

THIS CAN HAPPEN.

ASIA • EUROPE
NORTH AMERICA



EMPOWERING WORKPLACE
MENTAL HEALTH

2020 OFFICIAL E-BOOK



EMPOWERING WORKPLACE
MENTAL HEALTH



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Our company's health starts with our people

At GSK we are creating an environment where everyone can look after their mental health and wellbeing and support others to do the same.

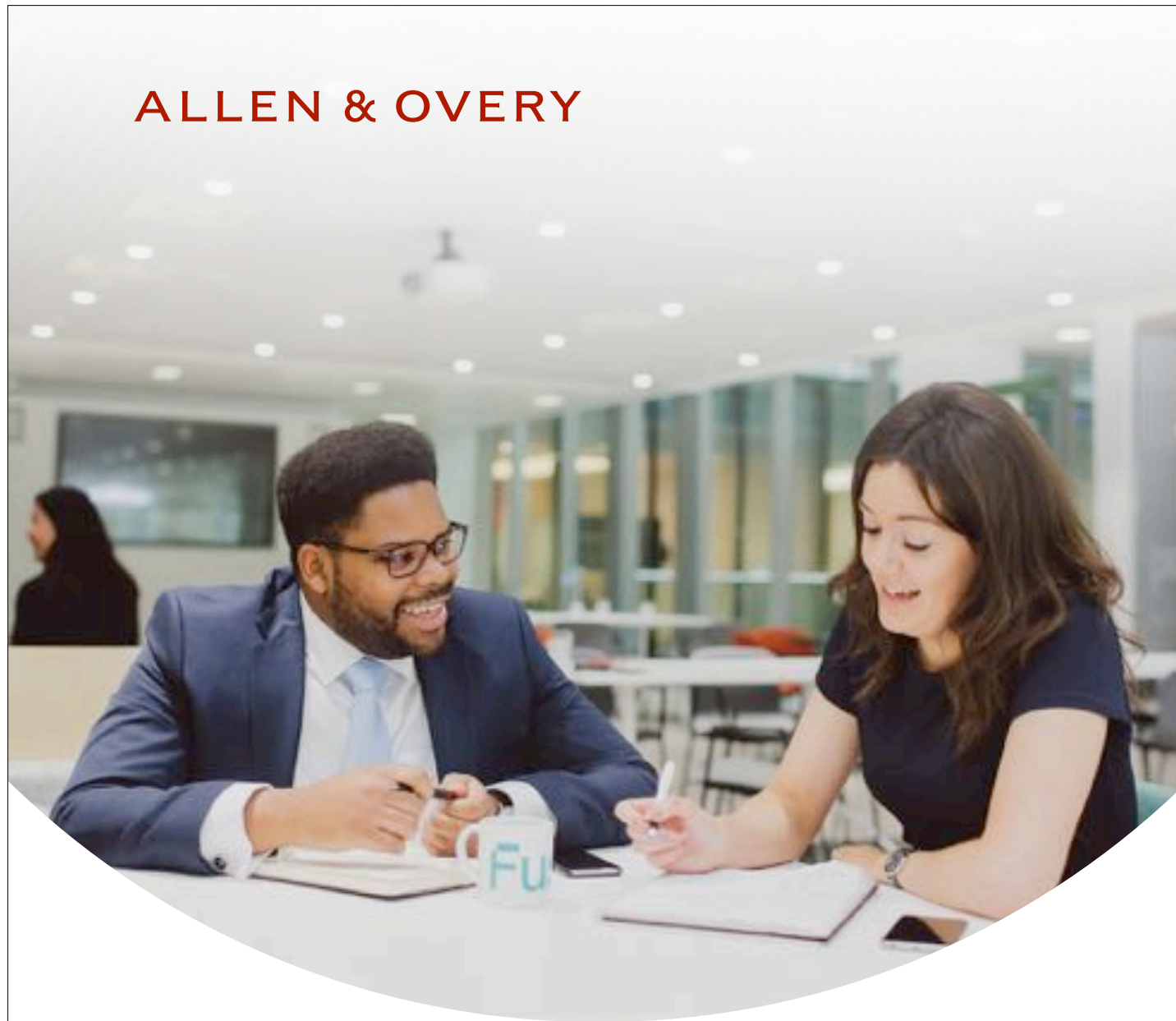
Conversations are making a difference and we continue to encourage everyone to be open, to ask for help and access support when they need it.

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ALLEN & OVERY



Foreword

This year's annual conference was a different kind of event, taking place online due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Moving everything online involved rewriting our plans, but it gave us the opportunity to enlarge the scope of our audience and subject matter. It enabled us to launch This Can Happen into new territories. What we didn't account for was how successful the format would be. The 1,850 delegates joined from 30 different countries and more than 250 companies. Delegates heard from 139 speakers, and participants took the chance to learn, share and be inspired.

So, we proudly present our third e-book, which contains a write-up of every single session, what was discussed and the key takeaways that you can use. Please share the e-book with anyone you think will find it useful and feel free to let us know your thoughts and feedback.

2020 was a year that challenged all of our mental health and raised awareness of the importance of supporting our colleagues. We hope our e-book inspires and prepares you for 2021.

ZOE SINCLAIR
Co-Founder
This Can Happen



Talking openly

We aim to create an environment where our people are able to talk openly and know they will be supported.

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THIS CAN HAPPEN TEAM

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Advisory Editorial Board

We have been very privileged to work with some amazing people who have helped us to deliver all of the content for this year's conference. Working with three editorial boards which provided local expertise and understanding of their particular region added to the value of the content and its relevance to our delegates.

The aim was to provide speakers and panellists who would inspire and empower delegates to go back to their organisations with new ideas, helping them support colleagues who may have mental health challenges. We would like to thank all the members of the editorial boards for their hard work.

UK & Europe Board



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Equity & Inclusion Officer,
EMEA & APAC
Northern Trust



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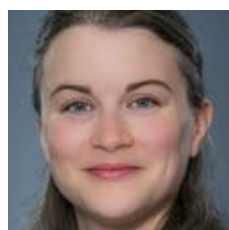


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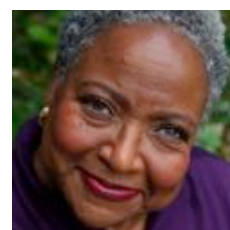
US Board



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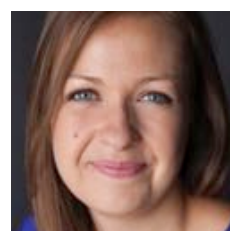
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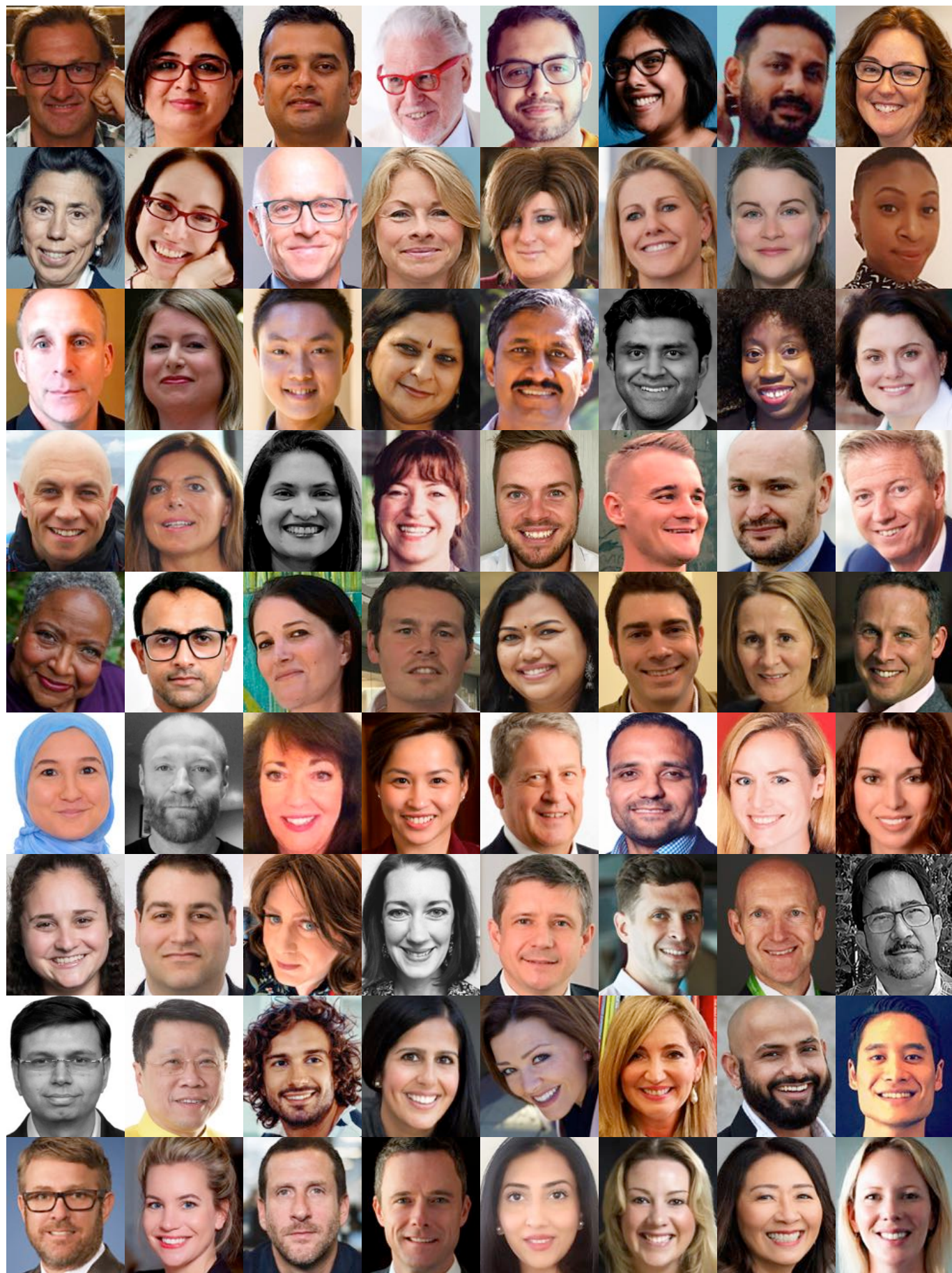
OLIVER WYMAN



Our Exhibitors



Thank you to all our Speakers





**BEHIND
THE SCENES**

What you had to say...

Some amazing people talking over the last day-and-a-half. So much content and help and support. I will be following up a lot of people. Thank you.

HENRY CHURNEY
Senior Medical Representative,
Kyowa Kirin

Amazing content – trying to attend all sessions.

AMY SHAW
Corporate Social Responsibility Manager,
Ogilvy

Wow, what an amazing line-up. So many topical speakers, the presentations are timed perfectly to stop you getting a digital fatigue. So much planning has gone into this event to make it suited to such a wide industry it has something for everyone.

DORIAN WILLIAMS
West Midlands Ambulance Service

This Can Happen, happened. The work that has gone into making this event possible is evident. The workshops and panels have been very informative, relatable and important topics to cover right now. As a team manager with over 20 employees all working remotely now, I feel I can offer more to them already just from a day-and-a-half and it has also given me insights into a diverse range of struggles they may be facing or may face, which will help me with future projects on employee wellbeing. Thank you to all involved, this will help so many people and I am looking forward to the rest of the conference.

CHARLOTTE WAKELING
Central Services Team Manager
Enterprise Holdings

Conference is great so far. Really enjoyed the MH across careers and the session about isolation and loneliness has been a stand-out too!

KENDALL TURNER
HR Business Partner,
LexisNexis

Given the remote working environment, the virtual event highlights that we can come together, learn from each other and continue the mental health conversation even when faced with a challenging period in all our working and personal lives."

DARREN DADABHAY
UK & Global Shipping Health Promotion Coordinator,
Shell International

'Really enjoying This Can Happen's first virtual conference, very interactive sessions and fantastic thought-provoking content. Lots of key take-outs, my favorite so far came from the 'Overcoming loneliness and social isolation at work' session – 'People need one meaningful connection' love it!

DAWN KIRK
Customer Service Manager,
Mars

I am going through TCH withdrawal already. I can't wait to learn about how I can support your work between conferences. Please think of me as a readily available resource willing to contribute however I can.

HALE PULSIFER
Vice-President Customer Accessibility,
Fidelity Online Center for Accessibility

I can't thank you enough for being a truly gracious host and for organising a masterpiece event. This conversation would be quite literally nowhere without leaders like you bringing people together. I'll absolutely dig into other sessions to build my own capacity as an ally.

NICK TZITZON
Chief Strategy Officer,
ServiceNow

Really enjoying the content and variety so far Zoe. Well done everyone.

SUE EVE
HR Director,
IBB Law LLP

Conference so far has been nothing less than inspirational, passionate speakers really highlighting how we can all play a part in improving MH within the workplace. Personally for me it's about creating a culture where MH training is part of joining a business, educating from day 1 and then lastly going away and reflecting on what as a business can we do to be proactive with MH to support our employees. It goes back to a saying from Simon Sinek: 'The employees must love the company before customers ever will.

GEORGIE SHAW
Customer Service Team Manager,
BGL

I have really enjoyed the conference and will be listening to the playbacks from today. You and the team have done a fantastic job pulling together a great virtual event.

GEMMA PORTER
Human Capital Global Wellness Manager,
Oliver Wyman

Day 2 of This Can Happen 2020 is delivering high-quality speakers on a range of key topics from suicide, to financial wellbeing, to loneliness and isolation, and technology, against the backdrop of the global pandemic. Thought leadership at its best.

CAROLINE LINDNER
Norton Rose Fulbright

Are your team equipped?



The mental health of our workforces is being challenged right now. For many of us, our ways of working have changed, and we are facing new pressures to protect the mental health of our staff, not only their physical health.

By educating your colleagues in some of the basics of managing their own mental health, together, we can not only address some of the biggest risks and misconceptions about mental health in the workplace, but create a wellbeing culture that inspires great work wherever it may be.

Our live online training courses include:

- Mental Health in the Workplace for Managers
- Mental Health Awareness
- Mental Health Champions
- NEW 45-90 minute bite-sized sessions, ideal for your awareness raising events throughout the year

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for This Can
Happen 2020**

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DAY 1 - 23.11.20



UK Mental Health 101: Why are we Still Having this Conversation?

Monika Misra, Head of Health & Wellbeing EMEA at GSK, asks how and why companies should build workplace mental health into their agendas

To open the conference, TCH Co-Founder Zoe Sinclair introduced Monika, who began her presentation by agreeing that even at GSK, a company now known for its transparency, conversations were still ongoing on the topic of mental health. With the help of data, and by being agile and adapting, she added, companies can make good headway in tackling the issue and its complex but widely experienced challenges.

Despite national and global campaigns, said Monika, with high-profile celebrities sharing their own stories, social media platforms helping spread awareness and employees being encouraged to get more involved in discussing workplace mental health, why do we still need to have this conversation?

We are all vulnerable, she suggested, especially when it comes to times of

change. The pandemic has made matters worse: people with pre-existing conditions felt worse, and those who never had mental health issues before are reporting dips in mood. Many of those who suddenly find themselves working from home have experienced a significant shift in their general wellbeing.

GSK, said Monika, is a huge global healthcare company with around 100,000 employees across 100 countries. Although conversations around mental health are still required at GSK, the subject is now high on the company's agenda with support available for every employee, whether thriving or struggling. The company bases its discussions on three areas, the first of which is ownership of mental health. This is a priority at GSK, which has recruited champions with a passion for the subject, and introduced mental health training for managers, →



MONIKA MISRA
Head of Health & Wellbeing, EMEA
GSK

THIS CAN HAPPEN 2020

We are a mental health charity supporting young people.

We raise money to help other organisations who are underfunded or underutilised and are committed to giving out grants which will truly make a difference to the mental health of young people up and down the UK.

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businessmentalwellbeing.com

DAY 1 - 23.11.20

making it an expectation. Employees are also invited to provide feedback via surveys that help shape future strategies.

The next area, said Monika, was the use of data and insight to help identify employee issues before developing solutions to address issues. GSK has an employee assistance programme (EAP) which enables the company to develop the right solutions to support employees through challenges. Uptake in manager training is also monitored, and employee surveys provide essential feedback on how managers are performing.

The third key consideration Monika outlined was that any programmes introduced are relevant to the needs of staff. This year in particular has seen the need for specific requirements to be addressed, in particular the need for everyone to take care of their own mental health issues. During the pandemic, managers have had a richer quality of conversation with employees, and learned much about their personal lives. The variety of individuals' needs and mental health experiences is not to be minimised.

Continuing the conversation

In summation, Monika warned that mental health issues were here to stay, but there are three questions a company can ask itself: how can we develop ownership of our mental health agendas? How can we make better use of data to ensure we are on the right track? And how can we remain agile in adapting to the changing needs of our employees? By asking these questions we may get an insight into why the conversation has to continue.

External questions opened with a query on company size: how can smaller businesses



Monika (left) and Zoe Sinclair field questions on topics such as survey feedback

input radical change? 'If we all take ownership and identify champions,' said Monika, 'it doesn't need to cost much. We can start by bringing in one service and see how that goes.'

Another question requested detail on employee surveys, to which Monika replied: 'We make sure to include such topics as transparency, teamwork, support, and company values.'

In closing, Monika answered an external query on how to provide managers with survey feedback.

'This is an open process,' said Monika, 'and it's about being courageous enough to take feedback, both good and bad, and see where improvements can be made.'

If we all take ownership and identify champions, it doesn't need to cost much. We can bring in one service and see how it goes

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 It's important to engage everybody in mental health discussion, but a good place to start is finding one champion who is passionate about the subject. Identify an employee whose enthusiasm and commitment will spread through the company, encouraging more to get involved.
- 2 If you're keen to introduce programmes but feel overwhelmed by the options or worry about financial constraints, start by introducing one service and see how that helps. Surveys needn't cost much, and they can be crucial in working out which service might work for your company.
- 3 We must all take ownership of mental health in the workplace. Find out who owns the wellbeing agenda where you work and ask questions about available support.

THIS CAN HAPPEN 2020

An Interview With Joe Wicks, The Body Coach, British Fitness Coach, TV Presenter and Author

The Body Coach was the nation's PE teacher during Lockdown One. Joe draws on his own experience to talk about the effects of exercise on mental health



INTERVIEWED BY:
LUCIE CAVE
Editorial Director
Bauer Media

Lucie Cave introduced Body Coach Joe Wicks, who answered questions from his home gym. Joe's family history has included several major mental health issues, and he spoke candidly about how that has affected his personal attitude to health and wellbeing.

Lucie got straight in by asking about the Joe Wicks mindset. 'Having two small kids has made me realise the importance of sleep. We just can't go to bed late and get up early anymore, so we leave our phones downstairs and get to bed by 9pm.'

'Energy comes from exercise, food and sleep,' said Joe. 'My first books were all about physical transformation but I've since changed that narrative. If you can tap into the need to feel energised, rather than having body image and weight-focus goals, it can transform the way you view exercise. I'm also into ice-cold showers first thing, then I jump straight into a workout!'

Joe's videos during the pandemic received a hugely positive reaction worldwide. 'I had already started reading testimonials

It was all about
how we feel once
we've exercised.
Relationships
improve, we
become more
ambitious

and looking at the reasons behind people's fitness journeys,' he said, 'and I'd started to notice it was all about how we feel once we've exercised. Relationships improve, we become more ambitious, we feel better. So *PE with Joe* was about making people feel good, about bringing families together and having fun. People seem to have stuck with the workouts and are still enjoying them.'

Joe made a video at the start of Lockdown Two, noted Lucie, that voiced his own confusions around the pandemic. What response did it get?

'The night Boris announced the second lockdown I felt upset and disconnected from my family and friends. I thought everyone might be feeling it too, so I put out a video, but I didn't realise how big a response it would get. Over one million people saw it and it got about 5,000 comments from people empathising.

'I don't stay in that state for too long, though. I always bring a negative mindset back to the moment to try and recover a sense of perspective. I also talk to family and friends as well as my social media audience: it's nice to talk to people who feel the same.'



Joe described how he perceived his own body image when he was younger.

'I was very skinny and my brother and schoolfriends would tease me. When I turned 16 I got a job on a checkout and used my weekly wage to join a gym. I was committed to fitness from an early age and it became my therapy.'

Coping with the chaos

Here Joe talked openly about what it was like to grow up with parents who both had mental health issues.

'It was chaotic: I had a drug addict dad and a mum with OCD, and there was a lot of shouting and fear of abandonment. Dad was in and out of rehab (he's clean now) and Mum had obsessive OCD and tidied all day. I used exercise and fitness as a way of coping. As a parent I now understand them better and have sympathy, and I also try to be patient with my own kids. In the end I think I turned out very well!'

Panel questions included how to find

workout time around meetings and Joe mentioned his new series *Wake Up With Joe*, which is available for viewers to access whenever they like, even in-between meetings.

Another question concerned increasing access to workouts for those with eating disorders. 'That's a huge topic,' said Joe, 'and needs professional advice. I always recommend nourishing the body with food if people are exercising.'

Does he influence his own employees? Sitting on a workout bench in his own gym, Joe admitted how much he missed his colleagues.

'Before lockdown we went paintballing, go-karting, had lunch club, and now we do quizzes with cocktails. I'm thinking of sending everyone a piece of gym equipment,' (here he patted his workbench), 'as a present so they can train at home, because I do value my staff.'

