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IT'S NOT 1 IN 4; IT'S ALL OF US.

Why mental health touches everyone

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THIS CAN HAPPEN. 2018

INTRODUCTION

Ninety percent of workers have been touched by mental health challenges, either personally or through someone they are close to. When employers recognise this and create a culture that supports workers' mental health, workers are more likely to speak openly, to know where to go for help or advice and are more than twice as likely to love their job. New research, carried out by Accenture for "This Can Happen"- the workplace mental health conference - challenges employers to look differently at the way they think about and support employees' mental wellbeing and shows the power they have to help employees be at their best at work and at home.

IT'S NOT 1 IN 4; IT'S ALL OF US
WHY MENTAL HEALTH TOUCHES EVERYONE

Picture a meeting room in an office in London. Twenty-five people of all ages and backgrounds, representing every level at the company where they work, are sitting around a table at the start of a half day workshop on mental health.

The trainer, who is also one of their colleagues, explains why she is involved in the company's efforts to end the stigma around mental health. She shares a personal story and invites those in the room to do the same if they wish to, before the training gets formally underway.

Many do. There's a newly recruited employee whose flatmate is anxious and fearful and who looks for reassurance each evening. There's a manager who struggles with depression.

There's an intern who explains that someone in his year at school took his own life; no-one suspected anything was wrong.

There are several members of a team that has been under pressure for some time; a mother who experienced post-natal depression; and someone whose sister lives overseas and who 'just doesn't seem herself' on the phone.

A few people have come to the training to learn about an unfamiliar topic, but most have a story about how their own or someone else's mental health challenges have touched their lives. All want to understand, to help and to improve support for those who need it.

"1 IN 4" That's the figure widely quoted in the media for the incidence of mental ill health. In the UK this figure originates from the 2007 Adult Psychiatric Morbidity Survey.[i] The study established that 23 percent of adults in England in 2007 had a treated or untreated mental health condition. It's important because establishing the incidence of mental ill health conditions—both serious and common—is essential for understanding whether the mental health of the population is improving or declining and is vital input for healthcare planning.

But '1 in 4' can give the impression that 'mental health' as an issue is relevant only to a minority of individuals.

That seems a long way from the experience of the people who gathered in that training room in my organisation a few months ago. And, in fact, as new Accenture research has confirmed, it is.

Mental health is not a minority issue. It touches almost all employees and can impact their ability to enjoy and live life to the full.

[i] "Adult Psychiatric Morbidity in England – 2007, Results of a Household Survey" 2009. It was carried out for the NHS by the National Centre for Social Research and the Department of Health Sciences, University of Leicester
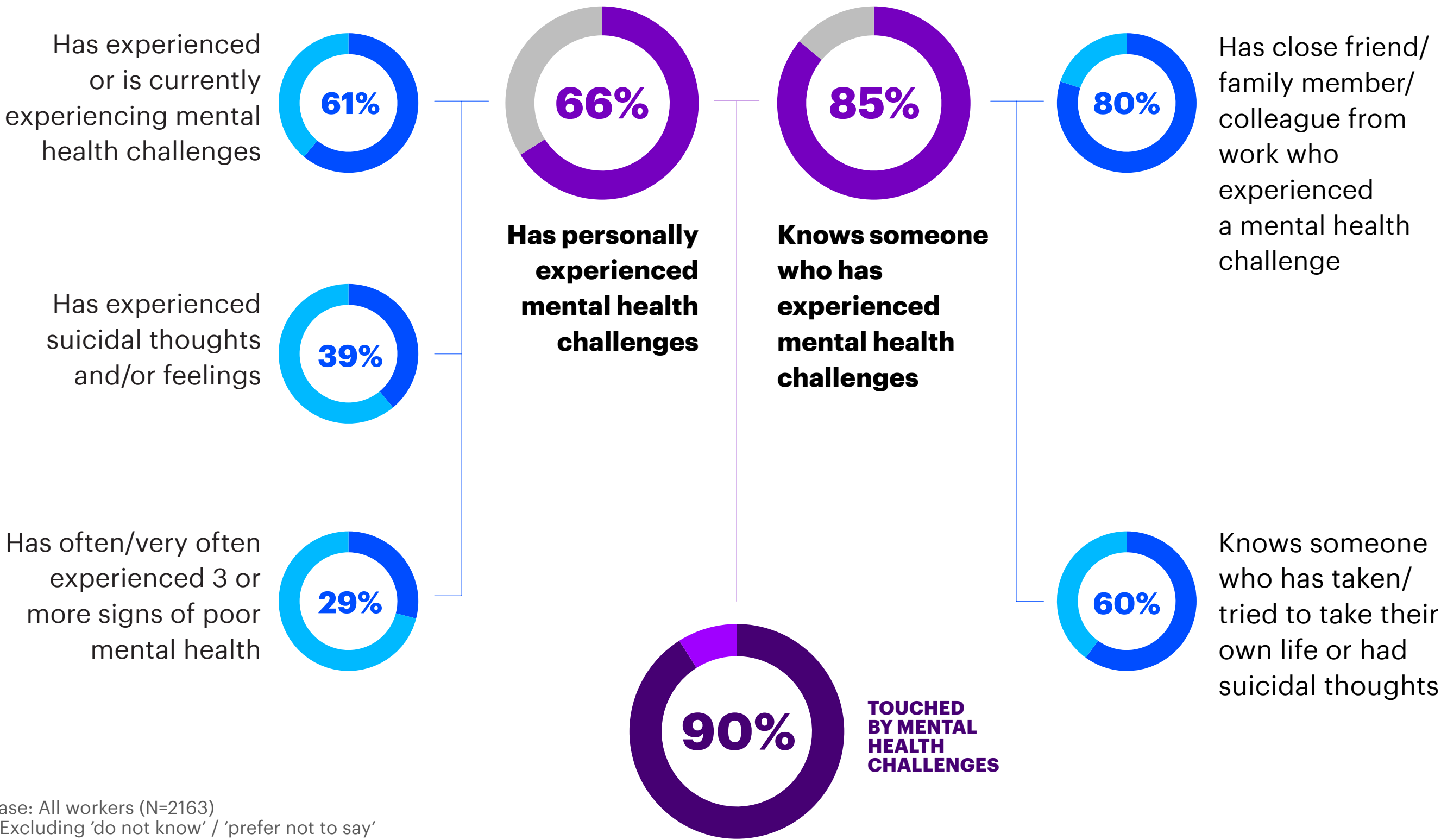
On behalf of "This Can Happen[ii]", Accenture recently conducted a survey of 2170 working men and women across the UK to understand more about how mental health touches peoples' lives.

