



MIND UR MIND

MIND UR MIND

A TOOLKIT FOR STAFF AND MANAGERS



WELCOME



MIND UR MIND

- Welcome to the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust Mind Ur Mind Toolkit.
- The Trust is committed to:
 - Helping its staff cultivate and maintain good mental and emotional health and well being, where our mental health is as much a priority as our physical health;
 - Providing support and resources to enable staff to stay in good mental health and provide help to those who need it

The aim of this Toolkit is to enable all staff to promote and protect their emotional wellbeing, to contribute to an understanding and supportive work environment, and to help managers to support the mental and emotional wellbeing of their staff. Many people are not well informed about how to recognise mental health issues and the help and resources available to them. Being able to access the appropriate help at an early stage can have a significant impact on recovery and long-term outcomes and can prevent the recurrence or reduce the impact of symptoms.

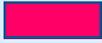
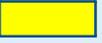
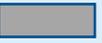
The majority of people who experience mental health issues will recover completely or find ways of adapting and living with their symptoms.

OVERVIEW OF THE TOOLKIT

- The toolkit is divided into four sections: **Mind Ur Language, Mind Ur-Self and Mind Each Other**, which has a sub-section for managers.
- **Mind UR Language** will introduce you to helpful definitions of certain terms and increase your understanding of mental health.
- **Mind Ur-Self** will help you understand what good mental health looks like, the warning signs that your mental health is deteriorating, how to talk about mental health and signpost you to the resources on offer throughout the Trust.
- **Mind Each Other** has tips and advice for Trust staff and also, managers on how best to support each other.



NAVIGATING THE TOOLKIT

- This toolkit is a large document however, you are free to come in and out of the toolkit at your leisure.
- If you are looking for something in particular, have a look at the key below which can help you pinpoint what it is you are looking for.
- If you are in need of urgent help, look for the pink box 
- If you are a **manager** seeking advice on how to support employee wellbeing and spot the signs of deteriorating mental health and emotional wellbeing, look for the orange box 
- If you are a **manager** seeking advice on how to have a sensitive conversation look for the yellow box 
- If you are a **manager** seeking advice on managing mental health related absence, Occupational Health referrals and reasonable adjustments, look for the blue box 
- If you would like to find out some self-help tips to promote and protect your emotional wellbeing, look for the green box 
- If you would like to access the External Directory with details of outside charities and organisations, look for the grey box 



PART 1: MIND UR LANGUAGE

**HELPFUL DEFINITIONS TO ENHANCE
YOUR UNDERSTANDING**

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

- It is vital that we all have a good understanding of mental wellbeing and associated terms. Mental health is the foundation for maintaining and improving overall health and wellbeing.
- According to research carried out by mental health charity Mind and Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development (CIPD), 1 in 6 workers experience depression, anxiety or unmanageable stress at any given time. Mental ill health at work costs UK employers £26 billion per year. On average, that equates to £1035 per employee.
- None of us needs to be an expert, but we need to know the basics so we can spot the first signs of poor mental health and get help as soon as possible.
- Read on to get started.

DEFINITIONS

- **‘Good mental health’** – Just as we have physical health, we have mental health too. How we feel can change from month to month, week to week, even day to day. Good mental health means coping with and feeling resilient in the face of life’s daily stresses, working productively, interacting positively with family, friends and peers.
- **‘Mental ill health’** – This covers a continuum of mental health issues, from those with mild symptoms to the most severe mental illnesses. At the most severe end of the spectrum, this can mean a dramatic change in a person’s thinking, emotional state and behaviour, and disrupts the person’s ability to work and maintain personal relationships. On the other hand, a person could experience mental health symptoms that may not warrant formal diagnosis, but which nevertheless can disrupt how they think, feel and behave. These may be experienced as a reaction to life’s stressors and the person affected will often recover with the right support.
- In all circumstances, the Trust will support you and make reasonable adjustments where appropriate to help you stay in work, or should you need to take time off, put plans in place to facilitate your return.



DEFINITIONS

- **‘Common mental health problems’** – These include depression, anxiety, panic attacks, phobias and obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD). Common mental health conditions like these are some of the most frequently experienced mental health issues in any given year. Symptoms can range from the comparatively mild to very severe.
- **‘Less common mental health problems’** – Less common illnesses like schizophrenia or bipolar disorder can have a big impact on people’s lives: it may be harder to find appropriate treatment and, as understanding of these conditions tends to be lower, people may face more stigma. However, it is entirely possible to manage the impact of such a diagnosis, including in the workplace.



DEFINITIONS

- The Health & Safety Executive Northern Ireland (HSENI) defines **stress** as “the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demands placed on them. This makes an important distinction between pressure, which can be a positive state if managed correctly, and stress that can be detrimental to health.
- Stress, including work-related stress, can be a significant cause of illness and is known to be linked with high levels of sickness absence and staff turnover. Severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or more severe mental health problems.





PART 2: MIND UR-SELF

**SPOTTING THE SIGNS // TALKING
ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH // WHERE TO
GO FOR HELP**

MIND UR-SELF

- **Mind Ur-self** is all about helping you to spot the signs that your emotional wellbeing might be compromised and learn some simple self-help tips to keep you feeling well. This section will also signpost you to the various support outlets that are available throughout the Trust.



SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- Mental health begins with two important letters: **ME!**
- We all have an individual responsibility to look after our health and watch out for warning signs. In the same way as sneezing or coughing might make you think you are getting a cold, there are tell-tale signs with mental health too. Remember, as individuals, we may show different signs but read on to find out more about some common symptoms.



SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- **Low mood and fatigue:** You might find yourself frequently feeling down or demotivated, unable to muster up the energy to interact and chat with colleagues or focus on your work, even do simple tasks like showering and dressing.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- **Worrying:** We all have things on our mind, but you might find yourself worrying excessively, feeling tense and anxious a lot of the time. This might then interfere with your daily work and home life.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- **Mood shifts:** Do you find yourself less tolerant or patient with colleagues, patients or service users? Although most of us feel in a better mood on a Friday at 4pm than on a Monday at 9am, dramatically shifting from feeling content to feeling irritable, angry or weepy can be a sign that you need to take better care of your mental health.

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- **Changes in sleeping or eating patterns:** Are you suddenly finding it difficult to get a good night's sleep? Is your sleep broken? Do you then find yourself exhausted in work? Have you lost your appetite? Alternatively, do you find yourself overeating or binge eating?