I had a drug addict
dad (he's clean
now) and a mum
with OCD. I used
exercise as a way
of coping

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Joe said: 'It can be annoyingly when I say "you'll never regret a workout", but we all know how much better we feel afterwards. Something in our mindset shifts, it clears our mind and raises our energy levels, making us feel alert and alive.'

2 'The pandemic has put things into perspective for me. I'd love to say it slowed me down, but I've never worked harder! We all chase success but it's really all about family and friends and health. I'm happiest when I'm with family and friends.'

3 'I encourage people to think about the mental health benefits of exercise and do it to feel good. It's about learning to accept your body and know that you can get stronger and healthier, but it's a long journey. Think about it as a lifelong cycle.'

Addressing Mental Health at Boardroom Level

The CEOs of four global businesses go head to head to discuss how larger companies can build in effective wellbeing strategies that last



FACILITATOR:
ZOE SINCLAIR,
Co-Founder,
This Can Happen

PAUL COSSELL
CEO
ISG

PETER FLAVELL
CEO
Coutts

JOSH KRICHEFSKI
Global COO
MediaCom

GARETH PRICE
Managing Partner
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This discussion included four senior leaders, all of whom, noted Zoe, were happy to discuss mental health issues candidly and openly. That is still not the case for people in many areas and companies, she added. Leaders need to do more, agreed the panel, to take ownership and invite transparency.

Zoe invited Gareth Price to talk about the challenging environment of the legal sector. He responded that the answer lies in unlocking potential, helping employees flourish and reach a state of flow. Mentally healthy people, he continued, would be able to contribute in far more positive ways to their lives outside of work and to their local communities.

Zoe then turned to Paul Cossell, asking about health and safety in construction. Paul agreed the sector was 'obsessed with safety', but noted the high number of fatalities resulting from poor mental health compared with those from physical injuries. He gave credit to the younger generation. 'Older ones were always taught to be tough and move on,' he said, and in this 80% male industry, 'guys are generally not as good at talking about emotions.' A shift of mindsets, he added, was perhaps more important than health and safety.

This kind of thing,
where brave
people stand up to
tell their stories,
can change a
culture overnight

Peter Flavell shared the memory of the head of a mental health network at his company ('a middle-aged bloke'), who gave a town hall sharing his own personal experiences. Peter said this from-the-heart speech was 'a wake-up call to young and old, male and female'. The company has since recruited mental health champions who train team leaders, and are first points of call for struggling staff.

Peter also talked about the trend apparent in working from home, where people attend more meetings and often work harder than they did in the office. Without the top-and-tail of a daily commute there is no chance to decompress, so it's important to make sure we are being kind to ourselves and to our teams.

The power of storytelling

Turning to Josh Kricheski, Zoe asked what big media companies like his were doing. Josh described an organic growth in the need to create a flexible working environment with mindful working practice. It's okay, he told his teams, to work flexible hours, but respect for the hours of others was paramount. After one especially powerful presentation involving storytelling, a huge stimulus for change came about. 'This kind of thing, where brave people stand up on stage to tell their stories, can change a culture overnight and make it okay not to be okay.'

Josh also put emphasis on the importance of creating a framework that people can use everywhere. 'Every market has its own culture,' he said, 'and we want them to be able to take ownership because that's what makes these things most powerful.'

Zoe then returned to Gareth, asking him how leaders can help employees flourish. A global framework was vital, he said, and went on to discuss three areas of interest:



culture and relationship-nurturing ('people have to be themselves at work'); social connection; and support. 'Work is an activity, not a place,' said Gareth, who backed up Josh's point about having empathy for others. Everyone, he said, should have the ability to take ownership of their own wellbeing.

Gareth noted how the pandemic was causing global uncertainty, and how we all had to be aware of this and make provisions. Peter agreed, and also stressed the need to recognise how different people's situations can be. He argued that it's really important it is to check in and out of online meetings, so as not to miss the personal interaction that can easily be lost online.

Surely not every leader talked about the subject so openly, Zoe asked. Paul shared his own experiences of differing attitudes: 'Mental health is cultural and culture is set from the leader, so unless you create an environment where it's okay to be vulnerable, most people won't reach out for help.'

Leaders, said Paul, tend to measure everything – apart from mental health. Josh agreed that companies have a responsibility to report on mental health activity. 'We should all be accountable for how we look after our people; I'd love to see this debated in Parliament.' ■

(Clockwise) Paul, Peter, Gareth and Josh agreed everyone should be able to own their wellbeing

Unless you create
an environment
where it's okay
to be vulnerable,
people won't reach
out for help

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Leaders must be expected not just to listen, but to record mental health strategies and outcomes, and be accountable for the wellbeing of their staff and teams. There is still a long way to go in the leaderships of many organisations.

2 Culture plays a huge part in how we react to situations and the kind of process we need to have in place at work, and one size doesn't fit all. Having a bespoke mental health agenda is crucial to achieving a successful outcome.

3 Storytelling packs a powerful punch and its ability to bring about radical shifts in a company's wellbeing policy shouldn't be underestimated. We all have a personal story to tell: the heroes are ones who are brave enough to get up and do it.

Understanding Racism in the Workplace and its Impact on Staff Mental Health in the UK

An insightful look into the pervasiveness of racism in the workplace, the devastating impact it can have on employees, and how employers can fight it



FACILITATOR:
LAURELLE BROWN
Trainer & Consultant
Laurelle Brown
Training &
Consultancy

PANEL

ADEEL AMINI
TV Producer
The TV Mindset

AGGIE MUTUMA
Group People Director
Argent Foods
Managing Director
Mahogany Inclusion
Partners

JONATHAN TAYLOR
Senior Psychologist
Pearn Kandola

Many conversations this year have focused on the Black Lives Matter movement, said facilitator Laurelle Brown, opening up panel discussion on key and current issues. We have come a long way, delegates agreed, but much more must be done to build these issues into everyday conversation and policy. It is time for organisations to grow and adapt.

Workplaces are a reflection on society, Aggie Mutuma suggested, and racism shows up in many ways, from entry barriers to micro and macro aggression. Victims suffer from negative mental health issues, second-guessing themselves and striving less, among other issues.

The issues, said Adeel Amini, are worn on our skin. 'You wake up as a person of colour, you browse social media and you're seeing your existence being debated. Then you go into work and you're the only brown face in a sea of white people, and you witness micro aggressions, and who is there to talk to about all of this? You live with the anxiety.'

Laurelle agreed that we have developed ways to cope, noting how research on our everyday experience of racism has had an impact on general wellbeing and other health outcomes.

How does the agenda of inclusion intercept with wellbeing?

'We need to stop thinking about inclusion as a nice-to-have,' said Jonathan Taylor. 'This is right up there with the fundamental human needs that we all have at work: the importance of autonomy in management, and the importance of getting a sense of development at work.'

In the UK, Laurelle said, the concept of racial trauma as a narrative is missing,

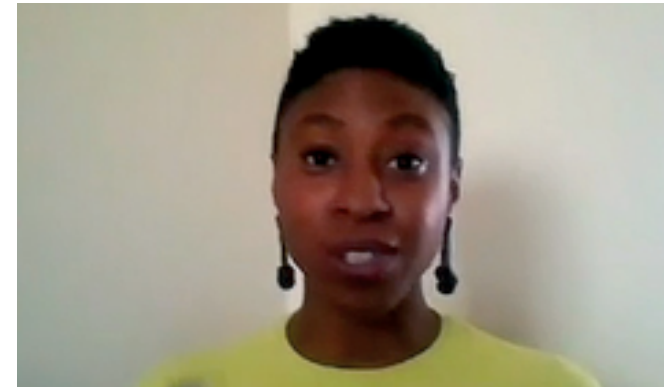
You witness micro aggressions, and who is there to talk to about this? You live with the anxiety

whereas in the US this is recognised as a mental health issue. Aggie agreed: 'The impact can affect people's entire lives. You might not have the same opportunities at work if you don't have an anglicised name. That impacts where you live, and where your children go to school, and that affects their life chances.'

Adeel talked about the need for protection and structure at work. 'Do I feel comfortable using company procedures to report a micro-aggression to a white person who potentially doesn't understand? If I go through that process (and I have), there are now two people who are going back into work facing the after-effects of that trauma.'

Structural solutions

Laurelle then raised an audience question: is having a BAME network in an organisation enough to safeguard staff mental health from the impact of racism? Adeel responded: 'Many industries were formed in the past when there was a different make-up to society, so they're inherently structurally racist because that's the era in which they were built. We don't want a granny annexe that doesn't get central heating; the issue must be built into the foundation of things.'



Jonathan was then invited to look at trends within types and sizes of company. If we think about culture as the way things have been done, he said, we find a lot of structures were built at a very different time, where people weren't even thinking about gender diversity.

Lately he's had conversations with SME groups that have been taking actions 'for the wrong reasons – thinking about this subject in terms of PR.' With the right leadership and culture in place, he added, even a large organisation can adapt.

Laurelle moved the conversation on to the topic of identity and language. How are we labelled by others, she asked. How do we refer to people who are not white? These

questions were aligned with an audience question: how do we feel about the term BAME? Adeel, speaking as a gay Asian man, suggested the term uses white as the control and the normal, with everything else lumped into one category. Labels are convenient, he said.

Aggie agreed that BAME is a statistical convenience, that government bodies use it and that it's lazy. Laurelle pointed out how hard it was to understand ethnicity reports stating White or BAME. What can be understood from a tick in that category, she asked. Not much. ■

(Clockwise) Laurelle, Adeel, Aggie and Jonathan asked whether employers are doing enough

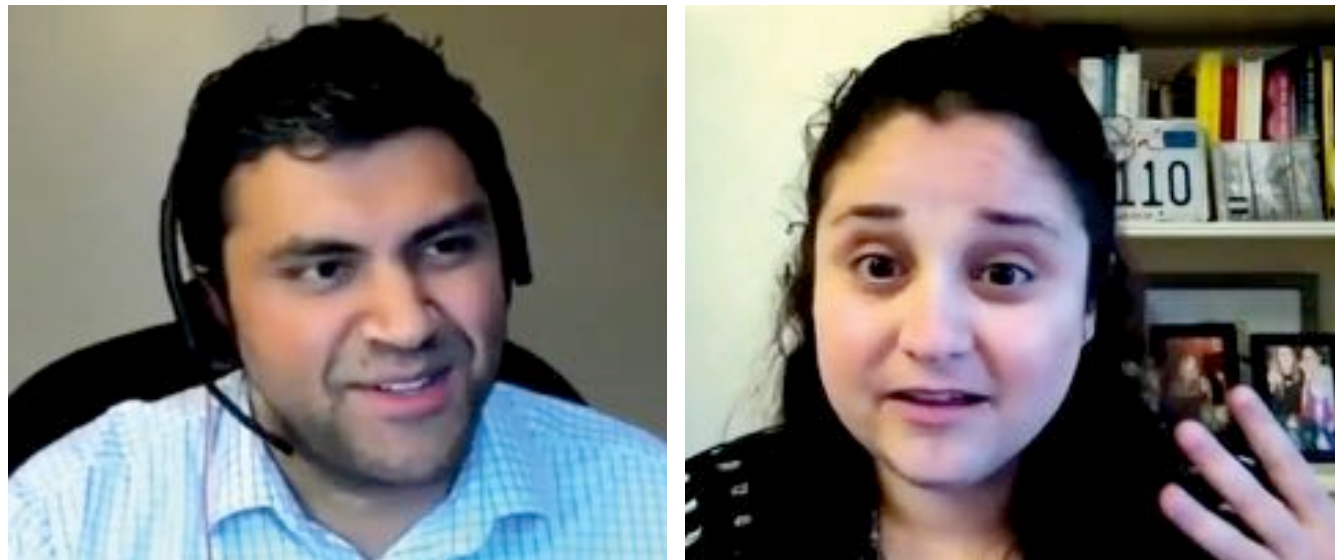
Many industries are inherently structurally racist because that's the era in which they were built

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Everyone has the potential ability to do something, or not. It's a choice, and particularly in the workplace it's all about the idea of allyship. Sometimes it can be as simple as telling the person: 'I saw that, and I'm so sorry it happened to you'. That in itself is a great start.

2 We often worry about what to say, but the real damage is in not intervening at all. It's all about ambiguity – we need to move past the point where no-one is reacting. Recognise when you're not intervening and remind yourself that it actually does matter.

3 Listen and empathise. Interrogate your company procedures and emails, look at everything within the structure. And educate yourself.



Embracing Mental Health: Recognising its Importance in the US Workplace

Two doctors discuss the workplace mental health landscape in the US today and how it has been affected by the pandemic



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Occupational Health
Physician
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PANEL

DR JESSI GOLD
Assistant Professor,
and Director of
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and Outreach,
Department of
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Washington University
in St Louis School of
Medicine

Dr Bhargav Chandrashekar opened the discussion by inviting Dr Jessi Gold to comment on the status quo of mental health in the US. What, he asked, are some of the bigger problems for care-seeking? The US is a big melting pot of cultures, said Jessi, so it's complicated. On top of that it has a medicare structure that separates mental from physical health, so when we visit a doctor it's uncommon to be screened for mental health problems.

Jessi and Bhargav agreed that the pandemic had caused issues for many people around work and family instability. Any kind of transition, she said, would likely be stressful for mental health, and on top of that there are no answers: we don't know when the pandemic is going to end, and that makes people even more anxious.

Figures show an increase in anxiety, depression and substance use for coping, and eating disorders in the younger generation. And when the pandemic is over some of those mental health issues will stay, with possible future PTSD issues. Bhargav asked Jessi for her definitions

of 'coping'. For that, she said, we need to define wellness. 'For me it's feeling whole in every department – physical, mental and spiritual – in such a way that nothing interferes with my day-to-day activities. When one is affected I'm no longer well, and coping is a way to either internally or externally get well again.'

'Some people practise mindfulness techniques but for others (like me) they don't work.' Many coping mechanisms rely on human interaction like going for dinner and seeing a friend, but now we've having to adopt solo coping strategies. There are many low-cost, simple ways, said Jessi, in which a company can help employees, like offering a company cost reduction on apps like Headspace. Sometimes they could simply curate a list of things for people to do, or open up conversation.

Bhargav invited discussion on what companies can do if someone needs help. Think about the relationship with a person, Jessi said, and what the power differential is, then normalise the experience. Ask questions without making assumptions.



An example is to say: 'This pandemic has been hard for me and I haven't slept, what's it been like for you?' rather than 'you look depressed, what's up?' At work, she says, power matters. If you present as an empathetic manager who is also not sleeping or eating well, people are more likely to respond positively.

A double-edged sword

An external listener posed the idea that working from home is not stressful for everyone, and Jessi concurred that many patients felt good over the pandemic; one size certainly doesn't fit all. The next question was about how to divide care between ensuring lonely people get connected, and those who want less screen time get privacy. Studies show, Jessi said, how many more hours people are working while at home. We don't have to answer emails at 10pm; we can put a space in our house and call it an office. If there is no space we can set up a temporary area. We can draw mental boundaries: avoid late emails, say no, think

about unfair requests. Bhargav mentioned the idea of having a work commute, taking a walk around the block at the start and end of the day.

In closing, Bhargav asked how recent events had affected women. There is a general understanding, Jessi replied, that women do more caregiving even in a balanced relationship. In science women have been publishing less, maybe because they need to find more time for childcare? More women seem to be dropping out of the workplace.

'As employers,' Jessi said, 'we must look at how policies – such as childcare, family leave and sick leave – can affect mental health, and be aware of what help exists. Then we will be able to curate that information and present it to employees, to show we care and that we've thought about it.' ■

We don't have to answer emails at 10pm; we can put a space in our house and call it an office

KEY TAKEAWAYS

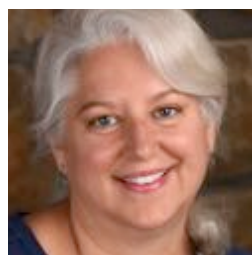
1 The brain is so connected to the body that when anxiety manifests as physical symptoms our heart rates go up, our stomachs hurt and we find it hard to sleep. It is crucial, to address mental health issues alongside physical ones.

2 We must all recognise that recognise mental health issues exist, and attempt to create a safe space to talk about them at work. For most patients, the baseline is to assume that it's not going to be okay to discuss any issues at work. This can change.

3 Open discussion sensitively so people don't feel defensive about talking. We must be empathetic and aware how important it is to not sound like we're simply brushing people off. Start the discussion in an open way with plenty of leading questions.

Caught in the Middle: The Pressures of the Growing Sandwich Generation

Almost half of those in the sandwich generation have less than four hours a week to themselves. We look at the pressures facing this growing demographic



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We Are Sharing The Sun

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Medical Devices)

MADELINE STARR, MBE
Director of Business
Development and
Innovation
Carers UK

A point raised by Madeline Starr from Carers UK neatly summed up this panel discussion: it is vitally important to recognise the struggles that sandwich generation employees now face. Citing a membership group, Employers for Carers, she said: 'Our job is to help people understand the challenges that carers face and develop practices to support them. We do that through digital resources and face-to-face opportunities for diagnostics, like lunch and learn sessions and networking events.' What can other companies do to help carers?

Sarabeth opened the panel by inviting them to describe in one word what it means to be a member of the sandwich generation.

Kristine Biagiotti-Bridges chose the word 'Overwhelmed – trying to cope with two generations top and bottom, dealing with paediatrics and geriatrics while holding down a full-time job.'

For Nisha Johnson the word was 'Expectation – from a career perspective, and also alongside all my other jobs as a mum, wife, daughter, sister, daughter-in-law, sister-in-law.'

Madeline's word was – 'Relentless: there is no let-up and no opportunity for a break.'

She cited a recent report in Carers UK which mentioned that sandwich generation carers often have no more than half-an-hour a day to themselves. 'What would I do with that half-hour?' she asked. 'Watch half the news, or sit in a chair aghast that after half-an-hour it starts all over again?'

Sarabeth chose the phrase 'pissed off – going from place to place, head down getting it done.' She recounted alarming figures about sandwich generation carers struggling with anxiety and depression,

Our job is to help
people understand
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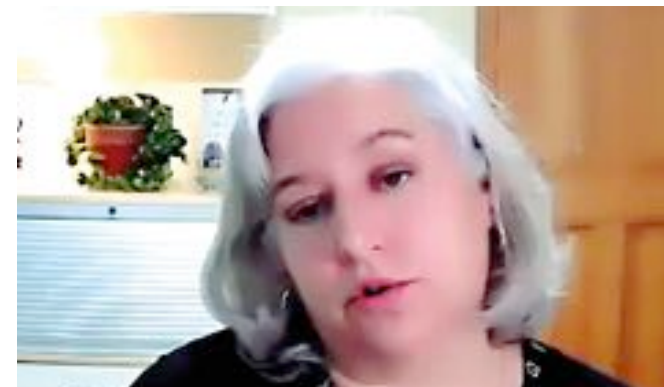
and her final stat was Covid-based: there has been an increase of 4.5 million new carers during the UK lockdown, 2.8 million of whom are working. With that, she invited Kristine to share more about her journey.

Kristine said that having children with special needs comes with one set of challenges, while caring for a father and grandparent brings another. 'I struggled to bounce between the two,' she said, 'and now we have Covid issues. My daughter can't attend her adult day programme because she can't wear a mask. We're all at home together, but who can watch her while I work? My stepson attends a school for children with autism that was closed for three months.'

Someone who understands

'During my first interview at Dell I explained my situation: I got the job and they have been wonderful. They offer resource groups as an option for people to find other employees in similar situations. Being able to connect has been that piece I needed.'

Kristine is involved with leadership in Dell's Diversity & Inclusion programmes. Through Covid, she said, they had taken the opportunity to promote resources



supporting employees, including three weeks of paid leave for any issue related to the pandemic.

Sarabeth now turned to Nisha, asking about support at work. Nisha cited an open environment at J&J for staff to talk about health in general. With two small children at home, extended family to worry about and two jobs, life had been challenging.

'My boss said "having you at 60 or 70% is fine",' said Nisha, 'and that made me realise that you can have all kinds of policies in place, but it comes down to the human connection'.

With a team of 200 on calls all day, she said, balancing demands is tricky.

Employees were soon told they needn't attend every meeting. The company moved fast to get people turning cameras off, then cancelled meetings on Wednesday and Friday afternoons and introduced a protected lunch hour: no activity between 12 and 1pm.

Madeline cited two recent reports looking at the pressures on carers during Covid: 55% were simply overwhelmed. Happily, a recent Employers for Carers survey showed that 74% of respondents have offered additional support during the pandemic. Top of the list was health and wellbeing. ■

(Clockwise) Sarabeth, Kristine, Madeline and Nisha shared stories of juggling responsibilities

My boss said
'having you at 60
or 70% is fine.' It
comes down to the
human connection

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Look after yourself. Kristine says: 'I have learned that I won't be good to anyone else if I don't take care of myself first.'

2 Have open conversations with your manager, about expectations in the workplace. J&J, Nisha said, has done a phenomenal job in making those conversations okay to have. 'We also need to make sure managers are able to support with practical guidance where needed.'

3 A number of new initiatives have been set up to help carers in the workplace: 'We have seen a promising and encouraging response from employers, the important thing now is don't lose this going forward, says Madeline. 'Care services need to be a condition for employment.'

Do you manage with Mental Wealth in mind?

As a leader or manager, ensuring the wellbeing of your team alongside delivering business performance in an increasingly uncertain economic climate is tough. Add in a spoonful of remote working and a dash of Zoom fatigue and you may well feel like it is the proverbial straw that will break your already overburdened back.