Sixty six percent of the employees who participated in our survey reported having personally experienced mental health challenges. These individuals either reported three or more signs of poor or declining mental health, told us directly that they have experienced or are currently experiencing mental health challenges, or said that they have had suicidal thoughts or feelings.

Eighty five percent said someone close to them had experienced a mental health challenge. These individuals knew of a close friend, a colleague, or a family member who had experienced mental health challenges, or had tried to take, or taken, their own life.

And overall? **Nine in 10 people who participated in our survey had been touched by mental health challenges in some way.** Among Millennials, that figure rose to 93 percent.

9 in 10 employees have been touched by mental health challenges

Has experienced or is currently experiencing mental health challenges — **61%**

66% — **Has personally experienced mental health challenges**

85% — **Knows someone who has experienced mental health challenges**

80% — Has close friend/ family member/ colleague from work who experienced a mental health challenge

Has experienced suicidal thoughts and/or feelings — **39%**

Has often/very often experienced 3 or more signs of poor mental health — **29%**

60% — Knows someone who has taken/ tried to take their own life or had suicidal thoughts

90% — **TOUCHED BY MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES**

Base: All workers (N=2163)
* Excluding 'do not know' / 'prefer not to say'

For three out of four respondents, mental health challenges—either their own, or others'—had affected their ability to enjoy life; 46 percent reported being affected to some extent and 30 percent reported a significant impact, saying they are 'only occasionally, rarely, or never' able to enjoy and take a full part in everyday life.

These findings should compel employers to see mental health differently than most currently do. They should see it as something that everyone has, on a spectrum from good to bad, that differs from person to person and from time to time and that requires a range of interventions and initiatives that are relevant across that spectrum: from the maintenance of good mental health to policies and practices that support those with more serious conditions. Mental health is not a minority issue.

For three out of four people their - or others' - experience with mental health challenges impacts their ability to enjoy and take a full part in everyday life

30%	46%	24%
Significantly affected	**Affected to some extent**	**Touched, but not affected**

76% Affected	24%

Base: Those touched by mental health challenges (N=1930)

Note: We asked how, if at all, the experience had affected them. Those described as 'Significantly affected' answered that they were "only occasionally, rarely, or never able to enjoy or take a full part in everyday life". Those described as being affected to some extent answered that they were not able to fully enjoy and take a full part in everyday life".

