



Keeping Excellence in Training Standards

Equality Matters

It's ok not to feel ok....

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Recently there has been a much more open approach to the issues surrounding health and well-being, especially mental health.

Historically, mental health issues have been stigmatised and marginalised: as if an illness affecting the brain is somehow less important than more obvious physical illnesses. Slowly, we are waking up to the realisation that, if 1 in 4 of us are struggling with mental health issues, then we need to have much greater understanding and awareness.

Raising awareness....

Recently, the way mental illness is being reported in the media is beginning to have a powerful effect on public perception. Even if you aren't a runner, the interest generated by Prince William, the Duchess of Cambridge and Prince Harry during the London Marathon was widespread and mainstream. Their **Heads Together** campaign focusing on mental health issues; even going as far as to discuss their own problems resulting from the death of their mother, Princess Diana.



Another recent first was The Muppet Show. They have recently created a character called Julia who is autistic. They use her to increase awareness



and understanding by helping children to identify some of the differences and commonalities of a child with autism.

What do you think are the benefits of raising awareness in the media and TV?



Mental Health Awareness Week has just finished with the theme of **Surviving or Thriving?** This highlighted that good mental health is more than *not* having a mental health problem, but about having a more positive and 'thriving' approach to life. Statics suggesting that only 13% of us actually have 'good' mental health!

Social Media is also playing a much bigger role; helping people to access to groups, share stories, and information, reducing feelings of isolation. The

#removethestigma tag line on Twitter promoted a shared approach for dealing with mental health. And **'it's ok to not be ok'**, endorsing that it's fine to ask for help; not something to be ashamed of.

Why do we need awareness?

Surveys suggest that our collective mental health is deteriorating. Most of us will experience a mental health problem in our lifetime and it comes in many guises: depression, anxiety, ADHD, bipolar disorders, dementia, drug & alcohol dependency, anorexia & bulimia etc., to name a few. Worryingly, young adults are at a higher risk level, suggesting a real and emerging problem - possibly linked to greater insecurities in life expectations for work, relationships and homes.



What has this to do with work?

Work is a big part of our lives and so understanding and addressing our mental health issues here is vital. **The Equality Act 2010** protects disabled people from unfair treatment. This includes many people with a mental illness.

It isn't just a legal requirement. It also makes good businesses sense. According to new research, the number of people saying that they have experienced mental health issues at work has climbed from a quarter to a third over the last five years. Too many to ignore.

We have already discussed in other Newsletters the problems that a lack of inclusion and discrimination can cause. If a third of the workforce suffer from poor mental health, then it stands to reason that businesses will benefit from a cohesive and open approach to mental health!

Do you know of any support offered through work? Would you know where to go to access support?

It's okay not to be okay

There are lots of organisations and charities that offer advice and support: Mind, Time to Change, Sane etc. All can be accessed online. All offering support and information.

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/>
<http://yuaf.org.uk/about-us/what-were-about/>
www.headstogether.org.uk/Mental/Health