Join CHAMPS to gain some simple tips that will help you:

- create a team environment that promotes positive Mental Wealth rather than waiting for mental health issues to emerge
- put some new rules in place that support your team to thrive not just survive
- lead by example and live up to the strategic agenda through your actions as well as your words.

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DAY 1 - 23.11.20

Addressing the Stigma of Mental Health and Addiction in the Workplace

EY in the US has brought this subject to the fore and engrained it into its culture. How does the company gauge the effectiveness of its campaign?

Mike Weiner joined EY about six years ago as a mental health clinician. Part of his role is to lead the employ assistance programme (EAP) in the US, branded as EY Assist. It's a hybrid programme with a small internal team of clinicians and a number of vendors that support the programme.

Having been in the EAP field for over 25 years, he thinks an EAP programme is at its best as a preventative resource to help with emotional health issues and life events – catching issues when they are still relatively small.

Zoe mentioned how Mike had focused on the stigma of mental health and addiction.

'EY has one of the longest-running EAPs in the US, over four decades old. When I joined EY I was surprised by the culture of caring,' said Mike. 'I had a family member with serious medical issues and needed flexibility as soon as I started; EY already had this as part of their culture. But as we looked at our employ assist data we realised that people weren't using the programme, so we needed to do more.'

'Our first step was to get approval from our leadership to develop something new; to talk about mental health in a different way

We realised people weren't using the employ assist programme, so we needed to do more



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ZOE SINCLAIR,
Co-Founder,
This Can Happen

PANEL

MIKE WEINER
Director
EY Assist

than we had been before. We decided to launch an initiative where people shared their stories to destigmatise mental health issues. We got approval.'

The campaign launched in 2016 and soon included the taboo topic of addiction.

'Even after a year of talking about the stigma of mental health, our team continued to see individuals approaching us for health and support with addiction, but who were not comfortable with taking time off work. We updated the campaign to focus on addiction stories from some brave individuals.

'We reached out to HR teams asking if →



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DAY 1 - 23.11.20

they knew of people who had experienced an issue and would be willing to talk. We also collaborated with addiction treatment programmes in the community to talk about treatment and try to normalise it.'

Encouraging trends

How does Mike gauge the effectiveness of the campaigns?

'When we launched in 2016 we began to see an increase in our EAP utilisation and it's been going up consistently – we're doing better than the stock market!

'We've had a few learning issues, for example being able to change behaviour related to making someone comfortable. We soon realised we needed to weave a question into our events: what would make you uncomfortable in terms of reaching out to ask if someone is okay? That led to some very fruitful information.'

Then an external question: how can EAPs be promoted to make them more trustworthy?

'We use digital tools to promote emotional health. A few years ago we recognised that sleep was a serious issue for some. We connected with a digital tool and got some great data about the extra sleep people had experienced when using it. We mention the tools in our storytelling sessions.'

So how can companies balance work with emotional needs? 'Putting in longer hours doesn't mean you're getting more work done. We need to be responsive to our clients, yet encourage staff to take the breaks they need. We've launched a campaign to not send emails after 7pm.'

Mike also answered a concern about those



reluctant to come forward with mental health issues. He drew a parallel with the situation two decades ago and how women's concerns around taking time off to have children have been addressed. 'We need to do the same for mental health leave,' he argued.

So how can smaller companies make a start? 'Begin with benchmarking the available services in your region. Plenty of EAPs work with smaller organisations, some of whom provide content to help develop campaigns. Build a community with other organisations to talk through what's been helpful – collaborate.' ■

Mike Weiner says EY has had to learn how to make people feel comfortable about using its EAP

We use digital tools to promote emotional health. We mention the tools in our storytelling sessions

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Many companies under-utilise their EAP programme, so one strong recommendation is to develop a collaborative relationship with the programme, asking what you can do to help promote it.

2 When working with someone who has had a mental health or addiction issue, it's imperative to give permission and flexibility to get people whatever care they need. Having continued touch-points after treatment is a great way to reduce the potential for re-occurrence.

3 Communications need to reinforce the confidentiality of the EAP programme. The stigma around mental health issues is a barrier for people. The most effective way to reduce concerns about confidentiality is to hear people stating they've used the EAP and found it helpful.

THIS CAN HAPPEN 2020

Business in the Age of Covid-19: Supporting Employee Mental Health and Changing Society

How the pandemic has impacted employee mental health, impelling companies to navigate a more purposeful path to help their employees and wider society



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PANEL

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Diversity and Inclusion
Unilever

MARK McLANE
Head of Diversity,
Inclusion and
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M&G

**DR CANDICE
SCHAEFER**
Global Head of
Employee Wellness
Twitter

Looking at the first steps in becoming a purposeful business involved leaders looking under the hoods of their organisations, Debra Sobel began, as well as assessing how well they care for employees. In light of the ongoing pandemic, a number of other issues had come into play. The panel discussed how their industries had pivoted to deal with the threat from Covid-19 to mental health in the workplace.

Dr Candice Schaefer opened with a summation: 'We have had to come up with ways to make everybody feel connected.' The first step, she said, had been to build a mental health peer support programme.

Mark McLane's company had moved fast to pivot, taking existing wellbeing resources and moving them online.

Candice talked about workers' needs during lockdown. 'We didn't know how long Covid was going to last. We had to work out how people could stay connected and educated to take care of themselves.'

At Unilever, said Esther Marshall, company policies already in place for flexible working converted to full-week policies. 'Our CEO did an unprecedented call to all employees to say "your family comes first and work will have to manage"'. It was about taking our existing policies further.'

Esther leads on gender diversity. 'We looked at stats for domestic violence, did the maths and realised it had to be going on internally.' The company quickly rolled out modules on signs of domestic abuse for line managers and employees.

So what silver linings have there been to the pandemic? Well, said Mark, family interruptions on Zoom calls have become

**Suddenly everyone
is on a level
playing field –
everyone is at
home doing the
same thing**

part of our daily working lives, and that's not a bad thing because we're more flexible in addressing how we show up. It's part of the conversation. He recommended honouring commute times, time-stamping emails and allowing teams to consider what works for them.

Candice agreed that a move towards remote work was in Twitter's plans before the pandemic but then accelerated. 'We've had a really good response in terms of empathy between employees; we are more conscious of including everybody.'

The human face of remote work
Debra raised another external question: are managers engaging in these initiatives? Esther agreed with Candice about remote work humanising everybody: 'Suddenly everyone is on a level playing field, whether you're a manager or a CEO – everyone is at home doing the same thing.'

Mark said the pandemic had given permission for everyone to be involved. From a wellbeing standpoint he sees managers being more proactive, and communication is now part of managers' own personal messaging. 'We're pushing to make sure everyone's okay,' he said.



Debra raised the topic of employee burnout, and Candice agreed: 'How do we keep people feeling connected as if there is an office?' She talked about the importance of building online communities that aren't necessarily to do with work.

Mark discussed a challenge, Govember, where teams walked 30 million steps for mental health charities. He talked about helping people set better wellbeing practice for themselves: 'We've walked around the world twice and we're still going.'

Thinking of how people can work anywhere, Esther remarked: 'The world has become an office.' But balancing that with business need is crucial, said Debra. 'People took time off before and

we addressed business needs,' said Mark, 'but the criticality of encouraging people to take time off now is about wellbeing and mental health, and walking away from the computer.'

Dr Candice mentioned a grass-roots approach to communication, such as peer-support programmes, and Esther flagged up a new weekly CEO town hall to every employee that builds in a question platform the previous day, so in a sense employees are the ones running the agenda. 'People love it and have asked if we can keep it going.' ■

(Clockwise) Debra, Esther, Candice and Mark agreed there were silver linings to the pandemic

**Encouraging
people to take time
off now is about
wellbeing and
walking away from
the computer**

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Avoiding burnout needs to be a high priority. As workers build home offices, they must remember to take time out. Knowing when to hit the off-switch has been a key consideration in 2020.

2 When it comes to furthering systems already put in place, the future needs to be based around addressing company eco-systems: what is the manager willing to commit to as well as employees? It's a dual-sided conversation.

3 As we go back to offices we're likely to have a higher proportion of individuals working remotely. Mark says: 'Asking how people are doing, taking a pause and getting people to speak up, these are the new business habits that we must hold each other accountable for.'



Starting the Journey in the US – the Time is Now but How?

So many of us want to start taking action, but how to begin that conversation? Managers from three organisations discuss their methods of moving forward



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Content Marketing
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Stigma is still a major barrier in the workplace, and suffering from ADHD or depression can have a direct impact on our career trajectory, but with open conversation, empathy and sympathy from leaders, this need not be the case. Gloria's panel talked frankly about their own experiences and their views on the topic.

Gloria opened with the story of her cousin who sustained an injury. 'The family mantra was: this is how we're interacting with this cousin now.' As she grew up she realised disability was a huge issue for some people, but for her 'it's just another day'.

As a person living with depression and an eating disorder, GERALYN GIORGIO was diagnosed late due to stigma holding her back from seeking treatment earlier. 'I kept it to myself and was very isolated as a result,' she said. Reaching out to an EAP got her the help she needed, after which she started an employee resource group at Johnson & Johnson.

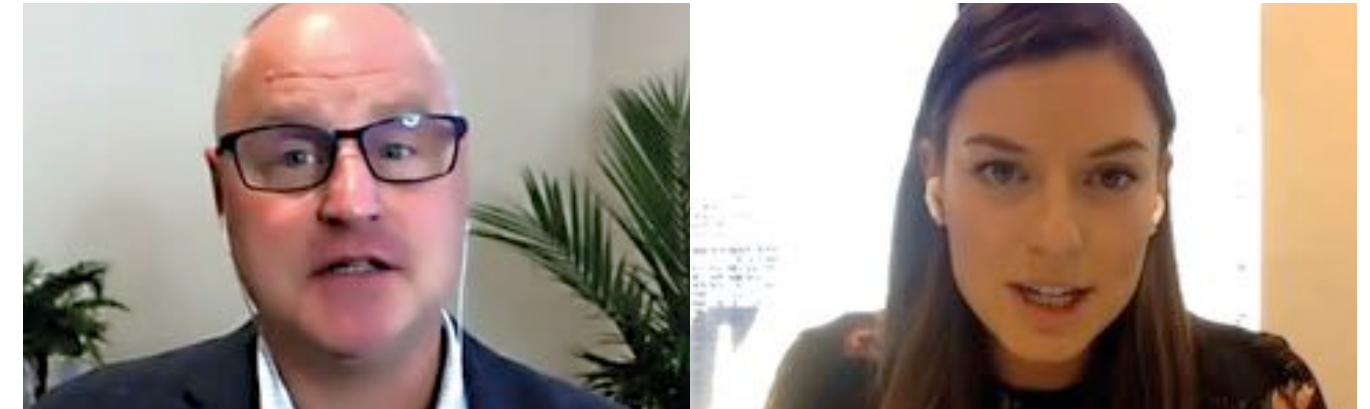
Hale Pulsifer spoke about his major depressive disorder and ADHD. As his career advanced and the stakes got higher, self-care wasn't enough, so he talked to his manager and got help. 'My experience was softened because people had come out of the mental health closet before

People had come out of the mental health closet before me – that weakens the stigma

me – that weakens the stigma and creates opportunities for others to get well again.'

When Suzie Smith moved into a people management role she built training programmes for high-performing teams. Mental health was touched upon but she wondered: are we talking about it enough? 'One of the first steps in setting up my programme was to look for internal resources,' she said, which began with talking to people who might be advocates for the network. A core group then drew up priorities and mission values before approaching executive sponsors.

GERALYN described her own employee resource group, which began with a group



of people who wanted to make a difference, and had the courage to share their stories.

Hale talked about how we already have a growing and slowly improving blueprint for groups who are under-represented due to race, gender, sexual orientation and disability, and asked why mental health should be any different?

Starting from scratch

What if you are in organisation where there is no history, Gloria asked. The first thing to do, said Hale, is to approach your company with a list of all the organisations who are taking this seriously. Collect best practice examples and find ideas that fit in with your firm, then ask them the question: how did you start and what worked?

Gloria also asked Hale about tackling stigma in the workplace. Both employer and employee are involved, he replied. For the former it's about cultivating psychological safety for everyone. At employee level 'all I can say is dare to be brave, and think about what might get better if you take that risk.' Manager training was key for psychological safety, added GERALYN, and educating managers is the responsibility of the company. Her

mental health ambassador gave a TED talk about mental health, his story resonated with her, so she approached him.

Hale then talked about how the spotlight on mental health is now magnified. 'It's one thing to know that life is a lot harder this year, but another to quantify how much harder.' He also noted how much pressure women put on themselves and how much more likely they are to express that they feel like they're failing.

GERALYN touched again on working with executive sponsors: 'Many will share their own stories about mental health, and as a result of those conversations they get engaged in the work you are doing, and ask what they can do to help. Tell them your story, don't just present a bunch of slides. Why is it important to the company?'

Suzie adds that clear expectations on roles is crucial, from duties to time commitments. Transparency will help people understand what's needed from the outset. ■

(Left to right) Gloria, GERALYN, Hale and Suzie discussed different strategies for getting an initiative off the ground

All I can say is dare to be brave, and think about what might get better if you take that risk

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Share your experiences of mental health. Hale says: 'I can't say no because I know it'll help make disclosure safer for the next person, just like it was for me. If we aren't honest about what we need then we are denying people the opportunity to help us.'

2 Executive sponsorship is crucial. GERALYN says: 'Our leaders are key, because they have to be able to talk about it, and if they're not talking about it from the top, then it's very hard to get the message out there across the entire organisation.'

3 Delegate activities to different people in the group so things don't rest on one person, like having different roles for each person with work shared across a team.

Growing Momentum and Delivering True Impact

Business leaders discuss how to sustain efforts on mental health. How can we deliver tangible impacts to employees with an effective strategy?



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Senior Director,
Mental Health
Aduro

PANEL

JANE AUSTIN
HR Director
Wave

LAURA DECOOK
Mental Health
Expedia Group

NICK TZITZON
Chief Strategy Officer
ServiceNow

A panel of three senior leaders talked openly about their own attitudes to and experiences of wellbeing issues in the workplace. Trickle-down from the top and a willingness for open conversation were just some of the tactics leading the way for a better attitude.

Carolyn Thayer-Azoff invited the panel to share stories of their own company's attitudes and programmes, and Jane Austin took the opening.

She said the UK appears ahead, but companies don't always tackle culture. Breaking down the stigma has to be meaningful. If you don't see your managers living and breathing the company ethos then everything put in place falls away.

Carolyn asked Nick Tzitzon how mental health conversations had opened up in the workplace. He said that belonging had been made a cornerstone of the culture, along with diversity and inclusion, and that has made people feel comfortable and safe. People talk about moments that matter, he said, but ServiceNow focuses on feelings that matter. Building that into business is paramount.

Laura DeCook talked about her own willingness to talk about her mental health journey. Her programme started with a connection to someone in leadership who became a mentor, and taught her everything about the company. One day in a big meeting Laura asked what Expedia was doing to support employees in their mental health journey, and no-one could answer. She was invited to HQ to speak with a senior team and share her experience of anxiety and depression. The inclusion and diversity team then expressed an interest and sponsored a number of programmes, including a mental health first aid pilot programme. People asked to get involved.

Managers need to be responsible for knowing how their teams are doing. Check for signs

Jane told the story of a commercial director who had panic attacks for his entire career. Addressing the issue was a turning point for him and his work, Jane said. He now ran sessions at Wave, with team members on hand at every session due to the high emotions the talks brought up. After the talks the kitchen was full of people sharing experiences.

A safe space to share

Sharing is not always positive, said Laura, giving a personal example of sharing that had backfired. Psychological safety was a key factor for her when joining Expedia.

Carolyn introduced an audience question about making sure staff get the support they need. 'We are doing a lot of manager training,' said Laura, 'because managers need to be responsible for knowing how their teams are doing.'

Check for signs, look for sudden silence in an employee, or absenteeism. Be open and ask how they're doing.'

Tim addressed burnout, asking: 'How do we go with that as a topic and create environments where people can openly talk about it? The more we target individuals, the easier it becomes to get them help.'



Another audience question raised the topic of leader accountability. Tim talked about evaluating manager performance with trust. 'These indications,' he said, 'aren't all things to all people but they help to create some sort of a lens to look through. We offer paid time off, for example, and have a very high employee retention. There's no way of measuring that, apart from a feeling that the two are connected.'

'It's hard to measure the impact of a mental health programme,' agreed Laura. These days responses to how people are feeling will likely be negative, given the current climate. The best way to measure is to get people on board and then get feedback and write it all down.'

Global strategy was the last point raised, something that's not a one-size-fits-all strategy, said Laura. Cultural nuances must be taken into account, she said, and 'we have to realise that programmes must be tailored to meet the needs of the regions and cultures you are working with'.

'We encourage checking in,' said Jane, 'and I'm always horrified when I find a people manager that doesn't know the name of one of their employee's partners. If you don't know people then you don't know when they're not okay.' ■

(Clockwise) Carolyn, Jane, Nick and Laura looked at various tactics for supporting staff

We offer paid time off and have a very high employee retention. There's no way of measuring that

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 First ask how people are doing, not what they're doing. Laura says: 'We're all going through this global pandemic together, we're all dealing with something right now. Spend the first five minutes of a half-hour check-in asking how your employee is.'

2 You don't need big money, you need passion. There are ways to work with a small budget, you just have to be creative. Assume you've got no money and see what you can get. 'I began with a £1,000 budget,' says Jane, 'and we still achieved national awards.'

3 Recognise that different people doing different kinds of jobs look at being able to participate differently. Bringing a gateway idea to several people, therefore, will involve different approaches.

Levi Strauss's Approach to Mental Health – A Deeper Case Study

Kathy Farmer and Ben Miller dive deep into Levi Strauss's mental health strategy, and the wider journey – with key learnings for businesses of all shapes and sizes



PANEL

BENJAMIN F MILLER
Chief Strategy Officer
Well Being Trust

KATHY FARMER
Vice-President,
Global Benefits
Levi Strauss & Co

Steeped in a positive history of mental health attitudes in the workplace, Levi Strauss is often held up as a shining example of how to do it right. It's all about championship, said Vice-President Kathy Farmer, as well as understanding that one culture will be different to another.

Benjamin Miller opened by talking about the current climate of mental health at home and work. Kathy cited two trains of thought, the first of which was historical:

Levi's has a long culture of wellbeing for employees, and from the outset it adopted the principle that what's good for business is good for the employee. That's now been adapted into one of the core values as 'profits for principles'.

Kathy described how she met with the CEO not long after joining the company. Levi's was a great brand with global recognition but it had fallen into slumber, and resilience and endurance were the two key factors needed to turn things around. Kathy was invited to take part in setting up a new programme addressing the issues.

'The CEO never asked me for data,' she said. 'He intrinsically knew that a workforce investment was imperative, so it was my job to go out and get the data to keep up with him. It didn't take a lot of money, just support and championship.'

'We set out on a traditional pathway, analysing data and looking at different healthcare delivery systems. We tried to do a gap analysis, shaping the research for the culture of each country.'

'But programmes require refreshing and communications, reminders and reinforcements as well as champions and modelling. What we found was that it became no longer a programme but a culture. Our programme became mission-critical.'

That journey, she said, after years of programme-shaping and the coincidence of world events, is now infused into the culture. 'Sometimes we deal with stigma. Sometimes there are resource limitations or access issues.' Stigma can be social and structural, said Ben. What barriers had Kathy come across? Barriers vary by country and culture, she said, and told the story of the launch of a global Levi's employ assist programme (EAP).

It became no longer a programme but a culture. Our programme became mission-critical



Ben Miller and Kathy Farmer discussed how Levi's mental health strategy was rolled out to meet the needs of employees in different markets around the world

'We knew in some countries our programme would be supplemental, and also the only one people had, so it was an uneven playing field. Sometimes a willingness to use a service is constrained. We did a lot of storytelling to help normalise things and we persisted.'

Different strokes

Ben asked about extovation – removing innovations to allow projects to thrive.

'Corporate leadership needs to get out of the way,' agreed Kathy. 'Once we laid out the strategy and structure we realised we weren't smart enough to know what was going to work in every culture. So we embraced a grass-roots approach and gave the opportunity for this to be designed in a million different ways. And it was.'

'In Russia the programme looked different to Singapore. Mexico did an incredible job! The UK had a different attitude again, and in Poland we had champions who spread the word.'

And Kathy's core values? Respect, empathy and integrity come to mind. Covid was interesting: instead of it being a push, it was a pull. Almost overnight the demand was for mental health tools and management support.

'Flexibility became another value. We added an extra paid day off once a month, stopped meetings on Fridays, and introduced flexible managing, launching a global manager reset training to help support leaders.'

For those just starting out, Kathy advises a gap analysis to help prioritise what the focus should be. 'There are plenty of NGOs and non-profits and intervention-based resources to look at and all these things are very low-barrier to begin with.'

Sometimes a willingness to use a service is constrained. We did a lot of storytelling to normalise it

We didn't know what was going to work in every culture. So we embraced a grass-roots approach

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Once you have your structure ready, you need to let go and trust people in their local cultures about what's appropriate. Japan is a very different place to San Francisco.

2 There are different types of tools, techniques, policies and ways of working that support mental health and they are broad, and have to be infused across the entire business. Don't pass up input from people who are passionate and want to volunteer and share ideas.