Millennials are more likely to experience mental health challenges but are less likely to feel safe to raise their concerns.
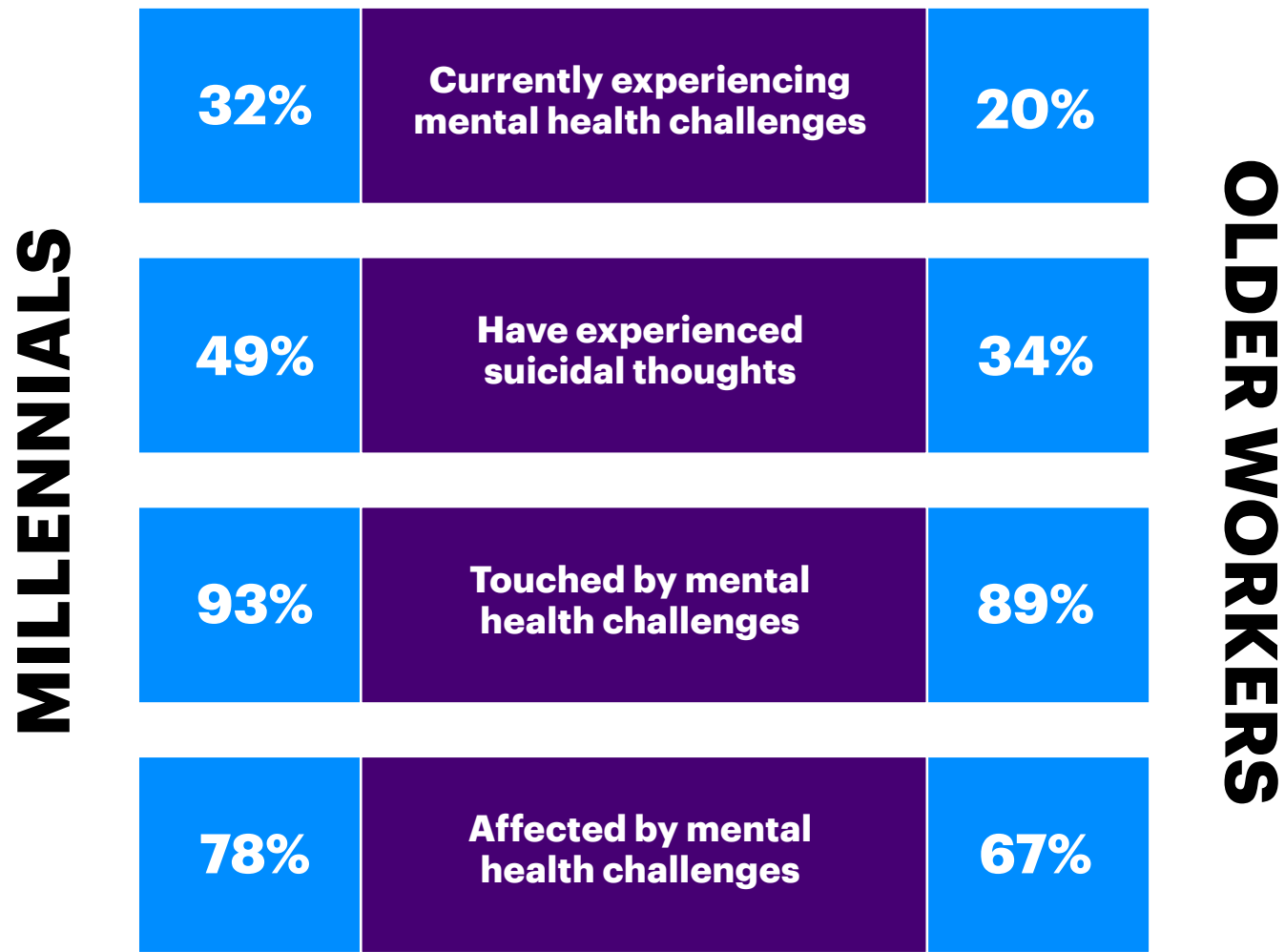
The youngest workers in our study were Millennials, ranging in age from 20 to their late 30s. This generation reports more personal experience of mental health challenges than the older generations in the workplace today. And when one factors in their exposure to mental health challenges through family, friends and close colleagues, 93 percent have had mental health challenges touch their lives.

Perhaps as a result, they are three times as likely as others to say that mental health is more important than physical health (18 percent versus six percent).

They are also more likely to manage their mental wellbeing actively, for example through exercise, yoga, or mindfulness practices.

However, despite having more exposure to mental health challenges than others in our study, they are less comfortable with the topic. Just over half said they find it easy to talk about mental health in general. They were also less inclined to see mental health challenges as something that can affect anyone (almost one third disagreed with the statement that 'mental health challenges can affect anyone', while only 16 percent of others disagreed).

Mental health challenges are more prevalent among young workers

MILLENNIALS		OLDER WORKERS
32%	Currently experiencing mental health challenges	20%
49%	Have experienced suicidal thoughts	34%
93%	Touched by mental health challenges	89%
78%	Affected by mental health challenges	67%

Base: Workers: Millennials (N=561), Others (N=1391) * Excluding 'do not know' / 'prefer not to say'

IT'S A RELIEF TO TALK AND THE STIGMA IS FADING, BUT OPENING UP AT WORK REMAINS DIFFICULT

Despite considerable progress, it's still hard to talk about one's own mental health at work. Yet hiding what's going on can make things worse. And for many, opening up brings relief, reduces stress, and helps people find and get the help they need.

The taboo that has long surrounded mental health is finally beginning to break down. Eighty-two percent of respondents in an earlier Accenture study[ii] said they are more willing to speak openly about mental health issues now than they were just a few years ago. They cited as drivers of change the willingness of high-profile individuals to talk about their personal struggles (53 percent) as well as the work of mental health charities (46 percent).

However, despite this progress, 37 percent of respondents still find it difficult to talk about mental health in general, with the Millennials in our study finding it more difficult than others, as a group. (For more detail, see page 6, 'Focus on Millennials'.)

And at work?