SPOTTING THE SIGNS

- **Difficulty concentrating and making decisions:** Do you find that you have difficulty with concentration, memory and your ability to plan? Are your abilities to make clear, definitive decisions reduced?

TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

- Never underestimate how powerful talking can be. It can often be the first step to recovery. Talk to someone you trust, at work or outside: tell them what upsets you or makes you stressed. Maybe you can't put your finger on it, but just saying it out loud can help make your feelings more manageable.
- 'Let's Talk' is a short film that portrays how things can become even harder with poor communication, and shows how talking can enable support and understanding. Click [here](#) to watch it.
- In an ideal world, we could talk about our mental health as easily as our physical health. Some people find it difficult to be frank and admit that they feel mentally 'under the weather.' See below to access our Conversation Postcards which can help break the ice.



MIND YOURSELF: CONVERSATION POSTCARDS

- Starting the conversation can often be the hardest part. If you want to talk to a colleague or friend at work, but don't know how to go about it, take inspiration from our Conversation Postcards. Ask the person would they like to go for coffee and a chat, or would they just like a phone call?
- If someone approaches you to talk about their emotional wellbeing, listen, non-judgementally. Respect the person's feelings, beliefs and values, and show the person empathy – let them know you want to understand how they feel.



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- All of us will experience changes and challenges in our working and personal lives. The Trust also recognises that we employ working carers.
- In such circumstances, the Trust is here to help you and offers a range of services aimed at helping restore your sense of wellbeing.



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF



- **b well** provides employees with access to a range of support, advice, training, activities and tools across five wellbeing themes. Via the b well website and app, you can access unique content composed by a variety of Trust professionals including Psychiatry and Psychological Services and Counsellors.
- **Here4U** A part of b well, Here4U offers an extensive range of activities and events to staff to address physical, emotional and mental health and wellbeing. From boxing to Zumba, choir to Pilates, there is something for everyone. Click [here](#) for the Here4U brochure.



Click the phone to access the bwell website where you can download the app!

SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Occupational Health** provide all employees with confidential and impartial advice and support on issues such as workplace health, reasonable adjustments and rehabilitation. Their multi-disciplinary team includes medical, nursing, physiotherapy, occupational therapy and psychological services staff. Employees can self-refer or request a referral through their line manager.
- **You can contact Occupational Health via email:**
occupationalhealth@belfasttrust.hscni.net



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Chaplaincy** – Chaplains offer spiritual, religious and pastoral help and support to all, regardless of whether or not you have a religious faith. Their service is confidential and non-judgemental, and is available 24/7 via the on-call chaplain. Each site has a quiet room for prayer or simple reflection. For further information, contact a chaplain known to you or the Trust lead chaplain or visit the Chaplaincy HUB page [here](#).
- **Rev Derek Johnston, Lead Chaplain, First Floor, East Wing, RVH / (028) 90632045**



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Staffcare** – Staffcare provides free, confidential counselling and support for Trust staff. You can call the Staffcare Careline at any time, day or night, and speak with a counsellor. You can be offered immediate telephone counselling support or arrange a face to face meeting with a counsellor, in a convenient and anonymous setting. You can avail of up to six sessions, with a future-focused approach to counselling. Click [here](#) to go to the Trust Staffcare page.
- Tel: 0800 731 3674 (Freephone, 24/7)



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Human Resources** – HR offer a wide range of services for staff, including a number of policies designed to provide flexible working arrangements to enable staff to balance both home and work commitments, thereby improving their working lives.
- Policies can be found on the HUB under HR policies. Applications for work-life balance requests are made through HRPTS.
- **For further advice and information, contact the Improving Working Lives team: (028) 90635678**



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Health Improvement** – The Health Improvement team aim to improve staff's mental and physical health and wellbeing. The team offers a range of training aimed at improving health and can be accessed and booked [here](#). Health Improvement also offer opportunities for staff to learn about emotional wellbeing and good mental health and engage with programmes such as the Couch to 5K running challenge.
- Contact the team at:
health.improvement@belfasttrust.hscni.net



SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

Support for Working Carers

- The Belfast Trust Carers Strategy outlines how the Trust values the vital support that carers provide to relatives or friends. Being a working carer can be a very positive experience, but can be physically exhausting and emotionally stressful at times.
- The Trust is committed to helping working carers maintain and improve their health and wellbeing. This includes the provision of a range of Improving Working Lives and other initiatives to enable staff to balance both work and home commitments.
- If you are providing substantial and regular care for a child or adult with a disability or illness, or an older person who is frail, you are legally entitled to an **Assessment of your Support Needs** as a carer. An assessment can be arranged by the member of HSC Trust staff who is involved with the person you care for, or you can ask your GP to complete a referral on your behalf. This assessment will identify any carer support services and you will be able to agree a support plan, to enable you to continue caring.
- Further information is available from the Hub or by contacting the Improving Working Lives Team on 028 9063 5678 or Belfast HSC Trust Carer Coordinators: Lynne Calvert: Lynne.Calvert@belfasttrust.hscni.net 0289504 6108 or Margaret McDonald: Margaret.McDonald@belfasttrust.hscni.net 02895046 702.

SUPPORTING OUR STAFF

- **Belfast Recovery College** offers a range of free courses that are available for anyone with an interest in mental health and wellbeing including service users, family members and staff.
- The college's courses cover four main areas:
- **Living and learning about me:** Addictions, What is trauma?, Living with Psychosis, Exploring attitudes to mental health.
- **Building skills, resilience and me:** Getting a good night's sleep, Be active for wellbeing, Mindfulness, Compassion fatigue, Developing friendships and social networks.
- **The 'know how' series:** Self-directed support, Understanding psychological therapies.
- **Giving and getting involved:** Value of volunteering, Finding and keeping a job, Co-Facilitators course for Peer Trainers.
- All courses are free to attend and you can visit their website to find out more or book your place [here](#).



DIFFICULT LIFE EVENTS

- Sometimes, we experience distressing or difficult periods in our lives which may impact on our emotional wellbeing and mental health. You can also visit the b well website where you can access a suite of self-help guides on topics such as Bereavement, Controlling Anger, Eating Disorders, and Stress. Click [here](#) to access the guides.
- The next section deals with some of the life events that can contribute to poor mental health, but we acknowledge that there are many more. Each section directs you to appropriate, specialised support.