3 Authenticity really permeates trust – people might then engage in services without fear of reprisal. Kathy says: 'Admitting to my own teams how I'm trying to manage my stress goes a long way. I encourage others to take the time they need and I admit to my team when I haven't done this.'

9 out of 10 adults have been touched by a mental health issue in the last year

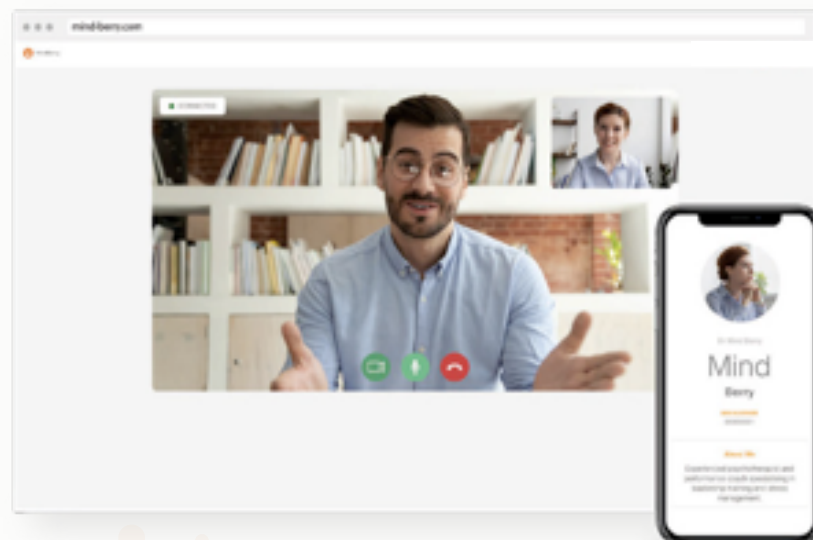
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DAY 1 - 23.11.20

Recognising Trauma in the Workplace

Defined as 'a deeply distressing or disturbing experience', trauma can have a devastating impact on mental health. How can workplaces respond?



Jon and Tammy shared their stories of dealing with suicide awareness and PTSD



FACILITATOR:
HANNAH STORM
CEO and Media
Consultant
EJM

PANEL

DR KEVIN JABLONSKI
Retired Chief Police
Psychologist
LAPD

JON KINNING
COO, Executive Vice
President
RK Mechanical

TAMMY SANDERS
Professional
Development Coach

DR SALLY SPENCER-THOMAS
Clinic Psychologist
United Suicide
Survivors

A facilitator with a background in media, and four strong speakers with trauma in their careers and personal histories: rich discussion would always come from such a strong panel around this contentious topic. Chief of all takeaways was that trauma isn't necessarily physical. It's emotional, it's all around us, and it needs addressing.

Hannah Storm opened by sharing her own story. Recently diagnosed with PTSD stemming from trauma in her professional and personal life, she helps media companies encourage employees to share their own experiences.

Jon Kinning responded with his own story. 'I met Sally back in 2014 and learned about suicide awareness,' he said. He took the values into his organisation and began speaking to employers at gatherings, which opened the door for discussion. He says many veterans work in construction, some of whom now thank him for making conversation possible; stigma is gradually being reduced.

Tammy Sanders' own PTSD diagnosis is around authority and incompetence: when people don't wield power with care and compassion, she struggles. Tammy focuses her work on managers and leaders. 'A key

message is to own the amount of power you have to affect the lives of others.'

Dr Sally Spencer-Thomas discussed the need for storytelling around trauma. 'We are all hardwired to be storytellers or listeners. We'll make stories up because we have such a strong need, so our brains seek narratives. It heals the storyteller, helping bring organisation into chaos. And when we share, we build community and are no longer alone.'

Dr Kevin Jablonski talked about his own experience. 'Law enforcement officials and medical personnel face a great deal of potentially traumatic incidents,' he said, →

We are all
hardwired to be
storytellers or
listeners. We'll
make stories up
because we have
such a strong
need

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DAY 1 - 23.11.20

Sally stressed the importance of narratives while Kevin talked of the difficulty of reducing stigma in law enforcement agencies

and outlined the importance of ensuring employees know what trauma is.

'When you're exposed to violence and suffering you can get a bit callous; it's a self-serving reaction.' Educating people to recognise when trauma is having an impact is crucial.

Translating words into action

What hasn't worked, Hannah asked Kevin. 'It's been difficult to reduce stigma in law enforcement agencies,' he said. Embedding psychologists within the work group worked well, mandating attendance at mental health classes less so. Brief online sessions work best, he said.

'We've also not done the best job of putting action to words,' he said. 'The culture has been to articulate how important mental health is and I think everyone believes that, but we haven't done the best job of demonstrating that behaviourally.'

What is needed for attitudinal change at management level, Hannah asked Sally, who advised being deeply knowledgeable about your own emotional intelligence, and also about resources. 'I know what it's like to go to our employ assist programme

(EAP) because I've done it, and that's powerful modelling.'

Hannah asked Tammy for a message to employers looking to hire marginalised people. 'Anticipate that as a reality,' said Tammy. 'My relatives grew up in segregated times, my great-grandparents were former slaves. These examples of trauma are very close, and it's not just people in minority positions. My wife is white and her family has had its own share of challenges. All of us might have some sort of mental health challenge.'

Tammy started restorative work in her twenties but only came to understand her PTSD having seen the film *Leave No Trace*. 'The movie didn't focus on how the main character got PTSD,' she said, 'but on how he wanted to live as a result of it. I saw myself in the story.'

Referring to minority issues in the workplace, Tammy said: 'Awareness is important, so make space for that. And approach it from a place of healing and togetherness.'

My great-grandparents were former slaves. These examples of trauma are very close

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 A key reason people leave their jobs, says Tammy, is to do with their managers. 'Getting leaders to own responsibility for the power that they have over other people is a very important first step.'

2 Stories must come from the heart, says Kevin. 'We've come a long way but we have to take executives and senior people who have worked their way up and find a way that they feel comfortable telling their story about a mental health challenge.

3 'People often presume that the only thing that's traumatic is war,' said Kevin, 'and it isn't. Vicarious trauma is very common in many types of industry: even sitting behind a desk you're still subject to society's ills.'

THIS CAN HAPPEN 2020

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Industry Spotlight: Law

Legal professionals look at the sector in the US, the challenges employees face, and best practice techniques from employers helping to tackle mental health



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PATRICK KRILL
Principal & Founder
Krill Strategies

The legal professional has been in the spotlight for mental health improvement as it has faced so many challenges. Vice-President Julia Clayton perfectly summed up the need for discussion: "The law is a difficult profession. It emphasises adversarial conduct, pointing out the other side's weaknesses and exploiting them, and that lends a constant environment to people that really contributes to difficulties." Add Covid uncertainty to the mix and issues are compacted but there is much we can do, and that already has been done, to make a change.

Patrick Krill opened by talking about his 2016 study, a research collaboration between the American Bar Association and the Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation. 'The survey shed light on mental health challenges in the legal profession. Taskforces were formed and we found ourselves with a robust lawyer mental health and wellbeing movement. Now we're looking at why lawyers are predisposed to higher levels of mental health distress and addiction than the general population.'

LeeAnn Black talked about Latham's progress in supporting mental health and wellness. When Patrick's ABA Pledge came out, she said, they compared it to the programme they had in place: were they doing enough?

They hired internal resources and engaged with external groups (including Patrick). They worked with individuals in the firm who had requirements, and also partnered with organisations for various aspects of mental health programmes. 'Now we're putting an on-site clinic in our New York office,' said LeeAnn. 'Many new young associates are comfortable talking about this subject; they want to know what the firm is doing to help. We've also partnered with many law schools; there's much to be done there.'

Mark Goldstein said: 'We need regular initiatives related to mental health and wellness, and initiatives such as ramp-up and ramp-down policies, where if you come back from a leave of absence you're not thrown right back into things.'

Many young associates are comfortable talking about this subject; they want to know what the firm is doing



'Making sure leadership is part of these initiatives is important so you know there's buy-in from the top down. The environment should be one where people feel comfortable coming forward.'

Mark said his own experience involved talking closely with a colleague about whether to take a leave of absence; he felt supported as she checked in repeatedly. On coming back to work he involved the practice group leader for his employment group and was in constant communication with her. 'There was a lot of "whatever you need, we're here to support you". If you walk the walk, people then start talking about it.'

Julia Clayton said: 'We've continued to grow since we got our support groups under way. They've always been online but the number of people who join each month has increased since the beginning of the pandemic.'

Changing the culture

How can smaller organisations tackle issues, Gina asked Patrick. Walking the walk, said Patrick, 'is important in a firm of any size because you're dealing with a fair amount of scepticism. There has to be

a relentless focus, because we're talking about changing the culture of the legal profession.'

So who does one turn to in a law firm? 'HR individuals are the most trained and can be responsive in an empathetic way,' said LeeAnn. Trained staff should know how to get people the right resources and sharing stories is also vital, because when somebody has the courage to share it helps other courage to come forward.

'I felt most comfortable going to a few people,' said Mark. 'The head of HR, partly because I'm an employment lawyer and by nature I trust HR. Also the head of my practice group, and mentors in the New York office. Outside of the firm, my wife and a few select folks.'

Do we have to be at the top of our career in order to be forthcoming about challenges? 'There was probably a time when it was more likely that someone with more seniority would feel comfortable sharing struggles,' said Patrick. 'But we've seen an attitudinal shift.' ■

(Left to right) LeeAnn, Patrick, Julia and Mark talked of the difficulty of changing mindsets but agreed younger lawyers were more open to change

There has to be a relentless focus, because we're talking about changing the culture of the profession

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 The root of the problem varies on what specific context you're working in. Patrick says: 'The stigma continues and we still have a lot of work to do, but we are chipping away at it and making great progress.'

2 As we look ahead, younger people should feel more comfortable advocating for their own mental health and wellbeing and raising a hand when they are struggling. Patrick says: 'There is growing recognition that this is the beneficial thing to do for your career.'

3 'There are so many layers and we're just beginning,' LeeAnn says. 'We have to be relentless about it. There is no competition here, we would love to share anything we can that has worked for us with other organisations.'

The Power of Personal Storytelling

In the closing session of our first day, we look at the power of personal storytelling. What happens when we share stories of our mental health journeys?



FACILITATOR:
JAMES PRATT
Founder
Silent Superheroes

PANEL

MARIETTE CARDY-DAVIS
Owner and Managing
Attorney
ML Clardy Law

TODD ELLIS
Culture Engineer
Microsoft

ELIZABETH HORNER
Registered Nurse
and Mental Health
Advocate

Four delegates willing to share their own stories gave a powerful wrap-up to the first day of the conference. Only by coming forward, they said, can we start the conversation to make crucial changes. Choosing the right time and space to tell your story is all-important, as is getting access to help after you have shared.

James Pratt got straight into the subject of storytelling, and the role it plays in mental health in the workplace.

'Stories have a way of creating connections,' said Elizabeth Horner, 'they humanise and unite people. Through the power of a story, people from different backgrounds can feel something similar and that's how you shift mindset.'

Todd gave an example of a time when his own issues were getting in the way of his ability to work. 'I told my manager I couldn't work in that way, that it was too difficult for me to break down the tasks, and explained why.'

The stare that I got as I spoke was like a laser focused on my head – yet the way he responded was with such empathy. He's now an advocate for mental health in the workplace.'

'Any time you're coming from a place that is authentic,' said Elizabeth, 'it will be a good story and you'll get your point across in a way that is unfettered by scepticism or negative interpretation. We need to do that whatever way we're comfortable. For me it was writing.'

'I'm a speaker, a performer at heart,' said Mariette, 'so for me it had to be verbal.'

'With my ADHD,' explained Todd, 'I write a lot – I'll write an entire wall of text and people will get lost. So what's worked for

Even in nursing,
if you show signs
of not being able to
handle things, you
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the kerb

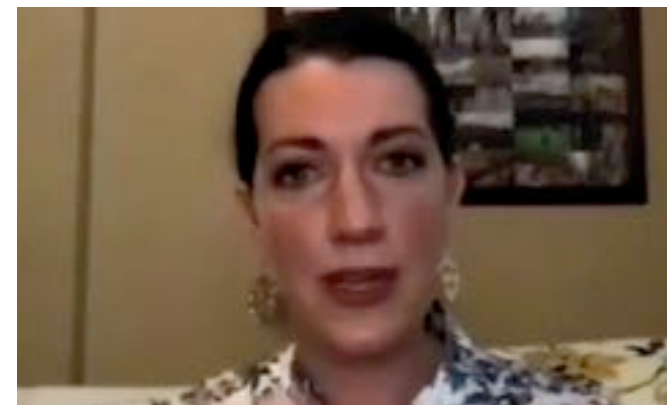
me is finding places that are uncomfortable and leaning in a bit at a time.

'Once I started a presentation by saying "water will probably leak from my face during this conversation" and that brought everybody to an equal level. I received overwhelming feedback.'

James was interviewing for a senior HR role when the CEO asked a question about sacrifice. 'Since I was about to launch my podcast I thought I may as well talk about it. I told my story and they offered me the job. I was, though, in a position of significant privilege being a white male going for a senior level role, so perhaps it was easier for me...'

Elizabeth spoke about her industry of mental health nursing: 'You'd think I could walk through the door and relay my struggle with bipolar disorder but even in my profession, if you show signs of not being able to handle things, you can get kicked to the kerb.'

An external question asked: does open communication benefit the individual more, or the company? 'When you have happier employees their productivity is going to increase,' said Elizabeth. 'You want to be



the place that doesn't stress people out, where they enjoy doing their job.'

The voice of youth

And are younger people more likely to tell stories? Todd works with a lot of people in their early career and noted that many had a take-it-or-leave-it approach to storytelling.

'They probably see those who've come before them,' agreed Mariette, 'and the results of what not telling your story does to an organisation and a person. They're a lot more upfront.'

It's not just about people but processes, said Todd, and Mariette agreed: 'We need

to provide tools, not just lip-service. Employees should know how to access help and understand what practical solutions a company can offer.'

'I told my story,' Mariette concluded, 'because as a black female attorney consultant in the US I didn't see anyone who connected with me, and who was a professional with bipolar disorder in the workplace; if I felt that way, so did others. It's important to know that your company is looking to connect with people and tools and having a safe space.' ■

James, Mariette, Todd and Elizabeth discussed when to share personal stories

Employees
should know how
to access help
and understand
what solutions a
company can
offer

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'Ideally anyone who needs to tell a mental health story should be able to,' says Elizabeth. 'I chose not to tell mine until I was proven at work and my proudest moment was when I decided to come forward. We need to pay attention to that moment we feel it's appropriate.'

2 Mariette says: 'Change comes from the top and it's important for an organisation to see that your story matters. I needed to share mine because I wanted to dispel some myths in the environments in which I was working, so other people could connect to those stories.'

3 'Awareness can be in allyship,' says Todd. 'Maybe a senior leader doesn't know how to share their story – but someone on a down-level can say "I have a story I'm willing to share, will you help me?". It's holding that space that's authentic.'



Exploring Resilience: Lessons Learnt from the Thai Cave Rescue

Experts who psychologically supported the 12 boys rescued from the Thai cave in 2018 discuss how lessons in resilience can be applied in the workplace



INTRODUCTION BY:
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Executive Director
Community Business

PANEL

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Psychiatrist
NHS, Royal Free
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DR TEE JAREONSETTASIN
Advisor
True Corporations

Mark started the session by showing video footage of the cave divers discovering that the boys and their coach were alive in the cave and drew attention to the boys' first words, which were 'thank you.' As his colleague Tee (then the Thai Minister of Education) pointed out, the boys and their coach had gone to the cave to practise their resilience.

During interviews following their dramatic rescue, when asked how they had supported each other, the boys replied that they had told each other: 'Never give up,' 'we must help each other,' 'we must be united', and that at no point did they think they would die.

As Tee pointed out: 'What was particularly surprising was that they were all in great shape both physically and mentally, and did not exhibit any signs of PTSD or any other mental health problems.' Another thing that struck him was that when it came to deciding the order in which the boys were to be taken out of the cave, they decided that the ones who lived furthest from the scene should go first, as it would take them the longest to be reunited

They were all in great shape both physically and mentally, and did not exhibit any signs of PTSD

with their parents. This led Tee to the conclusion that 'there is no such thing as individual resilience, but there is group resilience, and community resilience.' Tee emphasised that the boys were already a well-established (football) team, who respected their coach – and that you cannot build a team like this ad hoc.

Asked what underpins resilience, wherever we are, Mark defined the term as 'the ability to achieve full potential and development in the face of life's ordinary adversity' as well as in the face of 'unusual



(From far left): Kate, Mark and Tee discussed how the boys' team spirit saw them through their ordeal

or extreme adversity', and 'wellbeing and good general psychological health'. He then asked how we can practise resilience in the time of Covid: 'Can we do better than simply being in survival mode?'

He was struck by the fact that Western literature on psychiatry and psychology is all about the individual rather than the community in this respect. The Thai boys behaved differently from Western children during and after their rescue; most notably, they were calmer. 'There was a collective spirit.'

What can we learn?

This led to more questions: what is a healthy society? What is a healthy workplace? How do we best prepare for the need to cope with adversity, collectively? How might we, when faced with immediate adversity, actively go about collectively improving our wellbeing and our life chances? And does the story have moral and/or political implications?'

According to the American philosopher

Michael Sandel, if a just society requires a strong sense of community, it must find a way to cultivate in citizens a concern for the whole, a dedication to the common good. 'It must find a way to lean against purely privatised notions of the good life, and instead cultivate virtue.' As Mark pointed out, 'this chimes well with Thai culture'.

Mark has drawn on the writings of Sandel and his fellow philosopher John Rawls, who said 'the only social inequalities that are permitted in a truly just society are those that work to the benefit of the least advantaged members of society', as well as his experiences looking after the psychological wellbeing of the boys. He has concluded that a collective, shared experience is what society needs in order to come out of Covid more cohesive and more caring about each other. We cannot leave anyone by the wayside. ■

The boys were a well-established team, who respected their coach – you cannot build a team like this ad hoc

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 We need to think about what kind of company (and society) we want to have. What are our values? If we can persuade employees to sign up to a common set of objectives, we can build a team spirit that will help members through tough times.

2 We need to have a sense of proportion about traumatic or dramatic episodes. The boys understand they were lucky to survive, but they don't want their lives to be defined by what happened.

3 Focusing on the team rather than individuals can help build a group resilience that will support wellbeing for all members. The idea of emphasising the collective is found in Buddhist philosophy and Greek stoicism, and remains a source of strength in modern Asian societies.

Asia Leadership Panel: Why a Focus on Mental Health?

Senior business leaders in Asia discuss why mental health has become a priority for their organisations and how they ensure the wellbeing of their employees



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PETER SARGANT
CEO
Community Business

PANEL

PRAKASH MALLYA
Vice President and
Managing Director
Intel

JAN MEURER
President of Southeast
Asia
Johnson & Johnson

VIVIAN TSOI
Partner
White and Case

Peter Sargent kicked off the session by describing his organisation's involvement with This Can Happen: 'Community Business partnered with TCH by convening the Asian Content Curation Board, through which we organised a number of sessions as part of this conference to highlight mental health from an Asian perspective, to progress the dialogue around mental health in order to break down the stigma and address concerns surrounding an often taboo subject, especially in this part of the world.'

Asked to introduce herself, Vivian Tsoi explained that White & Case, where she is a partner, 'is a global law firm with offices in over 40 cities in 30+ countries.' Having grown up in the US, she moved to China in 2005 and has been working there as an M&A lawyer ever since while also educating partners on the wellbeing of their employees and the importance of mental health.

Jan Meurer, President of Southeast Asia at Johnson & Johnson, told us: 'I have worked in the US as well as Eastern and Western Europe, and now in Asia. I also work for the Alliance for Diverse Abilities within Johnson & Johnson.'

As a leader, I have made sure I call members of my team every day to ask, how are you doing? Can I be of any help?

Prakash Mallya introduced himself as Vice-President and Managing Director of Intel. Based in Bangalore, he grew up in Singapore.

Asked by Peter why mental health was important to the panelists, Vivian Tsoi explained she had been working with her own mental health issues such as depression for several years. She received therapy in California, but after moving to Beijing in 2005, she soon discovered that 'Asian societies have a slower time discussing issues relating to mental health, even within their own families.' She also feared that her employers would find out. And yet, '15 years later, China has changed and there are now a number of tools available online.'

Health is key to performance

Sharing his own personal story, Jan revealed that seven years ago he struggled with burnout. 'It showed me how important it is to have good mental health in order to be able to perform as a father and husband, but also at work. You need to create space for people to talk about their mental health. Having been in that situation, it has become obvious how debilitating it can be.'

Discussing the effects of Covid-19, Prakash Mallya stressed how hard the lockdown had been on people in India: 'The uncertainty of when this will end has put all of us under a lot of stress. That was my inspiration to read and understand more in order to make life better for my family as well as my team.'

Following on from this, Peter asked how the panelists were dealing with the effects of Covid within their organisations. Prakash outlined some of the practices that Intel has put in place to support its employees, such as access to confidential



assistance, hospitalisation insurance, the Headspace app (for mindfulness), workshops to raise awareness, employee ambassadors for peer-to-peer support etc. 'As a leader, I myself have made sure I call members of my team every day to ask, how are you doing? Can I be of any help?'