The survey reveals that many employees see barriers to being more open. Half of our survey respondents felt that raising a concern about their mental health might impact their career or prevent them from being promoted. Half also said that people in their workplace felt they should hide any mental health challenges or were unsure about whether they could be open. Half of our respondents believed that sharing any information about a mental health challenge at work could be perceived as a sign of weakness.

[ii] Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace: The Role of Technology.
Accenture, October 2018.

Female, 45
"There are no good, open discussions [where I work] and I wouldn't be able to talk to my boss about anything as he would be mortified! He isn't a bad person or manager; just from a generation where you don't have those sort of discussions at work."

Male, 37
"It's very difficult in work to be open and honest. You are constantly made to feel like you are dispensable and easily replaced at work, so it is difficult to be open and honest about a situation."

"

Male, 34
"A lot more people are sharing personal stories about mental health and how that affects them. [This] has really helped me to understand what [to] look for in myself and to have the courage to ask others for help when I need it."

Male, 28
"Employers have realised how much of an impact mental health can have on their workforce [and] there's been a massive push [in my workplace] for more mental health first aid on-site and trying to break the stigma associated with mental health."

61% Of those in our survey who reported facing a mental health challenge, the majority (61 percent) had not spoken to anyone at work and one percent had spoken only with a confidential counselling or employee assistance service. Overall, only five percent has contacted one of these services, perhaps reflecting the relatively low number of firms offering these services and/or awareness of them.
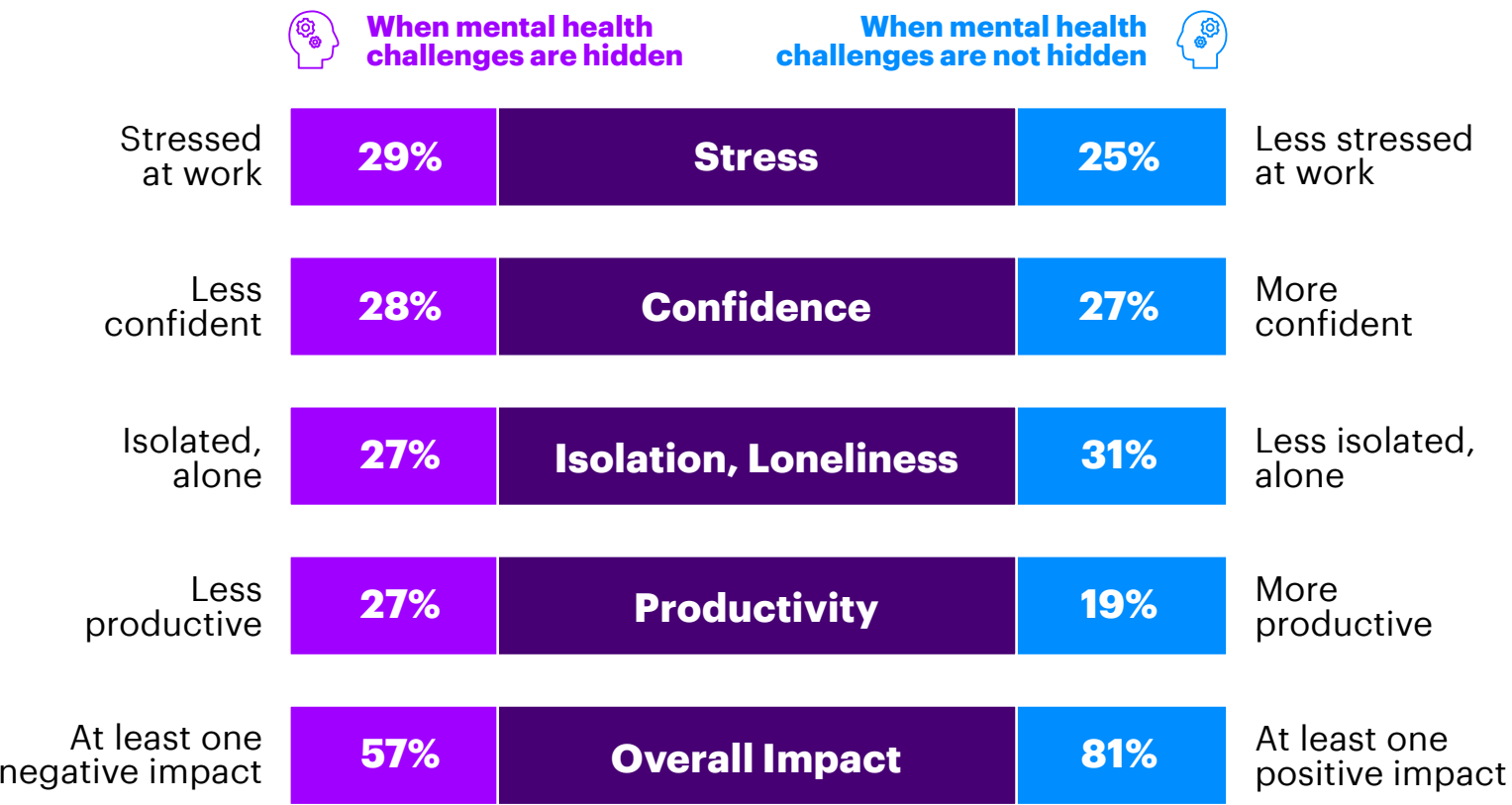
57% And yet, hiding mental health challenges at work had a negative impact on a majority of those in our survey. Fifty-seven percent reported at least one such impact, including feeling stressed, more alone, lacking confidence, being less productive, or simply 'feeling worse'. Twenty-two percent experienced three or more of these reactions as a result of hiding their mental state.