BEREAVEMENT AND TRAUMA

- Losing someone or experiencing personal trauma can be a hugely distressing experience. Whether this is a personal loss, or you have been involved in caring for someone who has died, or experienced a trauma earlier in your life, you may experience a variety of intense feelings and emotions, as well as trying to support family members or friends who have also been affected. This can impact on your mental health.
- It is especially important during this time to exercise self-care through eating regularly, getting enough sleep and most importantly, talking to someone about how you feel. Speak to your manager about your concerns and needs at work, and any adjustments that can be made to help you adjust to your new normal.
- The Trust recognises how difficult a time this can be and has put in place a range of options to support anyone affected by bereavement. The Trust Bereavement Coordinator's role is to promote and facilitate excellence in Bereavement Care and develop guidance and resources for families and staff.
- There is literature for staff on Support at Work after a Bereavement. Leaflets can be accessed [here](#).
- There is also training available to any service group in the Trust who requests it, including manager training for supporting bereaved staff. You can view the training available [here](#).
- Staff can also access Staffcare, Occupational Health and Chaplaincy services, as well as Here4U. Further external links are featured at the end of this toolkit. You can also access b well for more support.



ADDICTION

- Addiction is often linked to mental health problems, and sometimes what started out as a way of coping with feelings you did not feel able to deal with, can manifest into addiction.
- Ultimately, drugs and alcohol do little to address the underlying mental health problem. They can actually end up creating a whole host of new problems, whilst increasing the severity of the original mental health problems.
- If you feel that you are battling addiction, you are not alone. You can self-refer to Occupational Health for help, or access the Belfast Addiction Service via your GP or other healthcare professional through One Point of Referral. More information on this service is available [here](#).
- You can also use charities such as [Addiction NI](#), who provide confidential treatment and counselling. Their [Self-Assessment Tool](#) lets you find out if or how your drinking is affecting your health. The '[Drink, Work and Me](#)' campaign aims to raise awareness of the impact alcohol has, especially on your work.
- You should also familiarise yourself with the Trust's Alcohol and Drugs in the Workplace policy, available [here](#).



CONFLICT AT WORK, BULLYING AND HARASSMENT

- The Trust aims to provide a good and harmonious working environment. That said, conflict at work is something that staff may experience at some point in their careers. It should be noted that bullying and harassment are unacceptable and, in the case of harassment, unlawful behaviours which will be vigorously opposed by Trust Management & Trade Unions.
- It is always preferable to do your best to resolve conflict locally and discreetly. However, there are times when this is not possible and the conflict can become mentally and personally destructive.
- If this happens, the Trust is here for you. Talk to your line manager – they are there to support and guide you. Alternatively, if the conflict is with your manager, speak to another colleague that you trust.
- The Working Well Together policy is designed to resolve conflict and restore harmony in the workplace. It can be accessed [here](#). You should also familiarise yourself with the [Harassment](#) and the [Harmonious Working Environment](#) policies which can guide you on next steps.
- If a conflict situation is impacting on your mental health, you can access [Staffcare](#) or if necessary, a referral can be made to Occupational Health to direct you to more tailored therapies such as cognitive behavioural therapy.



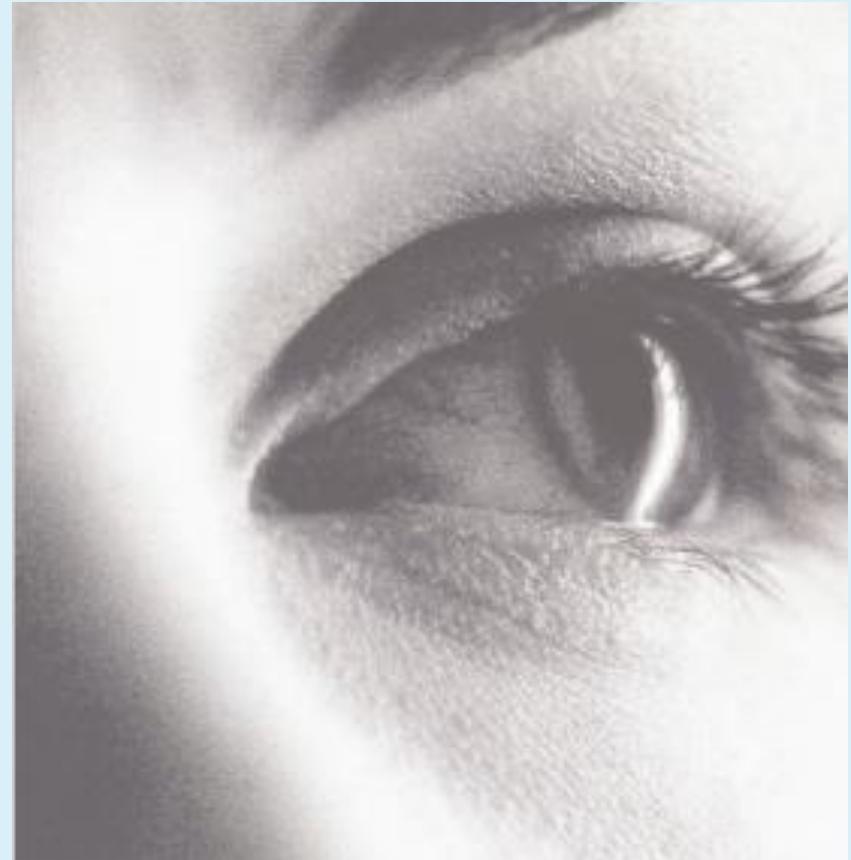
CANCER DIAGNOSIS

- Receiving a cancer diagnosis can be devastating. You may be facing difficult decisions about both your work and home life, and this may in turn impact on your mental and emotional wellbeing. The Trust is here to support you where appropriate, through this difficult time.
- It can be difficult to decide whether or not to work through your treatment, and this will very much depend on individual circumstances – it's impossible to predict how you will react to treatment until you start.
- Occupational Health are here to offer support and advice. They can offer advice on reasonable adjustments that can be made to accommodate your physical, mental and cognitive health.
- You should also liaise with the Attendance Management Team in HR, as they can provide support and guidance on entitlements and options open to you.
- You can also access Staffcare for free and confidential counselling to help you manage your diagnosis.



