may be needed.

Additionally, our research has also shown that the higher the levels of COVID-19 anxiety syndrome, the more likely it is that those people will be aware of the threat of catching the virus. This group of people will also find it harder to disengage from these threats, making a return to everyday living harder.

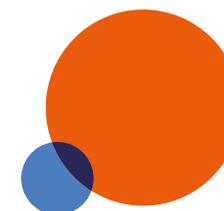
The COVID-19 anxiety syndrome appears to be more prevalent in younger populations and in those at high risk of adverse consequences from contracting COVID-19 and who have lost loved ones to COVID-19. Furthermore, it would appear, from a forthcoming large pan-continental study, that the UK has fared poorly relative to other countries both in terms of general mental health as well as the impact of the COVID-19 anxiety syndrome.

What treatment options and prospects are there for those affected by Covid-19 Anxiety Syndrome?

The COVID-19 anxiety syndrome is a pandemic-related phenomenon. It is not a clinical diagnostic entity like PTSD, specific phobia, or clinical depression. Previous respiratory disease epidemics have waned, albeit with seasonal 'ripples', and normal life has resumed. We therefore anticipate that most people will return to normal over time and that the COVID-19 anxiety syndrome will dissipate. However, for those struggling with aspects of the syndrome, we recommend considering Cognitive-Behavioural and Metacognitive Therapy interventions designed to facilitate letting go of unhelpful coping strategies. This would include encouraging the person to go outside and then gradually indoors into tight spaces, touch things around them and not leave the situation if feeling threatened, as well as learning to interrupt worry and training attention to become more flexible.

The goal of these psychological interventions is to introduce a gradual acceptance of the scientifically established assumption that a COVID-19-free world is unlikely, and that COVID-19 being an endemic virus is not something to be feared of itself; after all, life before COVID featured several Coronaviruses that caused regular seasonal — and relatively minor — respiratory disease.

While we continue to navigate through the pandemic, Onebright therapists can provide Remote Cognitive Behavioural Therapy sessions in the comfort of your home via telephone or digital channels. We cannot put a deadline on when everyone will be ready to return to 'life as we knew it'. It may last much longer for some than it does for others. But at some point, everyone will get up from the ground with the support of everyone around them.



Depression in the workplace



By Clare Price , Head of Psychological Services at Onebright

Depression is a common mental health problem, and it is estimated that 1 in 4 people experience a common mental health disorder at some time in their life.

The COVID pandemic has laid bare the impact that loneliness, self-isolation, and a change in circumstance can have on our mood. It is likely that many more people have suffered with depression over the past 18 months, and there is some evidence that people with pre-existing mood disorders have found it even more challenging to cope with the changes that have been thrust upon us and have seen their symptoms worsen.

Depression can manifest itself in many ways and can present itself in many areas of our lives - the home, the workplace, at family gatherings, for example.

Workplace stressors can impact our mood and lead to depression and whilst not an exhaustive list, the following situations may contribute to development

of the condition:

- Feeling like you have no control over work issues
- Feeling like your job is in jeopardy
- Working in a toxic work environment
- Being overworked, underpaid or undervalued
- Experiencing workplace harassment or discrimination
- Working irregular hours
- Lacking balance between work and home
- Staying in a setting that doesn't match your personal values
- Remaining in a role that doesn't further your career goals
- Experiencing poor or unsafe working conditions

You or a colleague may have depression if you / they have feelings of being persistently unhappy, hopeless or have lost interest in things you / they used to enjoy. Depression impacts how we feel, think and act. It affects people in different ways and can cause a wide variety of symptoms. However low you

or a team member are feeling now, remember that depression is treatable.

What are the common symptoms of Depression?

- A persistent feeling of low mood or unhappiness
- Reduced productivity, subpar performance in tasks, increased errors, or difficulty making decisions
- Irritability, anger, feeling overwhelmed, or getting very emotional during conversations
- Seeming indifference, forgetfulness, detachment, and disinterest in things
- A loss of interest and pleasure in day-to-day activities
- Changes in appetite – either eating less or more
- Sleep disturbance – difficulties getting off to sleep or early morning waking
- Difficulty in concentrating, making decisions, and remembering things
- Difficulty being around people leading to withdrawal and self-isolation

How to help employees in the workplace

If left untreated, depression may have a significant impact on work performance, and it contributes to presenteeism and absenteeism. It may also adversely impact multiple areas of employee performance, including focus and decision making, time management, completing physical tasks, social interactions, and communication. Like most other health conditions, early detection and effective treatment lessen the severity and impact of the condition.