81% For those who were able to talk to someone at work, the situation was considerably more positive. Most (81 percent) had a positive reaction (one of empathy, support, kindness) from the first person they told at work. These individuals reported improvements in factors such as a decrease in their levels of stress, and in feelings of isolation, and an increase in confidence.

44% Forty four percent said it was "a relief" to be able open up; close to a third said it helped them take positive steps towards getting help. Half cited at least two positive consequences of telling someone at work; almost everyone saw some benefit.

Perhaps not surprisingly, 61 percent of those who did speak with someone at work said that they shared their challenge first with a close colleague. This figure alone highlights the importance of ensuring that everyone in the workplace has an awareness of mental health and the knowledge to direct colleagues to professional help or to the right point of contact in their organisation. Line managers were chosen as the first point of contact by 39 percent of those who had opened up, senior managers by 22 percent, and HR/wellbeing specialists by just 15 percent.

When employees can talk about their mental health at work, it helps

	When mental health challenges are hidden		When mental health challenges are not hidden	
Stressed at work	29%	Stress	25%	Less stressed at work
Less confident	28%	Confidence	27%	More confident
Isolated, alone	27%	Isolation, Loneliness	31%	Less isolated, alone
Less productive	27%	Productivity	19%	More productive
At least one negative impact	57%	Overall Impact	81%	At least one positive impact

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A SAFE SUPPORTIVE CULTURE CHANGES THE GAME FOR EMPLOYEES, AND MAKES A POSITIVE DIFFERENCE FOR EMPLOYERS

Companies that have a supportive culture around employees' mental health enable workers to be more open and seek help. Employees in supportive companies are also more motivated and more loyal.

The independent review of mental health and employers led by Lord Denis Stevenson and Paul Farmer in 2016[iii] reported that only four in 10 organisations had policies or systems in place to support employees with common mental health problems. And the pace of change is slow. Only one in four workers in our study said that they had seen any progress in their workplace's efforts to show that mental health was important for everyone in the past two years. (Just nine percent said that 'a lot' had changed for the better.) When asked about changes in the amount of training provided around mental health (for themselves or to support colleagues) the majority reported no change (77 percent in both cases) and only five percent had seen training significantly increased.

> **Male, 34**
> "I've been very well-supported through this whole process by my employer – not [only] through official policies but also through peoples' openness in speaking about their own issues and listening to what I'm going through."

> **Female, 32**
> "Nothing beats talking it through, as it adds context. It doesn't always fix [the issue] but, if you don't feel judged, it at least feels like you are not facing things alone."

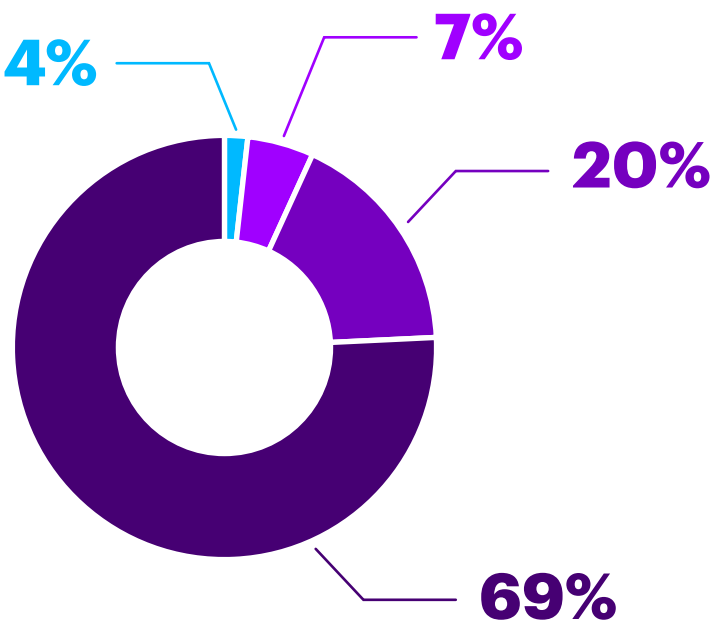iii "Thriving at Work – The Stevenson-Farmer Review of Mental Health and Employees"