DOMESTIC ABUSE

- Domestic abuse is the use of physical or emotional force or threat within close relationships in a way that causes harm or distress to those involved. The abuse can be physical, emotional, verbal, sexual or financial.
- **Nobody should ever suffer in silence – help is available.** The Trust has worked with our Trade Union colleagues to develop a service for staff who are experiencing or witnessing domestic abuse. This confidential service offers support and information for all Trust staff, irrespective of gender, sexual orientation, background or position within the Trust.
- You will be listened to, provided with time and space to talk and discuss what (if anything) you want to do, and your right to live free from abuse in any form will be reaffirmed.
- If you would like to speak to someone, the coordinating teams can put you in touch with a support officer. Please contact the Equality Team on 90565369 or Workforce Equality team on 90636080. You can also access the service via your line manager, Occupational Health and Trade Union colleagues. If you would simply like more information, please click [here](#).
- Alternatively, the Women's Aid helpline is available 24/7 on 0808 2000247.



RELATIONSHIP AND FAMILY BREAKDOWN

- Pressure arising from families, work, health and age can have an adverse impact on our relationships at home. Sometimes relationships can breakdown entirely, leading to separation or divorce. The trauma and upset that can result from this can make us stressed and impact on our mental wellbeing.
- If you feel a personal relationship is impacting on your mental health and wellbeing, then help is at hand.
- Staff can avail of confidential counselling services from [Staffcare](#).
- [Relate NI](#) is a registered charity and the leading organisation providing confidential relationship counselling support not only to couples, but to individuals, single people, young people and families across Northern Ireland. Click on their name to go to their website for more information.



DEBT AND FINANCIAL CONCERNS

- Often, the weight of worry about making ends meet or mounting debts and bills can make us stressed and impact our mental health. This in turn can make facing up to our financial problems even more difficult, which leads to a vicious circle.
- There are a number of places where you can go for advice and guidance. Your local [Citizens' Advice Bureau](#) can offer you advice, guidance and concrete solutions to your debt problems.
- You can also find help through [Christians against Poverty](#) as well as getting tips from [NI Direct](#) on topics such as repaying debts and budgeting.





SELF-CARE

Even if we feel well, in order to stay well we need to make good lifestyle choices in order to continue to promote and protect our emotional wellbeing.

That way life and work become easier, we feel calmer, happier and more confident and get more enjoyment out of life.

There are a number of things we can do for ourselves to improve our mental health and reduce our stress levels. Read on to find out more.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Get moving** - Reclaim your lunch break and get outside in the fresh air to give your mind a break. Why not have a look at the b well '[B Active](#)' site? You can also look at the Health Improvement pages for notifications on a range of fitness initiatives.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Keep it balanced** - Enjoy a balanced diet, drink sensibly and moderately. The b well site also has a section on eating well, which can be accessed [here](#).

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Make time for yourself:** Do things you enjoy and show yourself the same respect and kindness that you would show others. Make time for yourself, learn a new hobby or reconnect with friends. Be aware of your inner critic and self talk: speak positively about yourself, and recognise and take note of your achievements.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Make a list** - Write down your daily tasks. This will help you prioritise and focus, and give you a sense of satisfaction as you tick it all off.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Be realistic** - You won't always get things right every time, so accept yourself and remember : we are all in the same boat.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Use your time wisely** - Take your breaks and holidays, and use your annual leave to unwind and practice some of your favourite hobbies.

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Keep it balanced at home** – If you find yourself struggling to strike a balance between your work and home life or if you are a carer contact the Improving Working Lives Team in HR. They can advise you on our suite of flexible working policies, Childcare Vouchers and Trust Childcare Schemes. All information can be found [here](#).

SIMPLE SELF-HELP TIPS

- **Get a good night's sleep:** There's a close relationship between sleep and mental health. Give yourself some time to unwind before bed and keep phones switched off to create a relaxing atmosphere and make your bedroom a tech-free zone. Try to get around 8 hours' sleep each night.

SIMPLE SELF- HELP TIPS

- **Take 5:** The Public Health Agency (PHA) have devised Five Steps to Wellbeing, five things we can incorporate into our daily life to improve our mental health. You can read more about those five steps [here](#).





PART 3: MIND EACH OTHER

**A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS ON LOOKING
OUT FOR YOUR EMPLOYEES' MENTAL
HEALTH**

MIND EACH OTHER

- Mental health issues are the top reason for long-term sickness absence within the Trust, and therefore we all have a responsibility to look after our own mental health and that of our teams.
- **‘Mind Each Other’** has been designed with managers in mind, to help support staff who are experiencing stress or mental ill health. Managers are not expected to diagnose or treat staff and nobody expects you to be an expert. However, all managers have a responsibility to look after their staff’s health and wellbeing at work, to recognise the symptoms of mental ill health, know how to provide initial help and how to guide towards professional help.
- **Read on to get started.**



SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

- Positive management culture is key. As a manager you are responsible for treating your staff well, promoting their health and wellbeing and being there to support them when things get them down. Helping people deal with the pressures in their lives is one of the best investments you can make as a manager.
- How people are treated and managed at work is central to their mental wellbeing, and how motivated and engaged they feel. That's why it's important to be aware of and reflect upon your managerial style. Here's some things you can do to help. Read on for more.



YOUR ROLE AS A MANAGER

- Good mental health is an integral part of our overall wellbeing. Workplace factors can have an effect on a person's mental health and as a manager, there are some steps you can take to promote good practice at work. Never assume that nobody in the team is experiencing mental health issues – T.E.S.T. the silence with these simple steps.
 - **TALK:** Be open with your staff about mental health. Make it clear that it is a safe environment where they can discuss their mental health and have their privacy respected. Respect that they may wish to have this conversation with someone else. ACAS have produced a guide on Challenging Conversations and How to Manage them. Although not specific to mental health and emotional wellbeing, it provides practical advice such as deciding on a location, room layout, and some simple dos and don'ts.
- **ENCOURAGE:** Be supportive to your staff – encourage them to be open, realise their potential, support their development and encourage them to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **SIGNPOST:** Make sure your staff are aware of the various outlets that can help them at work, such as Occupational Health and Staffcare.
- **TRAIN:** Take advantage of the training offered by HR Learning and Development and the Health Improvement Team to ensure you can be a great support to your team.

Read on for some more in-depth tips.

YOUR ROLE AS A MANAGER

- **TALK:** Be open with your staff about mental health. Make it clear that it is a safe environment where they can discuss their mental health and have their privacy respected. Respect that they may wish to have this conversation with someone else. ACAS have produced a guide on Challenging Conversations and How to Manage them. Although not specific to mental health and emotional wellbeing, it provides practical advice such as deciding on a location, room layout, and some simple dos and don'ts. Click [here](#) to read it in full.
- **ENCOURAGE:** Be supportive to your staff – encourage them to be open, realise their potential, support their development and encourage them to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **SIGNPOST:** Make sure your staff are aware of the various outlets that can help them at work, such as Occupational Health and Staffcare.
- **TRAIN:** Take advantage of the training offered by HR Learning and Development and the Health Improvement Team to ensure you can be a great support to your team.