Jan explained that Johnson & Johnson is very engaged with governments and associations around the world to talk about the impact that Covid has had. 'Like Intel, we have put in place resources such as tele-health services for employees, on-demand virtual resources and the provision of leadership resources. Leaders need to learn how to deal with mental health issues.' Johnson & Johnson also supports the 'I'm Here' campaign, where

senior leaders talk openly about their own mental health issues to break the stigma.

Vivian felt that 'here in Shanghai, we are behind, and working through a mental health issue in a law firm is not easy by nature. Historically, the Chinese are traditional and conservative, but in the last two to three years there has been a big push to be more open.' She went on to explain that her firm now offers virtual seminars where people can talk about their mental health, and in particular encourage leaders to talk about their own issues, similar to Johnson & Johnson's campaign. ■

(Clockwise) Peter, Prakash, Jan and Vivian talked about how leaders could change the culture

Historically, the Chinese are traditional and conservative, but recently there has been a big push to be more open

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Asian societies tend to be very hierarchical, so the pressure to perform is very high. The lack of awareness of mental health makes it difficult for people to find coping mechanisms when that pressure gets too much.

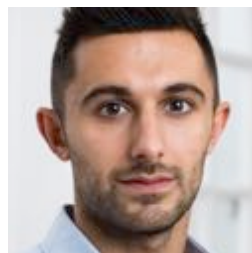
2 Mental health issues don't define how successful you are at work. It's how you deal with them that will determine how they impact upon your career.

3 Empathy and compassion will become more important in the future, as Asian companies modernise their cultures and become more open and transparent. The more we help each other, the more we can improve the situation for everybody.



Opening Up the Conversation about Mental Health in Asia: The Power of Storytelling

Recognising cultural taboos, experts and corporate representatives showcase how sharing personal stories can be a powerful way to open up conversation



FACILITATOR:
GIAN POWER
Founder & CEO
TLC Lions

PANEL

ALISHA FERNANDO
Head of Diversity & Inclusion, APAC
Bloomberg

ENOCH LI
Managing Director
Bearapy

Gian Power, founder of TLC Lions, opened the session by saying everyone has a story. Before asking the panel to share theirs, told us a little about himself, starting with his childhood growing up in a mixed culture, with an Indian dad and a white British mum. As an adult, 'on the surface, climbing the corporate ladder, everything seemed fine, but in 2015 things came to a head when my dad was declared missing after travelling to India for business and we discovered that he had been murdered in Punjab. This is when I realised that when I was able to share my story in the workplace it made a huge difference.'

Enoch Li, founder of Bearapy, a consulting and training company that promotes mentally healthy workplaces in China and across Asia-Pacific region, especially through creative means, took us back to a snowy winter's day in Beijing a few years ago, when she found herself sitting on her windowsill, deciding whether or not to jump. Thankfully her now-husband managed to bring her back inside, but she remembers 'feeling the desperation that life is meaningless, the hopelessness. I was then diagnosed with clinical

On the surface
everything seemed
fine, but in reality
I hadn't been
looking after my
body or my mind

depression, which caused me more agony and despair: What was wrong with me? I had a high-flying banking job, a good-looking husband, loving parents. On the surface everything seemed fine, but in reality I hadn't been looking after my body or my mind. This was a wake-up call to think about what is really important in my life.' Gian agreed different cultures have different expectations from a young age.

Alisha Fernando is committed to making a difference when it comes to mental health, both in the workplace and in the



(From far left: Gian, Enoch and Alisha have used their own remarkable stories as a jumping-off point

When I speak about
my experiences and
my condition I'm no
longer that silent
child

wider community, as Head of Inclusion & Diversity at Bloomberg. She told us her story, which centres on her being a silent two-year-old child refugee. As she and her parents fled Vietnam after the war, she was told to stay silent, as any sound would have given away their location to the authorities, with potentially fatal consequences. After they finally set sail on a fishing boat, it was boarded by pirates who stole the engine and all their food and water before setting them adrift.

Breaking the silence

Against the odds, they were discovered by a Dutch container ship. 'The captain asked for one person who spoke English to come on board so he could question them. My mother, this tiny woman who weighed 50lb and could barely speak English, mustered up the courage to climb on board the ship and talk to the captain.' Having been granted asylum in Australia, but scared by the new environment, Alisha once again became silent, and in her late teens was diagnosed with thalassophobia (fear of the sea) and PTSD. 'I still have good and

not-so-good days, but I have realised that when I speak about my experiences and my condition I'm no longer that silent child, and I think that's really important for us all.'

Gian then asked the panel 'why do you feel storytelling is so important in the workplace and what impact can it have on teams?' Enoch explained that when people share their stories, 'you see them for real, not just another colleague on the screen. It's not only about relating, it breaks down barriers of the expectations you have of people. It is important when we build teams to have that psychological safety where we recognise that these are real people you are dealing with.' However, as she pointed out, 'You need to tread lightly when encouraging people to open up, especially in Asia, and to be sensitive to things like people's background and age.'

Alisha added: 'Make sure you lay down the right foundation and support structure, such as counselling services. You don't know what you might uncover once people start telling their stories.'

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Storytelling has the power not only to bring about change, but to save lives. Sharing stories of your personal struggles doesn't make you weak, it makes you human.

2 Personal storytelling and opening up can be more difficult in Asian cultures. But if one person shares their stories it makes it easier for listeners to share their own.

3 At the workplace, closeness, trust and cohesion lead to better productivity. Storytelling is a vehicle to facilitate this, as it cultivates an environment where people can connect on a deeper level.



Looking Out for the Mental Health of Children and Young People in Asia

Experts and corporate representatives discuss the challenges faced by young people today and how parents and employers can equip them to cope



FACILITATOR:
MICHAEL CHAN
Programme Manager,
Responsible Business
Community Business

PANEL

MINAL MAHTANI
CEO & Founder
OCD & Anxiety
Support HK

SERENA QUAY
Diversity & Inclusion
Officer, Asia ex-Japan
Nomura

ODILE THIANG
Anti-Stigma Projects
Coordinator
Mind HK

Michael Chan from Community Business started the discussion by asking the members of the panel why they are so passionate about mental health.

Odile Thiang shared that before working for mental health charity Mind HK as clinical advisor, she worked as a nurse practitioner in A&E, where she saw a lot of families in crisis: 'This is where my passion for mental health started.'

Minal Mahtani's charity OCD & Anxiety Support HK, is dedicated to helping people struggling with mental health disorders and their families. She explained that she herself was diagnosed with a severe anxiety disorder in her twenties, 'but there were very few treatment options here in Hong Kong at the time. I had to be treated abroad, and I wanted to bring back hope and support by starting the charity.'

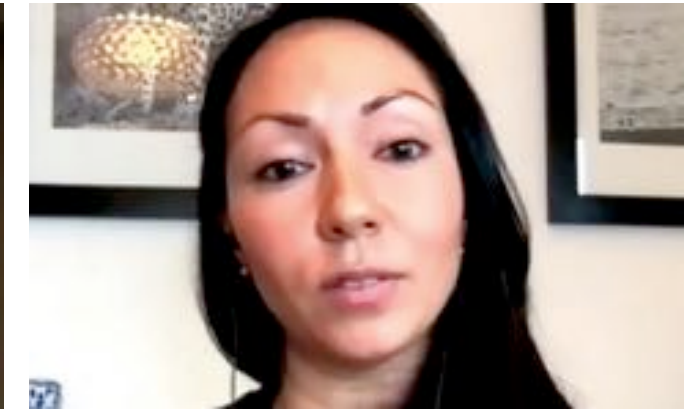
Serena Quay told us: 'My interest in mental health started when I was diagnosed with an eating disorder at 17, and then an anxiety disorder at 20. That's when I decided to raise awareness, first at college and now at Nomura.'

Odile said the main stressor for young people across Asia is academic pressure. 'This applies to parental expectations as well as their own.'

Minal added: 'At my charity, we receive about 25 emails a day from teens who are experiencing anxiety and depression, but have nobody to talk to during the pandemic. Their main stressors are: uncertainty around Covid; adapting to learning through technology such as Zoom and Google Classroom; worry about the future, and reduced face-to-face interaction with their peers. Teenagers feel very trapped at home, and are dealing with intense feelings of grief, frustration, anger and anxiety.'

Talking about her experiences as a young professional during these times, Serena explained that 'different institutions have a different stance on mental health, and that is a big conflict factor for young people. For instance, social media can be triggering, but there is also a whole generation of people being educated by social media on mental health. Young people are often caught in the middle.'

She added that, while she can usually be very open about mental health, her extended Asian family in Singapore have very different opinions. 'This can cause huge conflict, especially for young people like me who grew up abroad. So when I join a company, how do I know what culture they have? One thing I want to debunk is that generational gap means generational conflict. There are different ways of



dealing with mental health with different generations and it doesn't mean there's a whole generation of managers that doesn't know how to deal with these situations.'

Moving on to the challenges facing working parents, especially during the pandemic, Minal offered tips. 'Check in with them regularly, look out for symptoms of anxiety, a change in eating habits. Help younger children to get in touch with their emotions. Carve out time to relax. Provide reassurance such as: "We're going to get through this, even though it's difficult right now." Make sure there is structure throughout the day and use this opportunity to spend time together as a family.'

Spotting the signs

Odile talked about the Coolminds programme, which she runs in Hong Kong. She explained: 'It focuses on youth mental health, adopting a whole-school approach so that all the stakeholders, parents, students and teachers, have a common language. We want to make sure that young people know what mental ill-health is and what some of the signs are.'

Michael pointed to research suggesting transitioning from education to a career

can be stressful, and Serena explained that at Nomura, 'we focus on making sure that they're being taken care of. For instance, our Covid communication always includes mental health resources and direct links to mental health services.' She talked about engaging with small communities that might struggle more with mental health. 'For example, we have a Zoom call called Social Hour for new parents.'

Finally, Odile examined the effect Covid has had on Hong Kong: 'The pandemic came on the heels of social unrest, and this means we have been particularly badly affected, especially as young people tended to be more involved in the unrest. It also means that we have been socially isolating for much longer than the rest of the world. Students are feeling disenfranchised, and now that they're stuck at home there is more opportunity for conflict. In fact, 70% of students are showing signs of mild to moderate depression. There is an existential internal battle: What is Hong Kong going to be like in the future?'

(From far left) Michael, Minal, Serena and Odile discussed how academic expectation and adapting to the pandemic have been sources of stress for young Asians

Teenagers feel very trapped at home, and are dealing with intense feelings of frustration, anger and anxiety

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Teenagers today, amongst all the challenges that they already normally experience, are subject to a whole new load of stresses due to the pandemic. It is important to equip them with the language which allows them to open up, and to provide support.

2 It is equally important in the workplace to create a culture of openness. Even at interview level, it is a good idea to convey this culture to young people who may be about to join the company.

3 Inclusivity for all the generations is vital. We need to be making sure that we're accounting for every age group. Different generations face different challenges and may approach mental health in different ways.

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DAY 2 - 24.11.20

Out in the Open: We Need to Adopt a Bold Approach to Suicide

With awareness of the sensitivities – particularly in Asia – this session explores why suicide is a topic workplaces need to be brave enough to address

As Lai Wong explained, her organisation, mental health charity Samaritans, has pioneered suicide prevention in Singapore for the last 50 years.

Clinical psychologist and Associate Professor Paul Wong has been involved in suicide prevention research since 2003.

Vickie Skorkji has a background in psychology and neuropsychology. She has developed first aid programmes addressing Japan's high suicide rate and the stigma surrounding mental health.

Finally, Vieshaka Dutta, has coached and supported people in under-represented communities and was a finalist for the D&I Champion of Change Award in the Community Business 2020 in India Best Practice Awards.

Lai kicked off the discussion by reminding us of the sad statistic that according to the WHO, over a million people take their own lives each year globally, and over half of these suicides occur in Asia. Meanwhile, 'suicide has traditionally been perceived socially as going against religion and cultural norms. Some Asian countries have even listed attempts as a crime, and stigma is still prevalent, but the good news is that the rates are now decreasing,

and Singapore, for instance, has just decriminalised suicide this past January.' She then asked Paul about the cultural sensitivities surrounding the topic in Asia.

Paul agreed it is a complex issue. 'Here we have a lot of different countries with a lot of different flavours of cultures. Hong Kong in particular is a mix of East and West: on the one hand we have the culture of British government but also Chinese culture, where talking about suicide is believed to bring people bad luck. And yet, we have a high suicide rate in this region.'

Vickie added that Japan has one of the highest per capita suicide rates. 'In 2003 there were 33,000, although this has gone down to 20,186 in the last year. The Japanese government has put a lot of time into looking into research, but we still have a long way to go in terms of talking about mental health and erasing the stigma.'

Vieshaka said the situation was similar in India, 'although since one of our leading actors took his own life, this topic has come back on the map. I'm happy to say that recently we have started to talk about mental health more.

Moving the conversation on to the business world, Lai asked what the



FACILITATOR:
LAI CHUN WONG
Former Senior
Assistant Director
Samaritans of
Singapore

PANEL

VIESHAKA DUTTA
Director Inclusion
and Diversity
Publicis Sapient

VICKIE SKORJI
Lifeline Services
Director
Tell Japan

DR PAUL W.C. WONG
Associate Professor
University of
Hong Kong



Lai Chun (left) and Vieshaka hailed recent advances in Asian cultures' willingness to talk about mental health

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DAY 2 - 24.11.20



Vickie and Paul both listed excessive working hours as a major source of stress

triggers are that could lead to suicides. Paul, who has researched this widely in Hong Kong, explained that during SARS they discovered that unemployment was the main factor. 'And this applies to all countries in Asia, where people are facing a crisis during this time. People with schizophrenia or depression are also at greater risk.' He went on to list excessive working hours as a main trigger: 'In Hong Kong, people tend to work 50-60 hours a week, although we have now learned from Japan that this is a major stressor. But while we are now talking about this, nothing has been done about it.'

Vickie reiterated long working hours as a source of stress: 'There is even a Japanese word for it: *karoshi*, which means working to death. The Samaritans have been doing a lot of work with companies due to increased pressure during Covid.'

Vieshaka stressed that suicide was not always about one single trigger. 'It's often a culmination of things that have happened over the years. Mostly it is for personal and financial reasons, but I don't think we can isolate specific triggers.' She also emphasised the importance of supporting the family and colleagues of someone who has taken their own life.

Asked how we can share this with the corporate sector, Vickie said that during the pandemic the Samaritans had reached out to corporates to address stressors. 'These include the stresses of working from home, and worries about job security. Stress management is vital, as is training for managers. If an employee has a mental health problem and it's not talked about, it will take down the entire team.'

Finally, Lai asked the panel what advice they had for other companies on how to handle this subject in Asia. Paul listed encouraging employees to talk openly about mental health, and emphasised the importance of being proactive. 'For instance, we recommend regular webinars during lunchtime, or stress reduction workshops.' Vickie suggested providing businesses with research and information: 'This way they can make good decisions. It is important to ensure they understand their strategies can make a difference.' Vieshaka added: 'We need to normalise the conversation around mental health and suicide, even while recognising that it is not a comfortable topic for everybody. ■

Suicide is often a culmination of things that have happened over the years. I don't think we can isolate triggers

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Normalise the conversation about suicide and mental health and emphasise that these issues can affect people at any stage of their life.

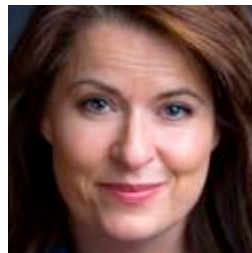
2 Be proactive, particularly during the pandemic. Encourage employees to openly discuss stress, anxiety issues and suicidal thoughts. Introduce stress reduction workshops during lunchtimes. Signal to employees that their employer cares and doesn't just see them as robots.

3 Minimise the stress on teams, giving managers the tools to deal with colleagues who are stressed, and talking to them to provide support.

THIS CAN HAPPEN 2020

Thinking Differently: Neurodiversity and Mental Health at Work

What challenges do neurodiverse people face at work, and how can some of their neurodivergences be put to use? Companies can learn a lot, the panel agrees



FACILITATOR:
CAROLINE TURNER
CEO
Creased Puddle

PANEL

CHARLOTTE VALEUR
CEO
Global Governance Group

LEE CORLESS
Vice-President
JP Morgan Chase & Co

The experience of companies that work with neurodivergent employees – those with a diagnosis such as autism, ADHD, dyslexia or dyspraxia – can and should have a positive effect, and pay dividends for the success of employees within the workplace.

CEO of Global Governance Group Charlotte Valeur, who is autistic, wasn't diagnosed until she was 50. The diagnosis came as quite a surprise, especially as her career involved working in high-paced investment dealing rooms. Looking back, she realises that she always felt different but reflects: 'My neurodiversity definitely made my career. It gave me an ability to hyper-focus, and my level of photographic memory also means I take things in more easily. So it's boosted my quality of work.'

For Lee Corless, Vice-President at JP Morgan Chase & Co, the diagnosis of autism came in his mid-thirties.

'My son's own autism diagnosis came at a very early age and then mine came, just after his. He has recently turned 18 and – after a big fight – I've managed to

My neurodiversity definitely made my career. It gave me an ability to hyper-focus

get him into some independent living so he can learn to function on his own. By the time I was diagnosed I was in corporate life, having spent much of my early career working for myself. And that should have given me a sign, because I always wanted to hide in the background and preferred not to be around people. This was strange, considering some of my choices of career: I ran a hotel and restaurant. But I was always back of house.'

It was those challenges of corporate life, and the challenges that his son faced, that led Lee to seek help.

'I became able to drive forward in my career, because I stopped trying to change myself to conform – or to mask – which is mentally draining and affects performance.'

Lee aims to break down barriers – for himself and other neurodiverse colleagues – through his Autism At Work programme, and encouraged managers to work closely with staff to understand and build a culture of acceptance for neurodivergent people. He commented: 'It's accepted that managers in large corporations can be short and to the point because they are busy. Why isn't it accepted that some



Charlotte Valeur says her neurodiversity was key to her success



people are naturally this way? It's about changing that culture.'

Caroline added that burnout, or so-called autistic meltdown, is a big worry for neurodiverse people in the workplace and detrimental to their overall health. She asked what impact a misunderstanding can have on their mental health.

Canaries in the coal mine

A severe impact, according to Charlotte, is that most minority groups end up being shut out, and then start doubting themselves. 'The whole language we use around diversity is wrong,' she said. 'Around 80 per cent of neurodiverse people, like me, don't have additional disabilities, so we are not disabled. In fact we are very able, but because we present in slightly different ways, our abilities get shut down, and we become dis-EN-abled.'

Charlotte believes much can be learned



Caroline discussed burnout with Lee, who is aiming to break down barriers with his Autism at Work programme

from the neurodiverse group. 'Things bother us sooner than neurotypical people. For instance, it's now thought that ultraviolet light is bad for productivity. Neurodiverse people could walk straight into a room and tell you that the lighting doesn't work,' She would love this community of people to become the guiding light for what can go wrong in the workplace before it gets to the larger neurotypical group.

Caroline closed the session by pointing out that in order to attract young people to workforces, companies need to answer their questions on environmental policies, corporate social responsibility. Also, employers must get on board with having clear policies on wellbeing and neurodiversity to keep a sustainable workforces. ■

Why isn't it accepted that some people are naturally this way? It's about changing that culture.'

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Encourage managers to be open about mental health, embracing neurodiverse staff and working closely with neurotypical employees on building acceptance on the different ways people work.

2 Consider the observations of your neurodiverse workforce – they have experience that can set you ahead for future neurodiverse employees. Consult with neurodiverse people on issues such as office environment, instead of letting all staff cope for longer, compromising their wellbeing and mental health until breaking point.

3 Encourage open dialogue with neurodiverse staff and explore different ways of working and communicating. Ask how they like to interact and how assisted tech, such as noise-cancelling headphones, could help.



Managing Success: Triumphs and Trials of Managers

The panel discusses how leaders can support the mental wellbeing of their teams, and get support they may need themselves from management above



FACILITATOR:
DR SUSAN KAHN
Chartered Psychologist
Birkbeck, University
of London

PANEL

SARAH McPAKE
Head Of Talent,
Insights & Inclusion
TSB

BECCA-JANE SCHOFIELD
Social Media Lead,
Chair Of Together
Network.
M&C Saatchi

Becoming mentally unwell can happen to anyone, whether it's due to stress in the workplace or a bereavement, and being given the space and time by your employer to work through it and get well is imperative for recovery and future performance. In management, it's important to support your team, but also that you have access to resources and support from your own manager.

Dr Susan Kahn began the session by sharing how, in her work as a psychologist in academia and coaching, she's seen mental health issues managed both really well and in less than helpful ways. So how do you give managers, who are already under a lot of pressure, the tools to support their teams' mental health?

Becca-Jane Schofield, Social Media Lead and Chair of Together Network at M&C Saatchi, pointed out that it's helpful to set up training so that busy managers can tap into the areas in which they need guidance. 'We've devised mental health first aid for employees and managers so there is help on both levels,' she said. She added that resources should be made

Mental health is still a scary topic for managers who feel a strong responsibility for staff's wellbeing

available, and panel sessions, open forums or information videos can be time-efficient ways of learning what advice can help.

Becca-Jane talked about the complexities of going from being managed to being a manager, and feels it's key to lead by example. 'Mental health is still a scary topic for managers who feel a strong responsibility for staff's wellbeing. Some feel they would know what to say to a team member who broke their leg, but when it comes to mental health, they don't have the experience to guide. Managers who

create a culture of openness and support are successful – and become the ones who other managers follow.'