The pace of change in the workplace has been slow

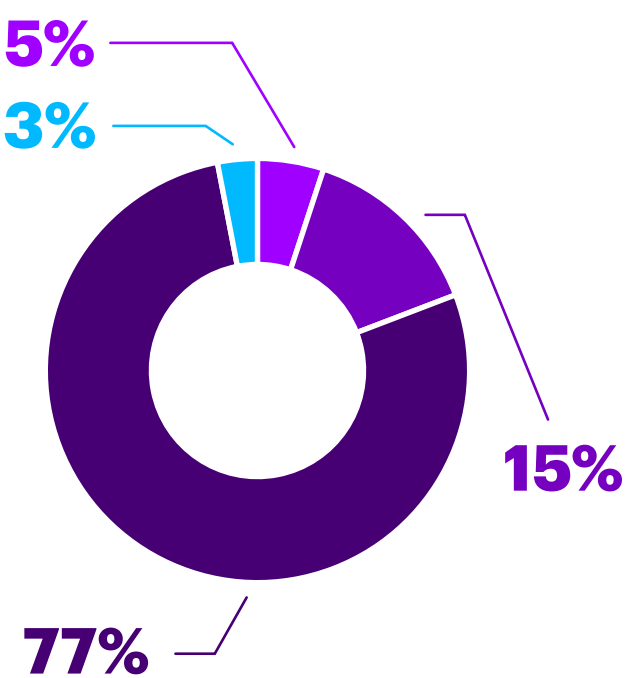Making it clear that mental health
is important to everyone

3%
9%
18%
70%
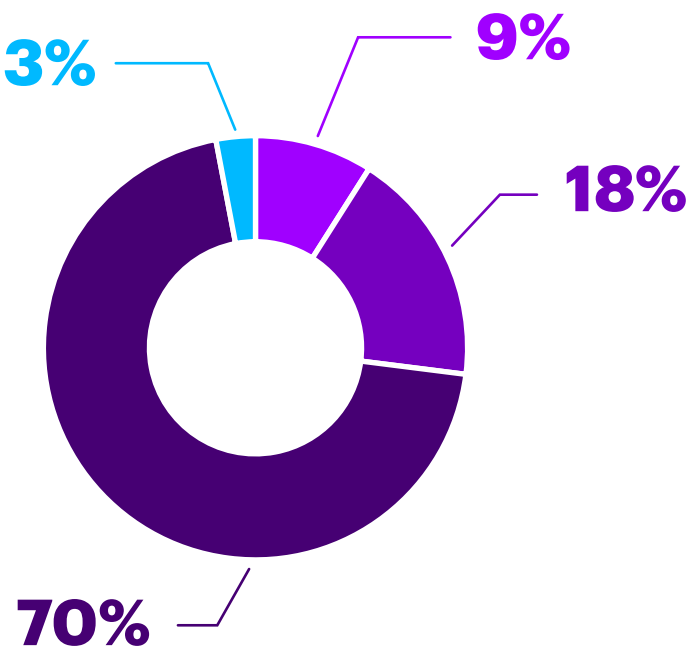
Being able to talk openly about
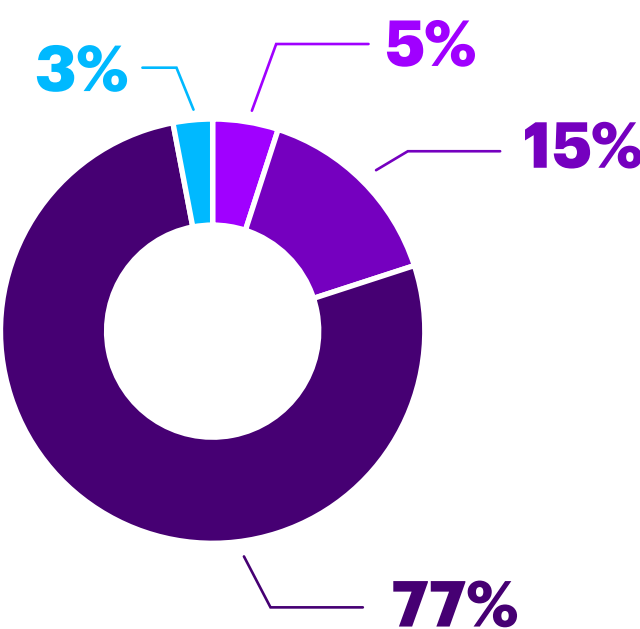mental health in the workplace

4%
7%
20%
69%

● It has improved a lot

● It has improved a little

● It has neither improved
or got worse

● It has got a little worse
or a lot worse

Training on how to deal/cope with mental
health challenges in my colleagues if needed

5%
3%
15%
77%

Training in how to deal/cope with
my own mental health challenges if needed

3%
5%
15%
77%

Base: Workers (N=2170)

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This slow pace of change makes little business sense. Over and again reports have quantified the cost of poor mental health to employers. The Stevenson-Farmer review put those costs at between £33bn and £42bn per year with half or more stemming from 'presenteeism'—people who remain at work while unwell and not able to be at their best.