Read on for some more in-depth tips.

SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

Be **supportive, approachable and responsive**, and encourage a healthy work-life balance. Make sure deadlines are reasonable and that work is clearly defined and well matched to each employee's abilities.

SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

Have regular catch-ups with staff, be accessible, take five minutes at the end of the meeting to **ask after their wellbeing**. How is their work going? Do they feel happy at work?

SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

Be alert to the potential workplace triggers for distress such as:

- Long hours and no breaks;
- Unrealistic expectations or deadlines;
- High pressure environments or lack of autonomy;
- Change management

SUPPORTING STAFF WELLBEING

Look after yourself too. **You cannot pour from an empty cup.** In other words, you cannot give of your best to your staff if you are not feeling good yourself. This Toolkit is all inclusive – Mental Health affects everyone.

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- In previous sections, we looked at the symptoms to watch out for in ourselves. As a manager, you are in a good position to notice if someone's behaviour has changed. Each person will present differently. This section outlines some of the main signs of a deterioration in someone's emotional wellbeing or mental health to watch out for, with an 'at a glance' table featured at the end with a non-exhaustive list of less common signs that you should still be aware of.

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- **Low mood and fatigue** – Has the person lost interest in work?
Has their productivity declined? Are they withdrawn?

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- **Changes in mood or behaviour** – Is the person suddenly irritable or snappy?

Are they teary and emotional at work? Is their behaviour out of character from what you know of them?

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- **Personal hygiene** – Have you noticed that the person is neglecting themselves?
Has their personal hygiene declined?

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- **Tiredness and eating:** Have you noticed the employee is regularly tired or sleepy in work?

Have their eating habits changed?

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- **Concentration:** Is the employee distracted and having trouble concentrating?

Have you noticed that they are finding it difficult to make decisions?

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

This table is a non-exhaustive list of signs that *may* suggest someone's emotional wellbeing or mental health is deteriorating. It is helpful not to think of these symptoms and signs in isolation, but as part of a broader picture.

(CIPD and Mind, 2011)

Physical	Psychological	Behavioural
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • fatigue • indigestion or upset stomach • headaches • appetite and weight changes • joint and back pain • changes in sleep patterns • visible tension or trembling • nervous trembling speech • chest or throat pain • sweating • constantly feeling cold 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • anxiety or distress • tearfulness • feeling low • mood changes • indecision • loss of motivation • loss of humour • increased sensitivity • distraction or confusion • difficulty relaxing • lapses in memory • illogical or irrational thought processes • difficulty taking information in • responding to experiences, sensations or people not observable by others • increased suicidal thoughts 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increased smoking and drinking • using recreational drugs • withdrawal • resigned attitude • irritability, anger or aggression • over-excitement or euphoria • restlessness • lateness, leaving early or extended lunches • working far longer hours • intense or obsessive activity • repetitive speech or activity • impaired or inconsistent performance • uncharacteristic errors • increased sickness absence • uncharacteristic problems with colleagues • apparent over-reaction to problems • risk-taking • disruptive or anti-social behaviour

SYMPTOM SPOTTING

- Now that you know some of the signs to watch out for, the following section will help you understand the importance of **talking** to your staff member or colleague about what you have noticed, with guidance on how to do it.

IT'S GOOD TO TALK



- You are in a critical role as line manager. Not only are you in a prime position to spot if something is wrong, but you can also be one of the first people to intervene and offer help and support.
- It is important to speak to the employee if you know or suspect that they might be feeling stressed or struggling with their mental health. Why not take inspiration from the 'Conversation Postcards' from Section II to initiate the conversation?
- If the employee approaches you, this is a positive sign: they trust you and want help. Always treat these situations with sensitivity and respect.
- **If you would like to receive training in this area, the Health Improvement team offers a suite of training in mental health promotion and suicide prevention, such as safeTALK, ASSIST and Mental Health First Aid. Click [here](#) for the full brochure.**
- The HR L&D team offer a programme called 'Carrying Out Courageous Conversations' as well as other helpful management development programmes. You can access the presentation [here](#), or you can find the L&D portfolio with dates and names of tutors for face-to-face training [here](#).
- Read on for some tips on how best to approach these sensitive situations.

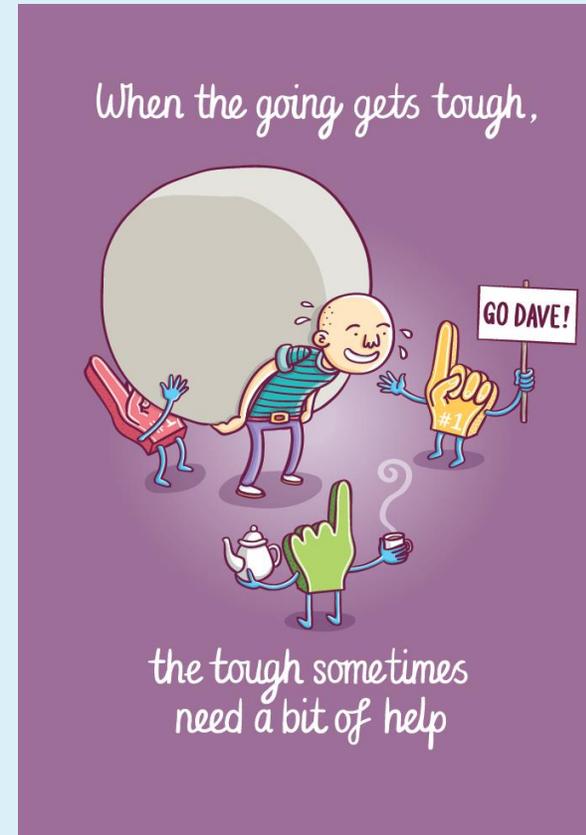


IF SOMEONE APPROACHES YOU

- **Listen** non-judgementally – respect the person's feelings and show empathy. Tell them that you want to try and understand how they feel.
- Give **reassurance** that you as a manager will support them at work.
- Ask open, non judgemental questions
- Provide **information** on the range of support available throughout the Trust.
- **Encourage** the person to access professional help (medical or other) where appropriate.