Sarah McPake, Head Of Talent, Insights & Inclusion at TSB, said: 'Managers are the first point of contact for their team, which means they can dictate what someone's experience of the work environment is like and are responsible for the culture of the group. An important strategy for positive team mental health management is to be open, transparent and create easily dialogue so people feel comfortable speaking up more regularly.'

Managers don't need to diagnose

It's also important to remember that leaders are not, and shouldn't be, therapists and can't have all the answers. 'Managers aren't expected to diagnose, but having the knowledge to signpost and direct to where help can be found – by simply passing on advice line numbers or connecting the person to resources – could be enough.'

Sarah added that guidance training can deliver information and language as a baseline, but she believes there's no right way, because everybody's situation is individual to them. 'It can be daunting, but staff are human and it's about having a good conversation. Simply asking if you've been helpful is a learning tool.' Susan said that in all the people she's encountered with problems such as depression, the thread that runs between them – from students to leaders – is vulnerability, showing that mental health is one area in the workplace where we can be equal.

Susan noted a difference between intellectually understanding, and practically and emotionally helping



staff. So when experiences are shared, outcomes gauged and common issues identified, support groups can be created from what's been learned. Senior management, Susan said, can have a traditional mindset and, unlike the younger generation, often have little background in talking about mental health. They may be more closed, or understand the concepts but lack the vocabulary.

Becca-Jane revealed she'd found it helpful to present senior management with evidence of how supporting staff with their mental health can improve their performance. 'Sometimes it's seeing figures on a page that helps,' she said. The more data companies can assign on the benefit of supporting mental health, for instance with proof of better performance and less absence, the more this generation will recognise the model is working, and be inspired to direct resources. ■

(Facing page, from left) Susan, Sarah and Becca-Jane discussed how mental health can be a daunting topic for managers

It can be daunting, but staff are human and it's about having a good conversation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Set the tone by having regular open conversations with your team about how they are doing. Be pre-emptive by asking what steps they would feel comfortable to take if they were struggling. Bring in employees who have recovered to get their advice on what worked for them.

2 Line managers should think about what makes them feel listened to, and set things in place that can help make a conversation begin. Use friendly tools such as red, amber and green mood days to create a culture of understanding and acceptance.

3 You don't have to be a perfect mental health facilitator, just listen well and if you don't have the answers, commit to finding the right support for your employee.

Overcoming Loneliness and Social Isolation at Work

Over nine million people in the UK are often or always lonely – that’s more than the population of London. How employers can help staff overcome loneliness?



FACILITATOR:
SARAH BODDEY
Chief Diversity, Equity
& Inclusion Officer,
EMEA & APAC
Northern Trust

PANEL

BARONESS DIANA BARRAN, MBE
Minister For Civil
Society and Loneliness
UK Government

IESTYN WYN
Campaigns, Policy &
Research Manager
Stonewall

DANIELLE YOUNG
Regional Lead For
Human Performance
& Care
Shell

Now more than ever, as we come into the ninth month of a pandemic that has forced many to work alone and be separated from their families, it is essential that employers consider what can be done to support staff in staying connected. And not just physically, but emotionally too, for the benefit of their mental and physical wellbeing.

Leading the session, Sarah Boddey from Northern Trust cited a recent statistic from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) on loneliness. The 16-29 age group are twice as likely as older groups to report feeling lonely. Sarah admitted: ‘That challenged a bias I didn’t know I had, because we think of loneliness being an issue for older people.’

Danielle Young, Regional Lead For Human Performance And Care at Shell, pointed out that changes in modern life can create self-induced isolation issues when maintaining human connection.

‘Employees can be at sea and away from their families for three to 11 months. In the past, they would finish a shift and go to the ship bar to socialise – now they go straight to their cabins to tap into social media and have virtual connections with their families. We are looking at ways to create more physical activities to encourage staff socialisation – like football, karaoke, and getting involved with each other.’

Iestyn Wyn, Campaigns, Policy & Research Manager at Stonewall, remarked on the isolation that rural locations can bring about. In his experience it doesn’t have to be the physical loneliness of being away from family.

‘I was brought up in rural North Wales where there wasn’t a lot of diversity and difference. Even though I was well

I felt isolated
by my uniqueness,
which had an effect
on my wider mental
health

connected with a strong support network of friends and family, I wasn’t able to relate to them, due to my LGBT identity. I felt isolated by my uniqueness, which had an effect on my wider mental health. When I moved to a busy city, despite being surrounded by people there wasn’t an LGBT dialogue at work, so I felt isolated again.’

Lonely in a crowd

Sarah agreed that loneliness should be looked at through multiple lenses – if you can’t be open about a core aspect of your identity, you can feel isolated.

Baroness Diana Barran, MBE, Minister For Civil Society and Loneliness, agreed there are pressure points for loneliness, and said the government is doing much to combat the issue. ‘I believe the UK is the only country to have appointed a minister for loneliness, and we’re working to reduce the stigma around this, for example with social media campaigns such as #letstalkloneliness,’ she said.

She supports the idea that it’s important employers support minority groups. Referring to a young people’s crisis support line, she’d learned that almost a third of people who call in are from the



(Clockwise) Sarah, Diana, Danielle and Iestyn discussed loneliness at sea, and as an LGBT person feeling isolated

LGBT community. ‘As leaders we have to admit we’re vulnerable too. In a weird way, Covid has made it easier. I would defy anyone to have not felt vulnerable and lonely through this, and sharing experiences gives people permission to talk. We’ve pulled together networks of employers, charities, media and digital businesses to look at what the pandemic has taught us, and how can we do things differently going forward.’

Work to tackle the stigma surrounding mental health continues. Danielle recommended creating a place of comfort

to talk. Her company is considering programmes for ship captains and senior officers to develop leadership skills to get the best of out their crews, from a command and control way of operating to coaching and development.

Sarah agreed that senior staff with experience would be well equipped to spot signs and symptoms of isolation among crew, and exert leadership in this area by showing their own vulnerability. ■

In a weird way,
Covid has made it
easier. I would defy
anyone to have not
felt lonely through
this

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- 1 Educate on what loneliness and isolation means, and which groups of people, such as LGBT employees or those with a mental health diagnoses, might be affected. Track loneliness as part of an annual survey to give an insight on how to prioritise.
- 2 Equip leaders with policies to improve their inclusion practices for equality. Network with other inclusive employers to share experiences then take firm steps to putting their successful practice in place yourself.
- 3 Employee schemes and networks really help, particularly through the pandemic. Set up daily ‘drop-in’ online coffee mornings for employees to access when they need connect. Just half an hour of feeling as though you ‘work with people’ again can make a huge difference to someone’s performance that day.

Balancing the Relationship Between Digital Technology and Mental Health

Digital technology and mental health have a complicated relationship. We looked at how employers can harness the power of technology for employee wellbeing



FACILITATOR:
LAURA WILLIS
Co-founder
Shine Offline

PANEL

KELLY LESLIE
Senior Human
Resources Manager
Farrer & Co

CHINTAN PATEL
Chief Technologist
Cisco

BHAVIK SHAH
UK Mental Health Lead
Capco

How companies manage the balance between harnessing digital technology and encouraging a healthy lifestyle is always important. But now that the Covid pandemic has forced us to rely on technology to keep businesses running, it's a fine line. Technology offers big benefits, with Zoom and Teams enabling us to keep working, meeting and collaborating and keep business moving. Technology has also given us the access to maintain our personal relationships with loved ones during this difficult time. But we need to manage the flip side.

Laura Willis, co-founder of Shine Offline, presented some interesting data from a recent survey her company had undertaken. It was found that, while 92% of people said their screen time was up compared with before the pandemic, 90% admitted to becoming stressed and overwhelmed by digital technology (pre-Covid this figure was 84%), and 70% felt more pulled towards news apps than ever before.

Also, respondents reported that their social media use was now higher than ever – and even wellbeing and fitness apps had caused a rise in stress levels, because people can no longer achieve the level of activity they did in pre-pandemic times. Crucially, 81% of respondents said they are overwhelmed by their work tech, and 75% were suffering from Zoom fatigue.

Historically, the growing sophistication of technology has organically encouraged longer working hours. For example, checking emails on the train home, or taking time out of the weekend to reply to an email there wasn't time to attend to on a busy Friday. And although many employees are grateful not to have to commute to the workplace during the pandemic, they admitted they've spent the extra time at

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cinema

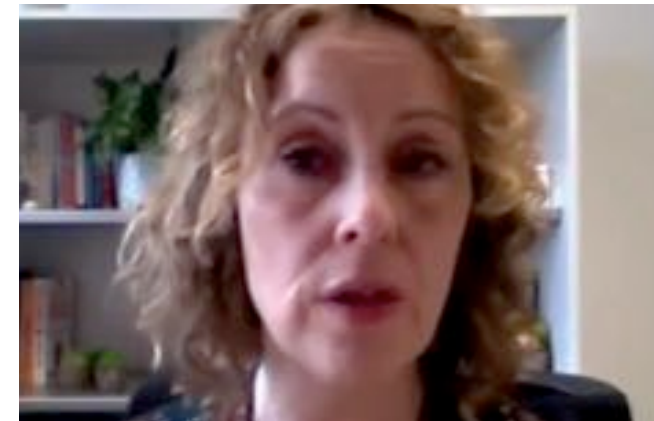
the computer screen, instead of using it to boost their wellbeing. The ensuing impact is that the boundary between work and personal time is now blurred – there's no sense of having left work and gone home, and when your home is your office it can be difficult to switch off.

Beware of the burnout

Bhavik Shah, UK Mental Health Lead at Capco, agreed that the pressure on personal time has always been there, but life in the pandemic has magnified it. 'Our normal stress relievers have been stripped from us – family, socialising, cinema. But don't live inside your office. Challenge yourself to avoid burning out,' he said. Pointing out the flexibility that tech has allowed us, Chintan Patel, Chief Technologist at Cisco said: 'Pre-Covid, our access to technology meant we could allow employees the freedom to working from home when necessary.

So the technology was there and with Covid, switching people over to working remotely was the easy part. But it's been a delicate balance enabling employees to stay connected without them being engaged in too much technology.'

Laura asked Kelly Leslie, Senior Human



(Clockwise) Laura, Kelly, Chintan & Bhavik agreed the pandemic has magnified the pressure on personal time

Resources Manager at legal firm Farrer & Co, to share her company's success in having a supportive management structure. 'We decided to put together a wellbeing charter; it's a series of commitments across the organisation that build up a positive culture of wellbeing,' Kelly said. 'This includes individual and company responsibilities, including the importance of taking holiday, the role of supervision in terms of wellbeing and – a particular concern over the last six months – technology.' Kelly went on to underline the importance of protecting off-

duty hours. For example, if a manager who has a young family takes the childcare hours away from the computer, then fires off an email to a junior colleague, it's okay for that colleague to say: "After office hours I've finished working, but I'll reply at 9am."

Laura agreed that it's important to encourage dialogue and face the negative aspect of not logging off at a reasonable time. ■

Our wellbeing
charter is a series
of commitments
that build up a
positive culture

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Ensure senior leaders are vocal and visible in championing a work/wellbeing balance. Ask them to share their own struggles to make mental health issues relatable for all. Kelly suggests managers use the power of storytelling. A leader simply saying 'this is my experience' can give staff permission to acknowledge what they're going through.

2 Encourage informal meetings, like walking calls combining exercise and screen breaks with colleague catch-ups. Don't make the backdrop always be your home office bookshelf!

3 Budget for necessary equipment. 'If the pandemic forces us to work from home for a long period, laptops may not be sufficient – your team may need desktop video units for a natural and immersive meeting experience,' says Chintan. This is especially relevant when considering the percentage of employees who are set to continue working from home.

Challenges to Internal Engagement on Mental Health – a UK Perspective

Mental health affects everyone in different ways, at different stages of life. Tailoring a mental health strategy to all audience groups can be a challenge



FACILITATOR:
DR AARTI ANHAL
Founder
before nine

PANEL

ROSIE COOK
UK Head of Inclusion
& Diversity
Mars

BECKY THOSEBY
Head of Workplace
Wellbeing
Ministry of Justice



Rosie (right), talks to Anhal about why expert input was needed for Mars' wellbeing programme

When trying to drive positive health across an organisation, how can we develop impactful, relevant mental health strategies and initiatives that can impact the people we need to support and deliver value for individuals and organisations? It's all about recognising the differences, then working out strategies that have a shared ethos but bespoke deliveries.

The panel opened by outlining their organisation's structures. Becky Thoseby described the Ministry of Justice (MOJ) with its 70,000+ staff, where the prison and probation services make up the bulk of the organisation. Most employees had been in the workplace since the beginning of Covid: courts stayed open and prison officers were all on site.

Rosie Cook described how Mars had 134,000 associates around the globe, and around 3,500 in the UK. With groups split between factory, field sales and office associates. An added complexity is that the company's three

areas of pet care, chocolate and food are run as independent units. This complex structure raises challenges such as communications going through different formats: posters in factories versus engagement in the field.

Building relationships

Becky's main challenge was being new at the MOJ, having joined in January. She took for granted the strong relationships she'd had in her previous role, and hadn't realised that an organisation the size of the MOJ would have so many layers in which people identified with their employer, all differently. Becky set about attempting to make inroads into every corner of the vast organisation. 'There was no way I could build up relationships with every director, so I had to influence using organisational systems and processes, not my preferred way. I'm still finding out what those processes are.'

She recommends asking for help and being transparent about the requests, as well as working hard to develop key contacts in all the different areas.

I found a network that continues to be valuable, and that in turn helped me build my reputation

'I found a group of HR business partners in the prison service who get together once a month and talk about wellbeing, and on the basis of that I was then introduced to another group. Pretty soon I found a network that continues to be valuable, and that in turn helped me build my reputation.'

Positioning the area of mental health and wellbeing as an expert service is crucial, Becky said, at the same time as gaining respect from senior teams. A strong, person-centred narrative is also important, as are clear and consistent messages, and 'telling people what's in it for them: it benefits both employer and employee.'

Rosie talked about the complexities of ensuring that leaders throughout seven different UK business units are aligned across one strategy. 'The main challenge was just getting them all in one room!'

'Most mental health and wellbeing programmes are quite fluffy and rightly so, but we wanted something that resonated with our individuals in the factory. So we took the decision to partner with Calm (the Campaign Against Living Miserably) to communicate in a way that was far more down to earth.'

She echoed Becky's comments on the importance of partnerships and also asking for help. 'The need for experts is why Mars partnered with Mental Health First Aid and Calm, because more was needed than passionate individuals.'

So how localised had approaches been, particularly in the MOJ where some worked on-site and some worked at home?

Becky pointed to an increase in bonding with local colleagues, which had been a strong positive. But she also noted a weakening in the link between those working on-site and those working from home. 'To get around the divide I liaise with the wellbeing lead in each unit, where priorities are aligned in a bespoke way.'

Mars also has site leads who manage ambassadors and activate events locally; the foundation has been set and now it's about embedding it, and also going external. 'We're a private company but we're learning how to share, and do things like attend this conference,' said Rosie. ■

Mars partnered with Mental Health First Aid and Calm. More was needed than passionate individuals



Anhal (left) and Becky discussed the challenges of developing a mental health strategy in a huge organisation

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'When local business areas produce their own plans that are 100% on message, that's a clear sign that engagement is happening,' says Becky. 'Another sign is when people proactively approach me to ask for advice on how they can help.'

2 People are likely to be working from home for a long time into the future, so from a communication perspective we need to make sure we always have the same level of engagement digitally as we do face to face.

3 The difference between working from home and working on-site can't be equalised and should be recognised. Becky says: 'Every individual makes a contribution that's of equal value, and thank goodness. We need to look at celebrating diversity with the organisation.'

Mental Health and Key Stages Across a Career

We experience different life stages as we traverse our career, with differing impacts on our mental health. How can employers support us during this journey?



FACILITATOR:
YVETTE CASTER
Freelance journalist
Podcaster and speaker

PANEL

PAUL BULOS
Contracts Director
Orion and Hachette
Children's

BEN IDLE
Managing Director
Deutsche Bank

CLARE-LOUISE KNOX
Founder & Business
Psychologist
She Her Thrive

BEN PLOWDEN
Director of
Coordination, Covid-19,
Restart & Recovery
Programme
Transport for London

Different stages of work and home life require very different input from organisations in terms of our career. The help we need in one phase of our career will be different to that needed during another, and that's before we've taken into account any sudden life events occurring. Companies need to be ready to provide help and support through it all.

TFL's Ben Plowden began by describing how stresses in a new job left him having routine panic attacks, until he reached a point where he hoped he'd be knocked off his bike – just to get some recovery time.

Ben thinks his employers should have recognised the challenges his new career was presenting. 'No aspect of my new role was the same as my old one, so the organisation should have put a number of things my way, like mentoring support.'

Clare-Louise Knox described her struggles with Pre-Menstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD), a condition that makes her 'allergic' to her own hormones. Symptoms can range from chronic fatigue to depression and it impacts her wellbeing every month.

She is also experiencing perimenopause, the transition to menopause which can begin decades before a woman reaches the menopause itself (Clare-Louise is approaching 35). 'I've met supportive employers,' she said, 'but I never talked to them about PMDD.' She added that it would have been a help if she's had the opportunity to check in one-to-one with a manager – focusing on general wellbeing rather than performance.

Paul Bulos was impacted by bereavement in his mid-thirties, when his father died in a car accident. This coincided with a busy career phase and the birth of his first

child. 'The full impact came a year later, manifesting in controlling behaviour, over-exercising, over-working, hyper-anxiety, insomnia and a debilitating phobia. I also developed OCD and became obsessed with protection, and over-checking whether the house was safe.' Paul didn't tell anyone for fear of judgement. Like Ben, he craved respite and even thought about crashing his car, 'just to have a stop'.

Paul saw his GP and confided in managers, who were supportive about the situation. But there was no peer-support network, and no real strategy beyond a basic bereavement policy. Because Paul's grieving had been delayed there was also a question mark over compassionate leave. And there was no subsequent career coaching, which, says Paul, he still needed.

Good to talk

Ben Idle then described how his marriage breakdown – in the midst of a seemingly successful life – left him severely anxious. 'I didn't have a road map of how to deal with it and my upbringing motto was "boys don't cry". But not dealing with emotions left me with a life not fully lived. I carried on as normal until one day at work I just sat at my desk in floods of tears.'

Ben called a friend who he had seen give a talk about similar problems; 10 minutes later they were talking in the canteen. Counselling ensued, after which Ben became accustomed to talking to anyone he could. Ben is now a trained mental health advocate and first aider. 'Having a signature on my email and a sign on my office door sends a clear signal to employees that I take the subject very seriously, and am here to help them,' he says.

Ben pointed out the importance of



(Clockwise) Paul, Ben Idle, Ben Plowden and Clare-Louise shared issues they'd experienced as a result of various life events

understanding a person's career path, and the points where they might be vulnerable.

'And let's recognise that men and women are different,' added Claire-Louise, 'and have different needs. Let's get rid of archaic policies and procedures like trigger-based absence policies that do so much damage and encourage presenteeism. And let's stop trying to make people fit a system and make the system work for people.'

Paul emphasised a need for data. 'Any organisation that's looking at its wellbeing strategy needs to know its people and its data, otherwise they'll create a strategy that doesn't fit.'

And how about helping staff deal with departure from the world of work, be it through retirement, redundancy or furlough? The process of leaving is like grief, Paul suggested, it's a loss. In addition, with virtual work, leaving ceremonies have disappeared and the normal process is absent. "Difficult conversations don't have to had in the absence of compassion," Paul said. 'Coaching is hugely important when it comes to ending careers,' added Claire-Louise. 'People retire and that's it, "bye". We need transition to help people navigate their new life.' ■

Let's stop trying to make people fit a system and make the system work for people

KEY TAKEAWAYS

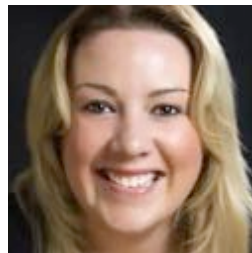
1 There are lots of positive steps employers can take. Train and educate line managers, and look at female-related health issues over the life cycle. 'That way we can tackle issues that affect women across all of their career stages,' says Clare-Louise.

2 Understand the degrees of change that someone's going through when they take a new role and put the requisite support in place. The more change they're going through, the more extensive that support needs to be.

3 Grief is not linear or finite, and it doesn't necessarily have predictable stages. Employers need to develop bereavement policies that offer long-term holistic support to employees and recognise individual circumstances.

The Tipping Point: Obesity Stigma at Work in the UK

18.7% of people with obesity experience stigma at work, and 38% when the condition is severe. The panel looked at awareness of size discrimination



FACILITATOR:
SARAH LE BROCCQ
Director
Obesity UK

PANEL

DR STUART FLINT
Associate Professor
University of Leeds

JESSY RICHARDS
Marketing
Professional

Obesity can give rise to negative internalised messages, so when someone makes a comment at work, our instinct is to assume they are right. This isn't and shouldn't be the case. Society drives the narrative around obesity, and changing that narrative can help change stigma.

In opening, Sarah Le Brocq said that working for a pharma company had been about helping people with health conditions lead better lives, but that she'd experienced stigma herself. One personal story involved a manager giving feedback on the way she looked. 'It was something I'd never experienced before; I didn't know how to react. Now I realise I could have stood up for myself.'

People of all ages and backgrounds report stigmatising attitudes, said Dr Stuart Flint, consciously or unconsciously. Children identify stereotypes of gluttony and laziness; from an early age the school environment involves harassment and bullying. At work, people experience discrimination at recruitment stage and in the push for promotion, as well as from peers and managers. Expectations differ according to a person's weight status.