Employers can play a key role in supporting the early identification of depression and other mental health conditions and improving access to care. It's an investment well worth making.

Raising awareness and educating the workforce

There are some critical steps to be taken: Educate employees and managers about depression in the workplace and its effects on productivity and encourage employees to seek help when needed. Reduce stigma surrounding mental health conditions and train managers and the workforce on how to start a conversation if they are concerned about an employee. Include content about depression in company newsletters, on the intranet and in other employee communications. Identify a champion at senior leadership level who has experienced depression, is willing to talk about it and normalise the experience.

Self-care and having a balanced routine

Self-care is important to improving mood. Help employees and the workforce to understand how they can improve their own self-care and develop a balanced routine:

- Eat and exercise well every day.
- Try reducing sugary foods and snacking often as this will crash mood.
- Be careful to limit the amount of alcohol intake as this can impact mood.
- Develop a balanced daily routine with a variety of activities including achievements (work, household duties), creative (arts, online courses) or fun (watch a movie, play board games) and maintain contact

with others either in person or using digital devices where possible will also help.

- Be mindful to try keep up good sleep hygiene—setting regular wake up and bedtimes.

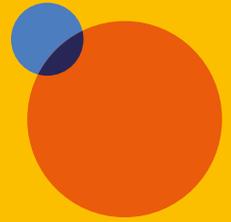
Daily Mindfulness practice

Paying more attention to the here and now and the world around you can improve your mental wellbeing. Engaging in mindfulness exercise's not just when you are feeling low in mood but practicing on a daily basis can help prevent depression symptoms from getting worse.

Onebright offer mindfulness training for workplaces and encourage people to use a range of free online mindfulness resources.



Overcoming the stigma surrounding mental health



Mental Health Myth Busters

It is important for society that we overcome the stigma that surrounds mental health. It is false beliefs about mental health that cause problems and stop us from talking about our mental health concerns, or fully understanding the signs of poor mental health and how we can help ourselves and others.

We've outlined just some of the common misconceptions about mental health and the facts in response to those to help educate people about what mental health is and the treatment and support available.

MYTH	VS	FACTS
Mental health is not real, it is just an excuse for people.		It's true that some people who experience mental ill health may act in ways that are unexpected or seem strange to others. We need to remember that the illness, not the person, is behind these behaviours.
Mental health issues are the same as learning difficulties and disabilities.		1 in 6 people will experience mental ill health in any year. Many successful people and celebrities have talked about their struggles and the help they have gained.
Only some people have mental health		Everyone has mental health, just like we all have physical health, sometimes it is good and sometimes it is not so good.
You can tell whether someone has a mental illness just by looking at them		You can't tell if someone has a mental illness by how they look. People with mental ill health can look just the same as someone else.
There is very little support available for people struggling with their mental health.		There are lots of services that can support you if you are experiencing problems – it's important to ask for help and talk to someone about your issues.
People with mental health issues cannot work		Most people who have experienced a mental health issue or illness continue to work or return to work when they feel better.
If you have mental health issues you are unlikely to recover from them		Mental health issues can be treated. Most people make a full recovery and go on to lead happy and fulfilled lives.

The signs of poor mental health

There are a range of common signs that we can all look out for that indicate poor mental health. Make sure you are aware of these and look out for them in yourself and your friends, family, and colleagues.



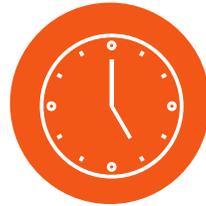
The person does not seem their usual self.



Low motivation or a lack of concentration.



The person may appear disinterested, distracted, or lethargic.



Insomnia and difficulty sleeping.



A lack of interest in activities, particularly those that they used to enjoy.