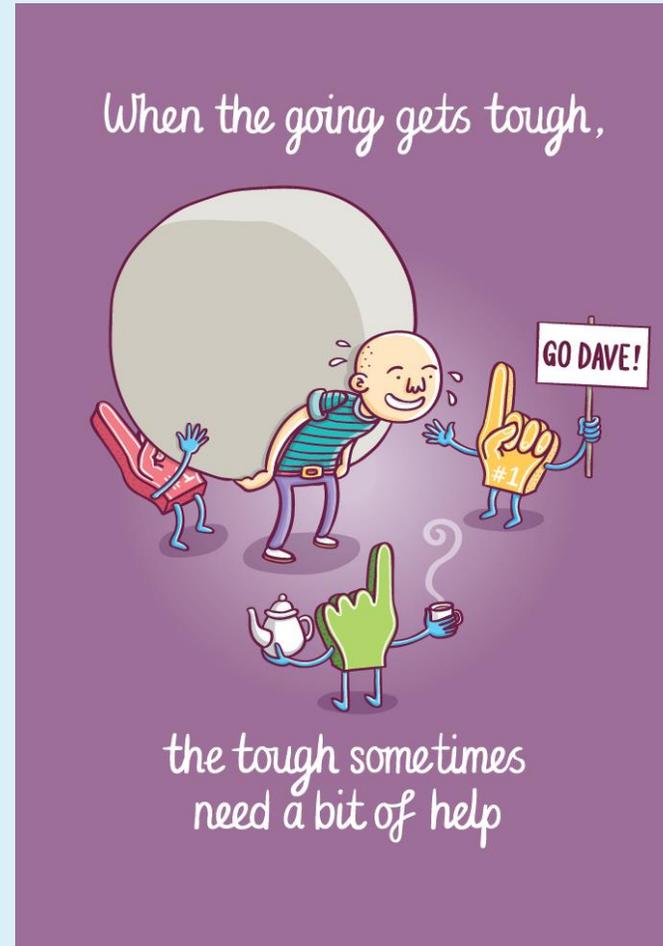
HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Make sure you have a private, quiet space to talk. Ensure colleagues can't interrupt.
- Allocate a generous amount of time in your diary, and turn off your phone.



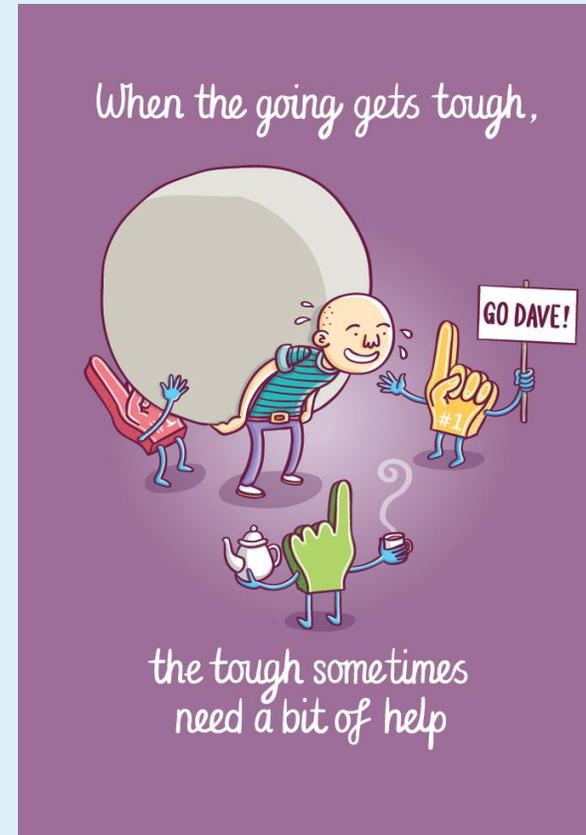
HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Try and understand what the person is telling you. Don't rush them or try and finish their sentences – give them the time and space to articulate their feelings.
- Repeat back what you think you have heard, and let them correct you or confirm that you have understood.



HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Don't offer your 'diagnosis' of what's wrong – you are there to listen.



HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Be prepared for some silences – be patient, and sit with the silence. Speak calmly and encourage the employee to talk.
- Tell the employee what it is that **prompted** you to approach them. For example, *“I’ve noticed a few changes in you recently. You seemed upset last week when _____ said/did _____ and you’ve been staying very late in the office. Is there anything bothering you?”*
- Be careful not to sound accusatory.

HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Keep the questions **open** and **neutral**: be careful not to sound accusatory or sceptical. For example, ask questions like:
- *“How have you been feeling recently?”* or *“Is there anything weighing on your mind?”*
- *“How are you doing at the moment?”*
- *“What support do you think might help?”*
- *“Is there anything I can do to help?”*
- *“Have you spoken to your GP or looked for help anywhere else yet?”*

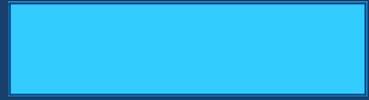
HOW NOT TO HAVE THE CONVERSATION!

Think carefully about your approach and questions. Asking the right questions is key to encourage the employee to open up. Steer clear of questions like these;

- “You’re clearly struggling. What's up?”
- “What have you got to be stressed about?”
- “Everyone else is in the same boat and they are ok. Why aren’t you?”

HAVING THE CONVERSATION

- Although it is a rare occurrence, it is possible that an employee may disclose to you that they have thought about ending their life. It is important to remember that it is an extremely brave thing to talk about suicidal thinking – it is brave for the person saying they are thinking of ending their life and it is also brave for the person who is listening to them share such deeply personal thoughts.
- It is very difficult to offer prescriptive advice on this issue, as these situations are very unique to the individual and their circumstances. Further specialised training such as Mental Health First Aid, ASSIST or safeTALK training, can be provided by the Health Improvement Team.
- In most instances, you will not have received training in this area. However, you are not expected to know everything about mental health or suicide, but you can still be a great help to the person.
- If someone does express suicidal thoughts, there are a few things you can do.
- Be sympathetic and listen – tell the person that what they are saying is worrying you and you want to help them, and that you also need to fulfil your duty of care as a manager. This may mean sharing the details of your conversation to ensure that the person gets help – their welfare is paramount.
- Ask the person if there is anyone they would like you to contact because you don't want them to be alone – perhaps they would like you to call their partner, friend or next of kin?
- Stay with the person until their contact can come to take them home. Discuss with the individual notifying their contact of the disclosure. Signpost them to counselling and advice through Trust resources such as Staffcare, which provides confidential and immediate support. Crisis support services are listed at the end of this toolkit.
- You should seek consent from the individual to notify Occupational Health and the individual's GP, as you are not a clinician. It is important to disclose this to someone who has experience of dealing with these situations.
- Maintain confidentiality after you have notified the relevant clinicians.
- Remember, this may also be a traumatic situation for you as a manager and you should not hesitate to avail of Trust resources to support you in the aftermath.