Jessy Richards was told she was too fat for her job and ended up depressed

They asked how I planned to lose weight to become more suitable for my role, and mentioned surgery

Jessy Richards talked about external perceptions. 'People assume that those with a larger body shape work less hard – actually we often feel like we have to work harder.'

Jessy was targeted in an old workplace by a senior leader, who told colleagues that she was too fat for her job.

'They got me into meetings to talk about how I planned to lose weight to become more suitable for my role. Then they involved HR and eventually mentioned surgery. I found myself in a place of depression.'

No longer was her work treated the same way as anyone else's, yet HR's response was that it was 'hearsay' and not much could be done. 'I couldn't stay because I no longer felt safe.'

Stuart responded to Jessy's story: 'In our society there's a message that it is acceptable to stigmatise people based on body shape. The message is often from the media and plays out in the workplace.' Stuart cited anecdotal information where senior leaders have discouraged the idea of people with obesity working for them.



Being educated that one size doesn't fit all is key, said Jessy, and with more people aware we would see changes.

Stigma in the gym

Sometimes, she added, peak fitness isn't motivational. It would be nice to have 'ordinary' people being able to help out, like gyms catering for larger people. Dr Stuart agreed that gym environments carry much stigma.

He went on to talk about some of the psychological impacts: lower self-esteem, depressive symptoms, anxiety and lower self-confidence are all connected concerns. Internalising stigmas, as in Jessy's early experience, is key. Detrimental thoughts don't motivate us for positive change, he says.

Stuart raised a point about unconscious bias – we don't always know where our prejudices are. We can start by helping people recognise when unconscious biases might impact decision-making, for example during recruitment processes. Jessy said interview panels could have a diversity and inclusion professional either

sitting in at every interview or auditing, 'just to give people like me, who have been overlooked, the chance to showcase the fact that we're a lot more than our bodies. We are our minds and our talents and also our passion.'

Jessy spoke about how nervous she had been before appearing on the panel. 'For years people like me have been told we're not meant to be seen; in reality we have many great qualities. I encourage anyone who's carrying that burden to talk about it. You'll be surprised how many allies you can find, and how liberating it is.'

Jessy's recovery has not happened overnight and self-acceptance came through transparent dialogue. 'Being able to open up and talk in a vulnerable way is important because you'll be surprised what you don't know. I learned how to separate my experience from who I am as a person. I do work incredibly hard, my career has nothing to do with my weight.' ■

Sarah and Stuart discussed unconscious biases and how recognising these could make for a more inclusive workplace

We're a lot more than our bodies. We are our minds and our talents and also our passion

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'Businesses can set the tone,' Dr Stuart said, 'and change the cultural norms to ensure we are working towards the key values of quality diversity and inclusion. These are all key values that we need to move towards, and rightly so.'

2 There are many messages in the press, said Sarah, that we need to eat less and move more, otherwise we've done this to ourselves. 'Actually, we now know that obesity is much more complex. There are genetics at play, biology, the social environment, many different factors are involved.'

3 'I'd love to see more programmes introduced into workplaces,' said Jessy, 'where there are people with body-positive messages that will in time change people's bias. Companies have programmes on resilience and leadership: how about having The Body as a topic people can learn more about?'

Supporting Transgender Mental Health at Work

A look at how workplace discrimination can affect trans employees' mental health. How can employers support staff who are transitioning or have transitioned?



FACILITATOR:
ALEXANDRA BEAUREGARD
Reader in Organisational Psychology
Birkbeck University of London

PANEL

CLAIRE BIRKENSHAW
Lecturer in Childhood Studies and Education
Leeds Beckett University

EMILY HAMILTON
Vice-President Strategic Change
RS Components

PRESTON TAYLOR
Head of Content Enrichment and Publication
RS Components

Why does the transgender issue still give rise to so much discrimination in the workplace? There is a need to be very careful at work, particularly because we have no idea which of our colleagues might still be planning to come out. Being mindful and all-inclusive are strategies that every company needs to consider.

Claire Birkenshaw discussed transitioning, and how she'd been perceived by others. 'Even after coming out I still felt guilty about saying who I was out loud, as if I was asking people to accept me as I am. People tell you they're experiencing a bereavement, and that compounds the guilt and shame.'

Having only just transitioned, Emily Hamilton was in a good position to comment. She had come out twice before, once in childhood and once in her early twenties, but both times to adverse reaction. Final acceptance came from a suicide attempt. 'Then I came out at work, the last throw of the dice, and finally found a place where I was accepted.'

'My adrenaline rush lasted for about two months and was exhausting, but the most surprising thing was how much extra mental capacity I unlocked as a result of coming out. I didn't have to hide or pretend, and I now never underestimate my allies at work.'

Reactions can be strong, remembered Claire, and painful. 'It hurt me when people said: "I don't know what to say any more" as if I was a completely new person, and all my attributes had been forgotten. I often just wanted to chat about the little things.'

The first time Preston came out in the workplace his manager didn't understand at all, and the trauma stayed with him for a long time. He still has residual

Even after coming out I still felt guilty about saying who I was out loud

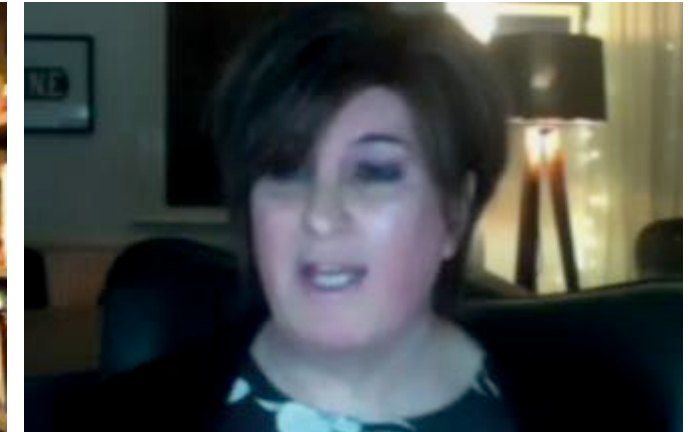
worries whenever the subject comes up. He reiterated the need to have everyday conversations: after all, he had the same likes and feelings; only his outward appearance had changed.

Thinking over what you can and can't say becomes a management strategy, said Claire. Being so careful all the time means you're spending expending a huge amount of time and energy thinking about things. Over the last two years she's dipped into over 200 books, simply because she's no longer distracted.

Playing a part

Speak to any actor after a full day's work, said Preston, and they'll tell you how draining it is to always be on show, because acting requires full-time conscious thought. Being in transition makes you body-conscious, so you worry about how you look, and it's all draining. There were weekends, he said, where he struggled to function.

Preston pointed out that when people claimed they knew all the trans people at work, how did they know? So many have not yet come out, so what steps can workplaces take? 'Don't leave humanity at the door,' said Emily, 'this is not some



(Clockwise) Alexandra, Claire, Emily and Preston discussed the highs and lows of coming in to work while transitioning

horrific process, it should be the happiest point in a person's life. And always have an idea of what (and what not) to ask: if you wouldn't feel comfortable being asked a question, don't ask it.'

Look at changing names and identities on systems, Emily added, and help trans people avoid seeing see their dead (old) names. And don't allow them to get caught out by the question of bathroom use, because 'it's pretty obvious'.

Organisations who mark themselves as inclusive, it was roundly agreed, need to

honour that by recognising events like Trans Awareness Week, and not just that event but all of them.

And if the basic systems are already in place, what more can a company do to be inclusive? Recognise the humanity in ourselves, said Claire. Emily added: 'If you hear any kind of negative comment, no matter who is around and concerning whichever minority group, challenge it.' ■

This is not some horrific process, it should be the happiest point in a person's life

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Try to gauge what an environment is like. Claire says: 'I listen to conversations, and the way in which people talk about other people to get a sense of inclusion in the workplace. I look at little things like what's on the noticeboard. These signs give a sense of how well groups are supported.'

2 Trans rights are human rights. Emily says: 'We're not talking about additional or special pleading. All trans people are looking for are the rights and acceptance that any other person would expect within the workplace.'

3 This is a big issue. 'We're called a minority but actually there are so many people out there who are struggling with this,' says Preston. It really is good business if you support those people, because they will feel comfortable to be themselves and then give it all back.'

LGBT+ and Mental Health in Asia: A Personal Perspective

High-profile LGBT+ individuals from Asia share their experiences of mental health and discuss the need for companies to be aware of the community's vulnerability



FACILITATOR:
DEEPAK KASHYAP
Director Corporate
Wellness and Diversity
Toronto Mindfulness
Centre

PANEL

APURVA ASRANI
Filmmaker

VASU PRIMLANI
Comedian

Workspaces are dominated by people who are married, with children, who meet at golf games and climb up the ladder. Meanwhile, LGBT+ individuals have very little to offer in that space.

Within the family and at work, negative thoughts of pride and shame don't leave a lot of middle ground for acceptance. If you can find someone with whom you feel comfortable sharing your story, open up and reveal the truth.

Filmmaker Apurva Asrani opened the debate by discussing the ethos of the traditional workplace: it's based on a strong sense of family, and anyone from that background is 'bankable'. If you're not, there are doubts about whether or not you are trustable. 'As gay men you have to push yourselves much harder to excel and be accepted.'

Growing up, Apurva had a sense of shame surrounding any feelings he had for other boys. He dated girls at college because 'a lot of us gay men can be very charming, and a lot of girls are attracted

Anyone who has
to live closeted is
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feelings

to us because we're sensitive.' When he was 17 he finally fell in love but was told that the word attached to his experience was 'homo' (not even 'homosexual'). He points out that India had no gay culture in the media at all. 'We had nothing; it was darkness, and anyone who has to live closeted is going to suppress his or her true feelings.'

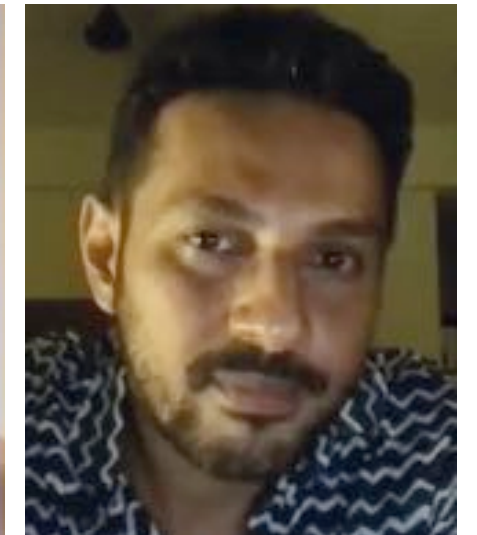
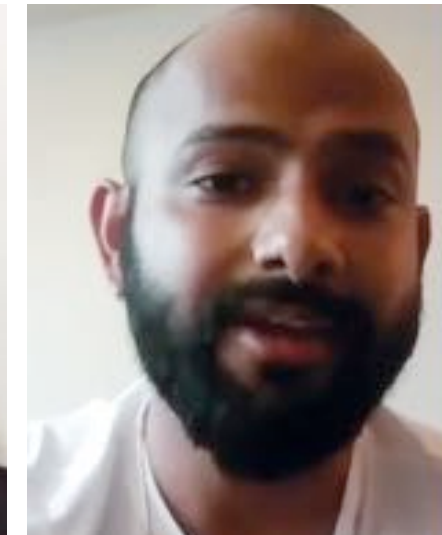
Describing her own upbringing, Vasu says that because it is always acceptable for two girls to stay overnight and hug and kiss and hold hands, she would fly under the radar. She knew she was different but had not heard of anyone else making those choices. By the time she was in her early twenties she was starting to think she was the only Indian lesbian in the world.

Facilitator Deepak Kashyap from Toronto Mindfulness Centre asked Apurva to talk about the power of film in passing over positive messages and Apurva noted that there are maybe two or three gay figures in the movie industry in India – him being one of them.

Cinema plays a huge part in Indian culture, he said, and movie stars are close to God, so when they present a certain attitude it matters.



Apurva Asrani: movie stars are close to God in India



(From left) Vasu, Deepak and Apurva discussed how to navigate a traditional workplace as an LGBT+ person

Vasu uses humour in her diversity training sessions, and that's a huge ice-breaker, helping open people up to being authentically communicative. Laughter promotes safety and comfort, and that's essential before real talking can start.

The power of opening up

Apurva pointed out that when you come out and you're no longer in hiding, people have very little that they can attack you with. He was lucky to have sensitive employers. It's so easy for companies to tick a box and say 'we did this, and this', he said, but it's more important to create an atmosphere that's genuinely positive and open. After all, a healthy and happy employee, he said, is very important for a company.

So how can we support young talent? Attendees at Vasu's diversity training sessions are already aware and willing to take part, she said, but she wants to hear from people who are still unsure and uncomfortable. If you really want cohesion in your company, you have to allow both

sides to feel safe enough to communicate. She recommended active engagement but within safe spaces – perhaps moderated by a professional to make sure things don't get out of hand; important if you really want to see results.

Apurva talked about his experience of being diagnosed with Bell's Palsy a few years ago, during which he decided to escape to Goa for a break, but he needed care. His partner – who had a full-time job – wondered how that would work, but Apurva encouraged him to talk his boss, during which he revealed his gay status.

The company gave Apurva's partner a work-from-home pass, checked up on him regularly, and were caring. 'He then gave his all to the company,' said Apurva, 'and that's why respect and care are so important in the workplace.' ■

If you really want
cohesion in your
company, you have
to allow both sides
to feel safe to
communicate

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Comedian Vasu Primlani notes the aura of suspicion around the subject in the workplace. It's a suspicion of the unknown and unfamiliar, she says, and if you're anything other than married with two kids, then there has to be something wrong with you.

2 Seek help and find allies. There are those who have found the courage to come out, Apurva says: reach out to them and share your story. It's important to not feel alone, but you have to take the first step and get support.

3 'I've always been out,' says Vasu. 'As soon as I found out there was a closet I spoke about it. When you don't speak your truth you're inviting disease and ill-health and do a disservice to yourself.'

Rolling out Mental Health Strategies in Asia

Corporate operators share how they are implementing mental health strategies in different Asian markets, adapting their approach to the local cultural context



FACILITATOR:
EMILEY YEOW
Chief Operating Officer
Allen & Overy,
Singapore

PANEL

MELLENER ANNE COELHO
Vice-President, India
Head of Diversity,
Equity & Inclusion
Northern Trust, India

LYN R LEE
Chief Diversity &
Inclusion Officer
Shell

KATIE POTTER
Head of Wellness APAC
Goldman Sachs

Compared with Asia-Pacific, London and the US are at a very different stage when it comes to tackling mental health and diversity in the workplace. Shifts in cultural attitudes are making progress, but there is a long way to go. Companies must help people understand that physical and mental wellbeing are interconnected, and issues carry no stigma.

Facilitator Emiley Yeow from Allen & Overy in Singapore asked the panel to comment on how the cultural context of each workplace had affected its approach to driving company mental health agendas.

Lyn R Lee from Shell reminded us that mental health in Asia is seen as a personal matter, and that for someone to ask for help might be viewed as showing a lack of resilience. Physical ill-health can lead to mental ill-health and vice versa. Shell has worked to implement its mental health strategy with all of that in mind.

Goldman Sachs, said Katie Potter, has had a wellness team in place for many years, and as a global team they had a lot of information available. But a few years ago, particularly in APAC, it was noted people had differing opinions on the idea of "resilience". It wasn't about working as much as possible and not getting enough sleep, it meant addressing any issues. The company went back to basics and rolled out five pillars of resilience: self-awareness, strong body, connection, purpose & meaning, and state of mind, and that is the bedrock for current strategies.

Mellener Anne Coelho from Northern Trust added: 'In Asia there's a lot of groupism and it's a collectivist society with a reverence for preserving harmony and saving face. People are reluctant to talk about disability and mental health for fear of affecting the preservation of the

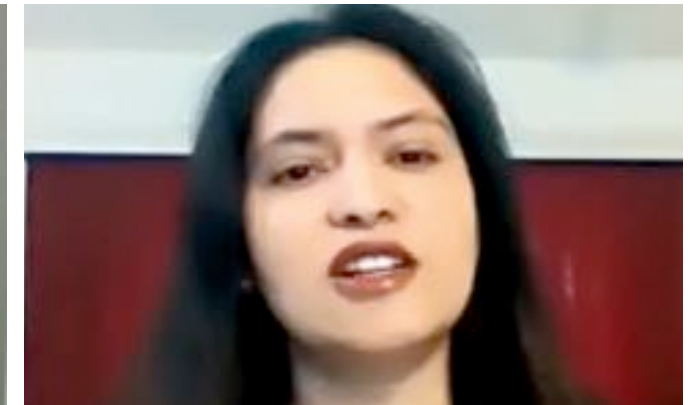
In Asia it's a collectivist society with a reverence for preserving harmony and saving face

family and society at large.' In India, Mel said, there's a lot of change happening with migration between rural and urban areas and rapid economic development. There are also several sectors of society that are deeply rooted in poverty, and talking about mental health still carries stigma. At Northern Trust, the approach had been to talk about mental health as part of health in general.

As with Goldman Sachs, a campaign was built around pillars of philosophy: in this case, physical, emotional and financial wellbeing. A fictitious character was introduced, who would then discuss all the different aspects of mental health with mascots. Not using real people meant that mental health issues were not associated with any diversity factor such as gender, disability or LGBT+. The scheme has since been replicated in other Asian countries.

Speaking their language

Stigma is ongoing, said Katie, and engagement issues still being worked out. Goldman Sachs APAC regions had noticed a lack of junior engagement in their on-site clinical support teams, so a counsellor was recruited who spoke several local languages, and that had made a big difference to the take-up of the service.



(Clockwise) Emiley, Mel, Lyn and Katie discussed ways to get around the stigma of discussing mental health in Asian societies

Removing some of the barriers had helped open up the conversation.

An external question for Katie asked about Covid's effect on the company's mental health requirements in the region. They already had a team on board, Katie said, but this year she'd heard much discussion of the challenges of home working. At the start of the pandemic there was a reduction in reaching out for help, as people were sharing so much over this universal experience.

Lyn raised the topic of making the workplace safe for those with a pre-diagnosed mental health condition so they

could then accept help from line managers – who themselves had to feel comfortable and competent at understanding what help the company could offer.

Mel pointed out that a line manager can spot signs of a mental health condition – maybe through a decrease in productivity – and then signpost, but perhaps not diagnose. That should be the job of psychiatrists and therapists. Listening without judgement is key, she said and that included not using negative language. ■

People are reluctant to talk about mental health for fear of affecting the preservation of the family

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Lynn talked about the need for a human-centric approach for line managers. They should be role models and check in regularly, asking people how they are and how they're feeling – not always easy in Asia. Meetings always start with a safety check and it should be the same with mental health.

2 Get your senior leadership on board, says Mel. 'Creating mental health awareness is a key aspect of change management but we need to see a significant cultural change. We need to unlearn and then re-learn a lot.'

3 Many people around us, from family and friends to work colleagues, will have been touched by mental ill health. It calls upon our leaders to be able to take part in storytelling. People resonate with the 'not just me' theory. Don't feel alone, says Lyn – just reach out.

Managing an Employee With Mental Health Issues: Stories From Managers in Asia

The panel looks at the hesitance in Asian corporate settings to share experiences of managing employees' mental health issues, and how to start the conversation



FACILITATOR:
HANNAH McLEOD
Head of Marketing and Strategy
City Mental Health Alliance

PANEL

MATHEW HYDE
Principal Health,
BHP, Singapore

NATHAN KHAN
Head of Partnerships
LinkedIn, Hong Kong

GILBERT LI
Partner
Linklaters, Hong Kong

A recent City Mental Health Alliance Hong Kong report about mental health and wellbeing in the workplace revealed that 22% of APAC employees had a mental health problem within the last 12 months. Asked who they'd told about it, nearly half hadn't told anyone, after which the top two responses were 'colleagues' and 'managers'. Responsibility clearly lies at the top, and it's important that leaders learn how to be vulnerable, in order to encourage others to do the same.

Facilitator Hannah McLeod invited the panel to share some problems they'd faced. Nathan Khan from LinkedIn talked about the challenges of being new to management, and outlined the self-induced pressure that some people face at work. Gilbert talked about the stigma within Chinese culture of discussing mental health. He shared a story from two years before of a colleague who had been a cheerful and hard-working senior associate until he began to feel the stresses of work. At the time, Gilbert said, the company was still on a journey about dealing with such situations, and their first move was to reallocate the man's work. But in doing so, had they removed his identity and taken some of the joy away from a role that he loved? Gilbert said that starting the conversation about the best way to accommodate him and help him get better was very challenging.

Mat Hyde from BHP in Singapore cited BHP's Employee Assistance Programme, with its supervisor support service that offers help for leaders dealing with interpersonal problems. Topics include tricky conversations with colleagues about work performance, work disputes, grief, and how to work with a stressed employee.

Supporting health campaigns such as Movember (said Mat, pointing to his

We need to treat mental health like physical health and understand our own requirements

moustache), encourages people to open up in the workplace. He said we need to treat mental health like physical health and understand our own requirements.

Practising de-stressing

As a small step, he said he irons a white shirt every morning. During that time he does a breathing exercise to control any physical signs of stress and pressure. He's not actually stressed when he's doing the exercises, but by practising them he's in a better place to apply the techniques should the situation arise later in the day. He recommended preparing for busy times of the year by getting eating, breathing and sleeping habits back on track.