An increase in absence.



Irrational fears and anxieties.



Withdrawal from any social interactions.



Substance use or misuse.



Worrying more.



Drinking more.



Irritability and short temper.



Aggression.



Finding it difficult to control emotions.

How you can best support your employee's mental health

Businesses up and down the country are increasing awareness of mental health and implementing a range of initiatives and services to help support employees with poor mental health.

Sometimes it's the small things that make the greatest difference. Here are some ideas for how you can implement small workplace changes to support employees and promote good mental health.



Tea & Chat

Set up a weekly tea and chat meeting for teams and departments to attend outside of their usual break times. We recommend setting this up in a comfortable environment (if the weather is good find a nice outdoor space), but the main aim is to get your employees talking about anything but work. Grab some biscuits, a cup of something warm, and talk about something neutral.

Conversation starters:

- Talk about their hobbies
- Talk about weekend or after work plans
- Ask what made them smile today
- Talk about any new books, films or TV series.
- Their favourite foods and recipes



Create a 'Mental Health Champion'

Enrol one person (or multiple people if you have a big team) to become your Mental Health Champion. All businesses have first aiders who you can go to in case of a physical medical issue, but many don't have a mental health champion who people can talk to and confide in. Your Mental Health Champions should receive training in mental health support and be someone that your employees are happy to go to and speak with.

By providing peer-to-peer network support within your organisation, you are creating an environment in which the individual feels comfortable to discuss any issues they may be having, whether they are inside or outside of the workplace.



Counselling

Employ a team counsellor who has experience in dealing with more complex mental health issues.

It is important to understand that different individuals may be less engaged with different types of peer-to-peer networks. Having someone other than a team member to talk to will make mental healthcare further accessible and more personalised. The counselling process is about providing a sounding board for an employee, giving them a safe place to talk about issues that trouble them, and allowing counsellors to help them find their own solutions to problems or develop better ways to manage issues.



Remote working Mental Health support

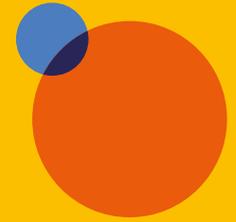
Encourage a positive work/life balance and encourage your team to do the same. It's easy to work longer hours and take fewer breaks when working from home. Ask your team to put a reminder in the diary when they plan to finish working.

Working from home can be isolating; ensure you and your team have regular check-ins virtually.

Why not encourage your team to complete a Wellness Action Plan and encourage them to share this with you. If they already have one, then it would be helpful to review considering recent developments and changes. This can be looked at and kept up to date during 1-2-1s.

Whatever wellbeing support your organisation has available, make sure your team knows about it and how to access it.

How Onebright can support mental healthcare in the workplace.



Did you know that poor mental health collectively costs UK employers up to £45 billion each year? Whether you are a small company or large global entity, we can provide targeted mental health training for any part of your workforce. We also offer board level reporting on insights, trends and risks for your organisation, and workforce screening to identify problems with staff mental health before they happen. This helps you put a complete safety net in place.

We can provide your employees with targeted mental health support. This will equip them with the skills and awareness they need to tackle mental health issues and help to create a positive working environment. It can help you to reduce absenteeism, presenteeism and staff turnover.

Our unique service helps your employees lead healthier, happier lives. Our evidence-based initiatives are designed to support every person and every workforce.

This offering is delivered with a return to work and performance focus in mind. Our services are robust, clinically governed and evidence based.

We aim to have a positive impact on companies by supporting all types of mental health. We believe in helping individuals and businesses focus on being the best version of themselves, creating tailored plans to support your people with their mental wellbeing.



Most training providers are training-only companies, wellbeing specialists or large groups who cover the whole of healthcare. Onebright is different, as we are true experts in mental health. We purposefully choose not to dilute our expertise by expanding to other health services, making us a niche in the market.

At Onebright, we work with mental health clinicians who are experts in research and corporate mental

health. The specific expertise of our trainers inspires trust, encourages open dialogue around mental health and effectively upskills an employee's ability to support issues with mental health in the workplace.

Find out more by getting in touch with us on

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or click [here](#) for more information.



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