Yet, our study shows that where organisations create a supportive, open culture around mental health there is a significant difference both in the way employees feel and their ability to thrive. Where there is a supportive mental health-culture, employees find it easier to talk about mental health, and are more likely to have spoken to someone in their organisation about their challenges and to know where to go to get help and advice. More than a third of workers in less supportive cultures do not know where to go for help.
Even in less supportive cultures people who open up are likely to have a positive reaction from the person they talk to, but in supportive cultures this rises to 94 percent.

Employers also see a positive effect – employees in supportive companies are more motivated; they are twice as likely as others to say they love their jobs. They are also more likely to plan to stay with their employer for at least the next year (94 percent versus 81 percent). (The sidebar, 'The Characteristics of a Supportive Culture' provides more detail).

Supportive versus less supportive cultures

More supportive	Statement	Less supportive
89%	Know where to go for help/advice on mental health challenges	62%
86%	Find it easy to talk about mental health	60%
56%	Have spoken to someone at work about mental health challenges	36%
94%	Received positive reaction when discussing mental health challenges	79%
94%	Likely to still be working for same employer in 12 months' time	81%
66%	Likely to say they love their jobs	31%

MORE SUPPORTIVE　　　　　　**LESS SUPPORTIVE**

THE CHARACTERISTICS OF A SUPPORTIVE CULTURE

We measured workers' agreement to a series of statements around their employer's attitudes and approach to mental health. Overall, 10 percent of employees indicated that their employer was performing well in every area.

At these organisations:

• People have a work-life balance that supports good mental health;

• People who are going through a challenging time with their mental health are supported;

• People feel safe to raise concerns about their mental health;

• People do not feel they must hide mental health challenges;

• Mental health challenges are not considered to be a weakness;

• People feel that disclosing mental health challenges would not impact their career/stop them from getting a promotion.

HOW EMPLOYERS CAN HELP EMPLOYEES
BE AT THEIR BEST

The impact of mental health challenges is felt by almost all in the workplace and employers can help by building the right culture and by providing practical support and advice. Business leaders can:

ACTION 1

Make it about everyone.
Companies may find that they need to reframe their approach to mental wellbeing. Many companies are reactive (focused on spotting the signs of declining mental health and of treating those who are experiencing mental health challenges). Being proactive—focusing on maintaining positive mental health and enabling employees to be at their best—is likely much more effective over the long term. Making it about everyone doesn't mean a 'one-size-fits-all' approach. Within a holistic framework, actions and resources need to be tailored to individuals with different needs and to ensure those with more serious conditions are fully supported.

Engage all levels of the workforce.
To be effective, the company's approach to supporting mental health must engage all levels of the workforce. To that end:

- Senior leaders should establish goals, track progress, act as role models and talk openly about the topic.

- Senior managers and line managers (those who manage people and projects are in the front line when it comes to workplace stress) should receive formal training to recognise signs of stress and declining mental health. These managers should also be empowered to manage their teams in a way that supports good mental health, for example, ensuring people use their holiday entitlement and are not expected to answer email out of working hours.

Organisations should design their offerings in support of mental health around the understanding that most employees already

actively manage their mental health and most consider it at least as important as their physical health. This positive attitude suggests that employees, especially Millennials, are likely to welcome and embrace training and initiatives that help them thrive and recognise their limits.

Since employees are most likely to turn first to a close colleague when they are concerned about their mental health, senior leaders should ensure that all employees know what resources are available to them. Although most (88 percent) C-level executives who participated in our earlier survey[ii] were aware of mental health initiatives within their organisation, that number dropped to 50 percent for workers below the manager level. Everyone needs to know where to go for support.

[ii] Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace: The Role of Technology. Accenture, October 2018.

ACTION 2

Let's talk.
Demonstrate to employees that senior executives are engaged on the topic of mental health, while increasing awareness of its importance.

One starting point could be as simple as raising awareness of the issue throughout the organisation, through conversations led by employees and senior executives. Only 14 percent of our respondents had heard a senior leader talking about the importance of mental health. Just one in ten had heard a senior leader talk about being personally affected. Accenture research published earlier this year revealed that both men and women thrive in more inclusive cultures—those characterised in part by environments in which employees can "be themselves." In such environments, employees are more likely to love their job, be happy with their progress, and advance to more senior levels. "*This is Me*"[iv] is a pioneering initiative launched in 2016 that helps companies start a conversation about mental health by encouraging employees and leaders to talk about who they are. This kind of initiative could help seed a more supportive mental health culture.

ACTION 3

Adopt mental health standards.
The Stevenson-Farmer Review sets out six standards for employers, covering everything from culture to the provision of practical and medical support and offers guidance on how the standard might be implemented. We also encourage readers to visit the recently launched Mental Health at Work[v] site, **https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/**.
It is an exciting new resource, particularly suited for smaller organisations that may not be able to offer a full range of support in-house.

THIS CAN HAPPEN

By focusing on culture, and taking a holistic approach to wellbeing at work and by adopting best practice, employers have the power to build a healthier, happier workforce. Today's conference offers the chance to share and to learn and, by working together, This Can Happen.

"

Male, 28
"It's a lot easier [to talk about mental health in the workplace] now than it used to be; there's a lot less stigma associated with it."