MANAGING MENTAL ILL HEALTH

A GUIDE FOR MANAGERS

LINE MANAGER RESPONSIBILITIES

- If the employee reports absent from work with stress or a mental health condition, this is managed in exactly the same way as any other sickness absence, in terms of Trust protocol. The only exception is that you must seek to establish any work-related factors contributing to their absence. Remember: safety first. You have a duty of care to look after your staff's wellbeing.
- **Be proactive:**

Make use of Trust services. Liaise with Occupational Health and the HR Attendance Management team. They are there to offer guidance and advice. Remember, an employee does not need to be off sick in order to have an Occupational Health assessment. Signpost employees to health and wellbeing initiatives like b well and this toolkit.
- **Maintain regular contact:**

Where an employee is absent, maintain regular contact, hold regular meetings and have open channels of communication. Research proves that regular communication increases the likelihood of an earlier return to work.
- **Be compliant:**

Familiarise yourself with the Attendance Management Protocol and know the guidelines around certification and trigger points.

Documentation and recording is critical. It is vital that managers record absence accurately and in a timely manner on HRPTS. Failure to do so can result in inaccurate absence reporting as well as errors and overpayments in salaries and wages.

IF THE EMPLOYEE IS STILL IN WORK

- If an employee is still at work, but either approaches you about feelings of stress or mental ill health, or you notice some changes within them, remember the tips outlined in section 3.
- Arrange to meet with them as soon as possible. Choose a place where you won't be interrupted and where privacy can be ensured.
- Thank the employee for coming to meet you; advise them that you are there to listen to their concerns and ask them sensitively about what issues are causing them to feel this way. Give the employee time: often these feelings are hard to articulate, so try not to interrupt or pre-empt what the employee is going to say.
- As a line manager, you are responsible for taking action and are in a position to make a number of adjustments immediately if necessary to assist staff to remain in work. Consider changes in working hours, start/finish times or work tasks. This can be done temporarily and reviewed.

IF THE EMPLOYEE IS STILL IN WORK

- Ensure you signpost the employee to available support within the Trust as this is often the earliest intervention.
- **Staffcare** – Staffcare provides immediate free, confidential counselling and support for Trust staff and you should draw the employee's attention to it as a first stop. Staffcare can provide cognitive behavioural therapy sessions. Staff can call the Staffcare Freephone Careline at any time, day or night, and speak with a counsellor. Staff will be offered immediate telephone counselling support or face to face meeting with a counsellor, in a convenient and anonymous setting. Tel: 0800 7313674 (Freephone, 24/7)
- You can also make use of the chaplaincy services, policies on the HUB, HR and Occupational Health. If their concerns are home-related, you can signpost them to this toolkit which points to help for a range of issues such as debt, domestic violence, health diagnoses and relationship breakdown.
- If you have concerns about medical fitness for work, you have completed the steps or would like advice on reasonable adjustments, you should liaise with Occupational Health (95040401) or the HR Attendance Management team to see if a referral would be beneficial. (90635678) Have a look at [this tool](#) from HSENI to guide you with the sorts of things to ask about.

MANAGING ABSENCE: A STEP BY STEP GUIDE

- If the employee reports absent with stress or a mental health condition, such as depression, anxiety or stress, then this guide will provide you with advice on how to manage their absence sensitively and effectively.
- As soon as is reasonably practicable, **phone** the employee and ask how they are feeling. Arrange to **meet up** for a coffee and a chat, so that you can discuss and identify ways in which you, as a line manager, can best support their recovery and eventual return to work.
- This meeting can be facilitated in another Trust venue, or even in a coffee shop. Just be mindful of privacy and choose a place where you won't be interrupted. It is important that you meet with the individual as soon as possible after they have reported absent.



WHEN YOU MEET

- **Thank** them for meeting you and assure them that all discussions are confidential.
- **Tell** them how they have been missed at work – think personally here too.
- **Explore** the reason for absence. Tell the employee that you are there for them and listen empathetically and non-judgmentally.
- **Discuss** the symptoms they are experiencing and their condition. How are these manifesting? Ask what support, if any, they have received to date. Try not to interrupt: often, these things are really difficult to articulate, so give the employee time.
- **Assure** the employee of your support, then begin to **identify** practical things that you can do as a line manager to alleviate their symptoms. You can look to this Toolkit, the HUB and HR for guidance. For example, consider the range of work-life balance policies offered by the Trust and whether this would be helpful to facilitate a return to work. Would a change in start/finish times or working hours or tasks be beneficial? These things can be offered and put in place by you immediately. Assess each case according to its individual circumstances.
- **Signpost** the employee to the wide range of support initiatives within the Trust: Staffcare, Chaplaincy Services, the b well app, Here4U, Occupational Health, Health Improvement Team, HR and the Belfast Recovery College. These services should be your first port of call for support for the employee. See the next slide for links and further details.
- **Update** them of any news they may have missed like staff moves or new projects. Again, think about the personal side of work: are there any new appointments, engagements or baby news? Ask them if they would like you to give their colleagues a general update on their wellbeing. If they decline, you must respect this.
- **Arrange** a date and time to meet again and to review the situation. Remember, as a manager you are responsible to maintain regular contact with the member of staff and to put in place any support mechanisms that would facilitate an earlier return to work.

WHEN TO REFER TO OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH

- If in the course of the meeting, you determine that you need advice around medical fitness to work, what adjustments you can put in place and how these should be implemented, or if the employee is unsure as to when they will be able to return, advise the employee that you will **refer** them to Occupational Health. Reassure them that this is to help, not to punish.
- **Tell** the employee why you feel this is important, **explain** to them that you want to make sure they get the help they need and are supported at work. You need to complete the [referral form](#) and email to occupationalhealth@belfasttrust.hscni.net.
- Refer to the [Manager's Absence Toolkit](#) and [Attendance Management Protocol](#) for further guidance.
- Occupational Health can provide support and make referrals for the employee to a whole host of specialist services such as CBT, occupational psychology and psychiatry. This is often expedited more efficiently through Occupational Health than if waiting for a GP referral which will be more beneficial to the employee.
- Occupational health can help to **clarify** current and future health, identify reasonable adjustments and give an indication of when the employee may be fit for work.

REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS

- In addition to mechanisms you can put in place as a manager, Occupational Health may advise that some alternative **reasonable adjustments** are made to help an employee stay in work or facilitate an earlier return to work.
- You should consult with the individual what adjustments may be suitable to prevent any disadvantage in the workplace, to assist them to return to work sooner or to support them with carers duties.
- These might include:
 - **Physical adjustments** to work setting; moving a person's **workspace** to a brighter or quieter area; providing new or different **equipment**, such as ergonomic chairs or a different computer monitor;
 - **Change in duties** or temporary reallocation of work duties;
 - Change in **working pattern** or a reduction in contractual hours;
 - **Phased return** to work after a period of absence;
 - Releasing the employee from work to attend **appointments**.



REASONABLE ADJUSTMENTS: IN ACTION

- *Simone worked in a busy area and had recently been experiencing panic attacks. She found that one of her triggers was spending long periods at her desk. This made her feel agitated and sometimes she would experience physical symptoms. Simone approached Tom, her manager, about this. He listened and offered her support. Tom suggested an Occupational Health referral and Simone soon had a chance to meet with a member of the multi-disciplinary team and was able to access cognitive behavioural therapy and is making great progress. Occupational Health recommended a reasonable adjustment for Simone of letting her take more regular breaks by dividing up her lunch and moving her workspace to a less isolated part of the office. Simone has been able to spread her time away from her desk better and can interact with colleagues more readily, all contributing to helping restore her wellbeing.*

EMPLOYEES WITH A DISABILITY

- In accordance with the Disability Discrimination Act, an employee will be defined as having a disability if they have a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial and long-term adverse effect on his or her ability to carry out normal day-to-day duties. 'Long-term' means likely to be 12 months or more.
- The Trust has a legal requirement to make reasonable adjustments to enable an employee with a disability to remain in work and provide regular and effective service.
- Managers should refer to the Trust's Employment of People with Disabilities framework, available [here](#).
- In addition to the reasonable adjustments noted in the previous section, further examples include:
 - Reallocation of some of the employee's duties to another person;
 - Adjustment to premises;
 - Acquiring or modifying equipment;
 - Employing a support worker;
 - Redeploying the person to an existing vacancy.

RISK ASSESSING

- You should familiarise yourself with the Management of Stress, Health and Wellbeing Policy and Stress Risk Assessment flowchart both available from the HUB. Contact your Directorate's partnered Health and Safety Manager for advice or guidance.
- Managers should use the Trust's General Health and Safety Risk Assessment to complete a stress risk assessment to identify and address any concerns, using the Health & Safety Stress Management Standards. A sample can be found on the HUB.
- Where a member of staff has been absent due to stress or you suspect that someone is suffering from work-related stress, it is important to use the Trust's Individual Stress Risk Assessment as a framework to discuss, identify and document the issues and how the manager can support/refer or signpost the person.
- Managers should use the Trust's General Health and Safety Risk Assessment to address any concerns, in line with the Trust Policy and BRAAT 2 standard 15.
- All these policies and tools can be found [here](#) or on the HUB for easy access.



CONCLUSION

- Now that you have finished the Mind Ur Mind toolkit, you should:
 - Understand what good mental health looks like
 - Understand what stress is
 - Know some self-help tips to keep you in good mental health
 - Know what support is on offer for you, your employees and your colleagues in the Trust
 - Understand some of the difficult life events that can trigger episodes of poor mental health
 - Know what to look out for and how to approach an employee as a manager
 - Understand your responsibilities as a line manager
 - Understand how to manage a stress or mental health related absence
 - Understand how reasonable adjustments can help
 - Know what a risk assessment is and where to access information to enable one to be carried out



EXTERNAL RESOURCES DIRECTORY

- **Alcohol and drugs** – Addiction NI : <http://addictionni.com/>
- **Bereavement** - Cruse Bereavement Care: <https://www.cruse.org.uk/northern-ireland> or northern.Ireland@cruse.org.uk / HSCNI Bereavement Network: <http://www.hscbereavementnetwork.hscni.net/>
- **Cancer support** – Macmillan: <https://www.macmillan.org.uk/>; NI Cancer Network (NICAN) www.cancerni.net and www.survivorship.cancerni.net; Cancer Focus 028 90663281
- **Carers NI** – 028 90439843 <http://www.carersuk.org/northernireland>
- **Childcare Vouchers** - Employers for Childcare - <https://www.employersforchildcare.org/>
- **Crisis support** – Lifeline – 0808 808 8000; Samaritans - 90664422
- **Debt** – Christians against Poverty : www.capuk.org / 0800 328 0006
- **Depression** – Aware Defeat Depression: www.aware-ni.org.uk / 02890321734
- **Domestic abuse** – Women’s Aid and Relate NI: <https://www.womensaidni.org/> and http://www.relateni.org/domestic_violence_and_abuse_services



EXTERNAL RESOURCES DIRECTORY

- **Eating Disorders** : Eating Disorders Association NI – 90235959 / <https://www.eatingdisordersni.co.uk/>;
The Laurence Trust (specifically for men and based in NI) - <https://www.thelaurencetrust.co.uk/> / 07510371335.
BEAT Eating Disorders in the Workplace:
- **Health and Safety** : Health and Safety Executive Northern Ireland - <https://www.hseni.gov.uk/>
- **Mental Health**: Inspire Wellbeing (formerly NIAMH) - <https://www.inspirewellbeing.org/mentalhealth> / 90328474 (please see ‘Crisis’ if you are in need of immediate support) / Action Mental Health - <http://www.amh.org.uk/> / 91828494
- **Mental Health at Work**: https://www.mind.org.uk/media/4297733/mind_how_to_be_mentally_healthy_at_work_singles_4-web.pdf
- **PSNI**: 0845 600 8000
- **Regional LGBT Forum** : www.lgbtstaff.hscni.net
- **Trade Unions**:
- **Trauma – WAVE Trauma Centre** : <http://www.wavetraumacentre.org.uk/home>

Please note: where an organisation has been mentioned by name, this does not constitute endorsement or recommendation on the part of the Belfast Health and Social Care Trust. Some of these services may be cost-incurring.