

Founders' Choice Award

OUTSTANDING SERVICE TO MENTAL HEALTH

Miles Kean, Executive Director, Entrepreneurs Division, Coutts



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It is truly both humbling and an honour to be chosen for the This Can Happen Founders' Choice Award. Tackling mental health is very much a team game. The progress we have made to date has been down to real desire to change and great teamwork and collaboration across many areas, spanning the entire breadth of our organisation and beyond.

It is a journey that is never complete and constantly changing, which is so evident this year in what has perhaps become the most challenging time ever for us all. We must always be looking forward on

behalf of our people to find ways to keep improving our approach to this agenda.

There are so many ingredients to mix together to have the best chance of success. Most important is the tone set from the top of an organisation, educating and supporting line managers and getting people passionate about mental health promotion to lead the change. Line managers themselves are often the most vulnerable, so helping them with their own resilience is key, so that they can in turn support their own teams.

Without doubt, one of the most impactful actions workplaces can take is to encourage their

people to come forward and talk about their own mental health journeys. Stories are incredibly powerful, break down barriers and help normalise mental health as an everyday conversation. With nine in ten of us somehow touched by mental issues, the subject should be normal to talk about, rather than locking it away in fear. This said, we must have support in place for when people do reach out. All organisations have a duty to their people to do this. There are many charities with wonderful free resources and some excellent providers in the marketplace.

What has inspired me over time is people's capacity to recover from some of the most dire situations and circumstances you can imagine and get back to leading fulfilling and productive lives. We must never let people lose hope. There is always a solution somewhere to be found and there is so much support and resource out there, so it is our absolute duty to ensure we don't leave anyone behind. It often takes time, but with the right approach, support and encouragement everyone can get better. It has been amazing to witness such turnarounds in people.

My driving passion is to ensure that there is always someone in every organisation that people can reach out to for help and to point them in the right direction. There are still too many lives lost to poor mental health that don't need to be and talking is the first step people need to take.

There is no real downside for workplaces to supporting staff with their mental health, and with the right approach everybody wins! ■