[iv] The website https://www.thelordmayorsappeal.org/a-healthy-city/this-is-me/ is a good starting point to learn more about the "This is Me" initiative

[v] Mental Health at Work was launched on 11 September by the Duke of Cambridge. The 11 partners behind it are Heads Together, CIPD, the Federation of Small Businesses, the City Mental Health Alliance, Mental Health First Aid, the Work and Health Unit, Public Health England, NCVO, The Work Foundation, Time to Change and the Institute of Directors.

TECHNICAL APPENDIX

In October 2018, we surveyed 2170 UK employees through the YouGov Omnibus service. The sample is representative of the UK working population.

The questionnaire was developed with the support of mental health experts at This Can Happen and at Mental Health UK[vi]. Participants' mental wellbeing was assessed using a combination of five lines of questioning.

To explore the findings from the quantitative survey in greater depth, we conducted a series of online ethnographic studies with UK workers currently experiencing mental health challenges. The 17 selected participants responded to both qualitative and quantitative prompts over the course of a working week in November 2018, using the dscout platform.

[vi] Mental Health UK https://www.mentalhealth-uk.org/

How we measured mental health challenges

1 We used a series of 13 statements to explore physical, psychological and behavioural indicators of poor or declining mental wellbeing, and to learn how frequently these had occurred for participants over the last year. If respondents selected three or more as occurring often or very often, the individual was recorded as having personally been touched by mental health challenges.

2 We asked directly whether the individual had experienced or was experiencing mental health challenges. Those who said yes were also recorded as having personally been touched by mental health challenges.

3 We asked directly whether the individual had ever had suicidal thoughts or feelings. Those who said yes were also recorded as having personally been touched by mental health challenges.

4 We asked whether respondents knew anyone who had mental health challenges and to select who from a list. Those who selected "close friend, close colleague or family member" were recorded as having been touched through someone close to them.

5 We asked whether the individual knew anyone who had taken their own life or attempted to. Those who said yes were recorded as having been touched through someone close to them.

APPENDIX: MENTAL HEALTH AT ACCENTURE

1 Accenture has a holistic health and wellbeing programme that incorporates physical and mental health and focuses on awareness and prevention. It is part of a broader programme that is designed to create a culture where employees can bring their whole self to work.

2 We recognise that there is still a stigma within workplaces and society in general when it comes to talking about mental health and seeking help.

3 We have a Mental Health Allies programme focused on getting the message across that it's okay to talk about mental health, and also to equip people with the right skills to enable them to support colleagues in need. Today, we have over 1,700 employees trained as Mental Health Allies throughout our UK business. Each has participated in a half-day classroom-based training session to increase their understanding of mental health challenges, whilst building confidence and skills in addressing common mental health challenges through roleplaying and scenario training. This training also explores the boundaries between the responsibilities of a line manager and the role of mental health allies.

4 Accenture offers a free confidential counselling service available through Bupa, open to all Accenture employees 24/7. The Employee Assistance Program (EAP), can also help employees with a variety of issues such as managing stress in the home or workplace, legal and financial issues and relationship problems.

5 Technology plays an important role in our programme: online awareness training is available to all. Specifically, employees have access to Big White Wall, a confidential, professionally managed chat environment where they can remain anonymous. Employees can access this environment at any time, from any location with online accessibility. We have also developed a mindfulness app, and we offer access to other apps to support sleep and general wellbeing. We are currently using our technical expertise to design new tools to support mental health throughout the organisation and beyond, working alongside mental health and medical professionals.

About This Can Happen

This Can Happen is an innovative and solutions-led conference for companies who recognise that staff need support to deal with mental health issues affecting them, their colleagues or their families.

This Can Happen was founded by Jonny Benjamin MBE and Neil Laybourn, a duo of inspiring mental health advocates, and Zoe Sinclair of Employees Matter. Together, they have taken the next step to convert awareness into action and make prevention a top priority for businesses across the UK.

The event is supported by GSK, Direct Line Group, Accenture, Goldman Sachs, Bright Horizons and Mental Health UK.

About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company, providing a broad range of services and solutions in strategy, consulting, digital, technology and operations. Combining unmatched experience and specialized skills across more than 40 industries and all business functions – underpinned by the world's largest delivery network – Accenture works at the intersection of business and technology to help clients improve their performance and create sustainable value for their stakeholders. With 459,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries, Accenture drives innovation to improve the way the world works and lives. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

About Accenture Research

Accenture Research shapes trends and creates data driven insights about the most pressing issues global organisations face. Combining the power of innovative research techniques with a deep understanding of our clients' industries, our team of 300 researchers and analysts spans 23 countries and publishes hundreds of reports, articles and points of view every year. This project was led by Barbara Harvey, Managing Director in Accenture Research where she leads Accenture's global research on inclusion and diversity, focusing on gender. She is also the executive sponsor for Accenture's Mental Health programme in the UK. Barbara would like to thank the project team Dominic King, Robin Faber and Agata Dowbor for their contributions to the study. Visit us at www.accenture.com/research