Nathan told a story of a close peer who had always had a strong personality, but 'flipped 180' during a busy spell, and became detached. Nathan was new to his role and there was a lot to learn, but he shared his own experience with the colleague, letting him know he had been there too. The company now has many strategies in place such as employee resource groups, wellness workshops, and online meditation sessions.

In fact, during the height of the pandemic a leadership sharing session run by three



(Clockwise) Hannah, Mat, Nathan and Gilbert discussed how companies can better understand their employees' needs

senior directors saw them share personal stories of vulnerability. The effect was humanising and emotional and helped bring people together. Going forward, he said it would be great to see more managers bring things to the table, he said, but with some education.

Gilbert said his wife had post-natal depression, and some family members are struggling with OCD. In his wife's case, he wished he'd known more so he could have spotted the symptoms and offered advice. He doesn't want others to make the same mistakes. When his story – along with those of colleagues – was made into a video and shared, feedback was overwhelmingly

positive. It was a turning point for the company, which has now put in place first aid and manager training, an employ assist programme (EAP), seminars and more. The motto for Linklaters' leadership training is 'we're not training you to be psychiatrists, we're just training you to be a better colleague.'

Gilbert said: 'We can all be better colleagues by spotting symptoms and having that conversation. This is your job as a manager, so take an active role and don't turn a blind eye.' ■

Three senior directors shared personal stories of vulnerability. The effect was humanising and emotional

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Compassionate leadership is important. 'There's a difference between empathy and compassion,' Nathan says. There are lots of ways of to do this, including letting your guard down and sharing stories, and making it okay not to be okay.'

2 Senior members of teams should be free to share stories of personal experiences to normalise such topics and build them into conversation, as if discussing having a cold or flu. 'We talk about Covid every day – why is it such a big problem talking about mental health?' asks Gilbert

3 It's important for leaders to intervene early and take swift action. Mat says: 'When we miss the early signs, intervention at a later time will be more involved. Said another way, unchecked symptoms increase the likelihood of needing professional help.'

Women in Asia and the Challenge of Mental Health

Local experts examine how the Asian cultural context can make women vulnerable to mental health issues, and how lockdown has exacerbated the situation



MANOJ CHANDRAN
CEO
White Swan

PANEL

DR PRABHA CHANDRA
Professor of
Psychiatry

SUZANNE PRICE
Representative
Director
Price Global

JAYA VIRWANI
Ethics and Diversity &
Inclusion Leader
EY

Asia is a vast and diverse region. This discussion focused on India and Japan, but aspects will resonate in other Asian countries too. For women, working is beneficial for mental health, but there is a need to be switched-on 24/7. As the pandemic played out, a pause in the school support system only increased the workload. As a workforce we need to supply more support.

Dr Prabha Chandra opened the discussion with a well-known statistic: one in five people around the world has mental health issues. In countries where there is less gender equality, she added, work-related problems are heightened. The same applies in workplaces where women have less control.

Jaya Virwani from EY cited a recent LinkedIn Workforce Confidence Index Report, which had over 2,000 respondents. Forty-six per cent of the women surveyed work late to make up for work; 44% work outside of business hours to address childcare; and 42% can't focus on work with children at home. Taking care of the family is a disproportionate burden that has doubled with the pandemic.

Jaya discussed how EY had started a conversation around wellness some three years ago. With the onset of Covid in July, there had been a peak in the uptake of the company's employ assist programme (EAP) among women with mental health issues. Jaya pointed out that EY is the first company in India to launch a domestic violence policy, with a structured support system and the opportunity to continue working from home, or even relocate to another office if that is what is required.

Suzanne Price from Price Global noted the strong gender roles in Japan, where women take on all family responsibilities

In Japan, the average man does 20 minutes of housework per week

and the average man does 20 minutes of housework per week, according to research. Domestic help is expensive and not culturally accepted. Women end up pulled both ways and feeling guilty: there is a sense of no choice. Adding to this, Suzanne quoted Japan's infamous sense of "gaman", a condition of being so stoic that you don't show pressure.

Family ties that bind

Jaya noted similarities in India, especially surrounding the guilt of not being able to give 100% at work or home. The joint family system in India, she said, is all about putting women's needs last. If you then have to move to another city for work, away from your support network, that brings its own complications. Home, Jaya added, is not a safe space for some people.

Prabha agreed that we tend to think of trauma as an acute situation, but it can be low-key events occurring on a daily basis. She talked about senior-level women returning home each evening to take up very traditional roles: the transition is hard. Unsafe spaces exist at home and work, said Prabha, citing examples such as sexual harassment and 'little barbs'. These daily small-incident traumas can cause long-term anger and stress, resulting in a



(Clockwise) Manoj, Prabha, Jaya & Suzanne discussed how the pandemic had ratcheted up the pressure on Asian women

label of 'over-reaction' from men. In reality the reaction is due to an over-sensitised nervous system that has endured micro-trauma in an accumulative way.

Suzanne then turned to data, stating that in Japan the use of hotlines had increased by 50% since March. By August, suicide rates had increased by 15.4% – for women the figure was 40%. Many Japanese women work in retail and services as contract workers. Labour laws don't apply, so many had lost their jobs. Japanese apartments are small, said Suzanne, with no dedicated office space. She recommended advancing women's networks with recommended confidential listening sessions.

Dr Prabha was involved in setting up dedicated government helplines during the pandemic: 'We had 10,000 calls in a week, a large proportion from women.' As the pandemic plays out, stress levels show no signs of dipping. Online therapy hasn't helped as confidentiality issues prevent discussion.

Women just want to come to the offices to talk, and at work they need a psychological safe space. True resilience, she said, is not about being stoic, it's about knowing when to ask for help. ■

Daily small-incident traumas can cause long-term stress, resulting in a label of 'over-reaction' from men

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Women should be able to share burdens with their partner, says Prabha, in an attempt to escape the traditional mindset. And for a man to be supportive, his mental health is equally important. It's about emphasising to both genders that it's okay to share emotions.

2 Jaya notes EA's culture of empowerment where people are learning to handle time responsibly, like saying no to poorly timed meetings and blocking out lunch breaks. Most important is building trust in teams: the higher the sense of belonging, the more inclusive you are in your behaviour.

3 Suzanne cites investments of time, courage and money in setting out solutions. Training managers must apply more hands-on practice in managing mental health, including more role-play and less analysis.



In The Shadows: Substance Use in the Asian Workplace and the Link With Mental Health

Experts explore the growing challenge of substance abuse in the workplace, the relationship with poor mental health and how companies can address it



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SKY SIU
Executive Director
KELY Support Group

Amber Alam's opening figure cited mental health, neurological and substance disorders as marking 10% of the global burden of diseases, and 30 of non-fatal diseases. EAPs have been an important source of employer strategy, increasingly so since the pandemic began. But while awareness has improved, stigma still prevents many from seeking support. The key is in addressing our perceptions of who substance users are, and getting a handle on the 'work-hard-perform-less' paradox.

Sky Siu opened by describing the work of KELY Support Group in Hong Kong, geared towards young people aged 14 to 24, with prevention programmes mainly targeting secondary school users but also professionals. The 18 to 24-year-old bracket had seen a recent increase.

Amber Alam introduced APAC Optum and its mission to help people live healthier lives through a global employ assist programme (EAP). Optum conducts an annual international survey of employers, benchmarking a broad range of health and wellbeing services. Stress issues had showed a steep increase since this time last year, much of it lifestyle related and much of that under the family dispute perspective. There has also been a 40% hike in issues related to substance abuse compared with last year. Most employers,

Amber said, provided an EAP but there are still many companies without one. This year in Asia the emphasis had increased: 53% of employers now offered an EAP and 44% on-site EAP counselling.

Sky emphasised the link between mental health and addiction, with a common factor being underlying stress. Stress in young people often resulted in them turning to substances as a coping mechanism. In Asia's stressful working environment, the trend transfers from a competitive school environment to finding the best job. She cited anecdotes where young professionals on deadlines had used cocaine or crystal meth to stay up all night.

Michael from Lifespan Counselling, also in

There is a perception of the need to be the first one in the office, and the last one to leave



Hong Kong, works with young substance users and had seen a rapid increase in this year's referrals for substance abuse and addiction. He also cited the highly intensive culture that begins from a young age and goes right through to work. Clients experiencing a 'work-hard-play-hard' culture used substances as a release valve. A vicious cycle then forms, which impacts on families too.

Pressure-cooker cities

Sky agreed the pressure-cooker culture was a characteristic of most cities in Asia – there is a perception of the need to be the first one in the office, and the last one to leave. She quoted a 2019 survey from Rand Europe that reported Hong Kong ranking as the top city for long hours but lowest for productivity. Almost half of respondents had worked over 50 hours, but more than 70% of productive working days had been lost: the data didn't match up.

Saskhi cited data from WHO that identified the five leading mental health conditions for the APAC region: depression, anxiety, PTSD, suicidal behaviour and substance use disorder. Amber responded with a story from his previous career where his wife worked long Indian hours and he kept long American hours, and they never saw

each other. Had he known an EAP was in existence, he would have utilised it.

Michael talked about the need for family and friends to spot signs (behavioural changes like subtle differences in interaction) then carry out gentle confrontation in a supportive way. In the office, he said, we have an idea of how our colleagues always look and work. If we can learn to spot troubles – like productivity dips and absenteeism – that's a vital start.

The world has changed over the past year, said Amber, as have wellbeing strategy changes in the workplace, due to an increased need for virtual working. Tele-help services are now a huge part of mental health and wellbeing at Optum, and it's global, so someone in Singapore can access intervention from across the region.

Sky concluded that we have a preconceived notion of substance users, who typically are portrayed as dangerous, aggressive people. Many are simply substance users by way of coping. Once that understanding occurs, conversation can happen. ■

(From left) Sky, Amber, Michael and Sakshi discussed how substance abuse could be seen as a result of the pressure cooker culture of work in Asian cities

If we can learn to spot troubles – like productivity dips and absenteeism – that's a vital start

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 The need among Asians to save face feeds into the culture of not being willing to share struggles. If they can't do this when it's just related to work, then the problem of not sharing issues will be exacerbated if things escalate into substance abuse.

2 A big problem for EAPs is that the people-managers, who should be the torch-bearers, often don't understand mental illness and the difference between work help and clinical help. Amber said employers 'are beginning to come up with positive initiatives.'

3 Learn how to keep an eye out for one another. Look out for changes in an individual that are atypical of their behaviour. Michael says: 'It's hard to assess presenteeism but these issues causes real work-life balance struggle.'

Deloitte's Global Approach to Mental Health – A Deeper Case Study

This case study takes a deep dive into Deloitte's global mental health strategy – lessons learnt and practical steps taken by member firms across the globe



EMMA CODD
Global Inclusion
Leader
Deloitte

Mental health awareness had already been raised as a potential new programme at Deloitte before Covid hit, and progress had been made in some countries. Unaware of the pandemic on the horizon, the company's Global Millennial Survey became a beacon of information at a time when mental health awareness was pivoted to high priority.

Over 80% of Deloitte's workforce belong to the Millennial or Generation Z demographic. This ground-breaking survey covering over 18,000 individuals globally provided essential information for the company, as well as others. Raising key questions related to mental health, the pre-Covid findings were stark, said Emma Codd:

- 48% of Gen Zs and 44% of Millennials of all those surveyed reported feeling anxious or stressed most or all of the time (that's nearly half of 18,000 people).
- Nearly half of Gen Z and 44% of Millennials ranked mental health as their first or second priority in life from a huge list of priorities.

From a workplace perspective two major stress contributors stood out:

1. Balancing work and life
2. Not feeling comfortable to be your authentic self at work

Ominously, said Emma, the survey also showed that stigma was alive and well within the workplace. More than half of respondents said they felt time off due to stress or anxiety was legitimate. A third of those said they'd done so yet half those people gave a different reason for their absence. What did that lack of transparency translate into?

An important figure from a UK survey by Deloitte & Mind in Jan 2020, 'Refreshing the Case for Investment', revealed that poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45bn a year. The report also found that for every £1 spent by employers on mental health they get £5 back in terms of reductions in absence, presenteeism and staff turnover.

Armed with these figures, Deloitte worked out its new global mental health strategy. Global progress had not been consistent and even using the words 'mental health' was a challenge in some countries. One stark choice was to stick with that term no matter what.

Four pillars to provide a space

'Our formal vision,' said Emma, 'is to provide an environment enabling people to talk about mental health without fear of adverse impact on their career. Also to teach people to spot the signs and ask "Are you okay?"'

There are four elements of the very clear new strategy:

1. Making a clear commitment
2. Setting a baseline relevant to every country where we operate

Our vision is to provide an environment enabling people to talk about mental health without fear



Emma talked about making it feel okay to ask 'are you okay?', and for people to say if they're not

3. Creating a road map along which our firms can progress
4. Telling stories both internally and externally to help remove stigma

Elements of the new strategy cover:

- Senior leadership engagement and understanding

People's experience and everyday culture starts with an engaged CEO and leadership team, said Emma. In Deloitte HQs across the globe a consistent factor had been ensuring a fully engaged and vocal CEO when it came to mental health.

- Lived experience and storytelling

Emma championed the initiative's pioneering leaders. From the US, Jen Fisher was talking about her experience.

From the UK 'the extraordinary John Binns also sharing his experience of knocking

on the door until people listened, before engaging with talent'.

Storytelling, says Emma, doesn't have to be slick and corporate, just effective; in fact it helps if it isn't too glossy.

In Australia the scheme is called This Is My Story, where four powerful short stories include a senior partner and her daughter telling their tales. The US has a podcast series and the UK has a campaign, This Is Me.

- Steps to encourage disclosure including inclusive leadership

Here the key phrase is everyday experience. You won't speak up if you feel judged, and therefore this is about senior leadership, attitudes and everyday culture in the workplace, and people's need to feel safe before we speak. ■

IN NUMBERS:

48%
of Gen Z from the survey feel stressed most or all the time

44%
of Millennials rank mental health as their first or second priority

£45bn
poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45bn a year

Per £1
spent on mental health, £5 is returned in reduced absence and staff turnover

People's experience and everyday culture starts with an engaged CEO and leadership team

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 Those surveyed who were comfortable with disclosure cited working for companies that were open about discussing mental health issues. 'If we focus on this as employers,' says Emma, 'it could make a difference.'

2 Storytelling must include people from all levels because senior leaders need to tell stories. 'As someone lower down you may feel exposed, but if you see a leader being open you stand a much better chance of being encouraged to speak up.'

3 For those on a small budget Emma's advice is 'Cost it: show them the money and the figures. Show them the cost of attrition, go back and look at the exit data. Mine that data, factor it all in, calculate the cost of replacement and present it. You need that number.'

'To Be or Not To Be...' Recognising and Reducing Suicidal Ideation in the Workplace

Mental health activist Dick Moore shares a deeply personal story about suicide. How can families, schools and companies build it into their knowledge base?



DICK MOORE
Mental Health Activist
Charlie Waller

Dick Moore was a lucky man: living with privilege and opportunity that grew with each year – until In 2008 he became depressed. He got therapy and took early retirement and life was good. But then came a downturn that led him to take the stand at conferences around the world, giving critical advice on suicide intervention.

Life as a teacher, husband and father of four boys was 'privileged', until a depressive spell took over. A 'lovely' psychologist introduced him to the idea of 'pattern-break'. Dick said: 'My state of mind was not going to change if I was going to carry on doing the same things in the same ways I'd always done them.'

Dick was encouraged to talk to the key influencers in his life and those discussions led to early retirement. His wife became the main breadwinner and Dick became a house-husband.

The grief of a parent

Dick's son Barney was a sporty 21-year-old, quite cool and pretty normal, but suffering from social anxiety. When his adored girlfriend dumped him, Barney committed suicide.

In dealing with this tremendous loss, Dick heard about another charismatic young man, who had taken his own life 13 years before Barney, leading his parents to set up the Charlie Waller trust. Since 2012 Dick has been delivering talks, courses and workshops in schools and at conferences around the UK and overseas. Suicide, explained Dick, is at one end of the continuum of emotional wellbeing. We all fit on this line and we need to work out where we are and what our priorities

are. Top of the list should be looking at those we work with and love to identify anybody who is slipping – then asking what we can do to help.

Dick then shared statistics applied to 1,000 UK employees across all sectors, under the title Are Your Employees Working Productively?

- 770 will experience symptoms of mental ill health at some point
- about 250 will suffer from clinical depression
- 150 are suffering from a diagnosable mental health disorder today
- over 100 will have self-harmed
- 460 claim that workplace stress impacts their lives
- 444 claim working from home since Covid had a negative impact on their mental health

Dick read an email from a friend received a week before the TCH conference, asking for advice on dealing with anxiety. Fine 99% of the time, the city worker said that when anything worried him his anxiety shot up to worrying levels.

Dick then reeled off two more encounters since receiving the email: with the parents of a young graduate who had thrown himself under a train, and with a young mother whose executive husband had hung himself. Covid, said Dick, had made matters worse, but these were not unusual events, they were horribly common.

Dick presented a photo of Didier Lombard, CEO for France Télécom, convicted for implementing policies judged to have played a part in the suicide of 34 employees. Lombard was sentenced to a year in prison. In the UK we've had no criminal convictions of the like but, Dick warned, it's only a matter of time.



Dick Moore: 'Every one of us can be the light at the end of somebody's tunnel'

If we're deeply concerned about somebody we must 'keep them safe for now' until further intervention

How does your company score in these areas, he asked:

- Commitment to employee wellbeing
- Environment – were employees feel valued and happy?
- Policy – is there one for the company wellbeing programme?
- Training – have you had any in emotional and mental health?
- Empathy – building connection to create a culture of empathy

Dick mentioned the Asist Suicide Intervention Skills Course via UK charity Papyrus. 'The training is hard, emotional and valuable. It tells us that those of us who aren't clinicians or experts have one task in the workplace and at home: if we're deeply concerned about somebody we must "keep them safe for now" until further intervention can take place.'

Dick showed us a clip from Brene Brown's film Empathy, and finished with a lecture excerpt from neurobiologist Andrew Curran on dopamine and how to generate it.

'Company executives who don't take the emotional and mental health of their employees very seriously are abandoning the moral high ground and failing in their duty of care.'

What not to do:

- try not to express shock
- don't minimise someone's feelings
- avoid analysing someone's motives
- don't argue, lecture or judge
- don't ridicule or use guilt
- don't be sworn to secrecy

Questions to ask:

- Are you thinking of killing yourself?
- Do you have a plan?
- What is stopping you?

Read for inspiration:

- *The Boy, the Mole, the Fox and the Horse* by Charlie Mackesy
- *Empathy* by Brene Brown ■

SUICIDE FACTS

Now some suicide facts, based on the UK

- Suicide is the leading cause of death in people age 10-34
- Greatest risk age for men is 46-49, for women 50-54
- 26.8% of 24-year-olds have experienced suicidal thoughts
- In 2016 more than 50,000 people attempted suicide

Suicide is at one end of the continuum of emotional wellbeing. We all fit on this line

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'If someone is in an environment where they feel understood,' according to Andrew Curran, 'then that is good for their self-esteem. If those two things are true, that's good for their self-confidence. All three and they'll feel emotionally engaged in the situation.'

2 'Each individual will make a difference,' said Dick, 'if we follow Andrew Curran's advice about winning the hearts and minds of those close to us. All of us can be the light at the end of somebody's tunnel.'

3 Dick's best piece of advice to a CEO? 'A programme needs to be driven from the top with direct, hands-on leadership and a strong conviction that is clear to everybody, by a public endorsement of the programme.'

Coping with Caring in the UK: A Personal Story

An exploratory look at caring for someone who is experiencing mental health challenges, with husband and wife Jon and Abigail East



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Co-author of 'Big Boys
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PANEL

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JON EAST
Legal Consultant
**Sensus Rem
Consulting Ltd**

Having had a 'pretty privileged existence', Jon East's mental health decline began in 2017, with what he and his wife Abi thought was a prolonged bout of insomnia. This turned quickly into a deep depression, causing Jon to be signed off work and Abi to take over as carer, a role that she is now able to share with other sufferers, and their employers.

Jon East talked frankly about the start of his illness. 'It was a confusing time, a perfect storm. My insomnia made it hard to cope with life in general, I was sometimes getting two or three hours sleep a night. I also experienced a falling-away of some of my coping mechanisms.

'I'm involved with a hockey club and the season stopped in March so that had ended. I became less interested in being active, watching sport, eating out and socialising. Months before I'd got my first smartphone; looking back I think that became something of an addiction – there was so much you could do on it, and it pulled me in. These were all signs.'

Work had been very stressful and Jon was finding it hard to make decisions. He would push papers around the desk, not sure what to pick up next.

Jon's wife Abi East noticed he was stressed but assumed it would pass, but then she saw how he became self-doubting and negative about things and lost interest in hobbies. One day he had a panic attack in a supermarket; it was worrying to see him in such a state. Eventually he saw his GP before having one CBT session – and then things progressed to holistic care.

Friends and family rallied round, for



When John fell into a deep depression, wife Abi took over as carer

Abi as well as for Jon. 'Being a carer is full-on,' Abi said, 'and all the focus is on the patient. I limped through every day on autopilot. Our daughters were seven and 10 at the time and I also run my own business; life was busy.'

A packed-out family life was detrimental to Jon, so having time out became an important aspect of recovery. Breaks at his parents' enabled him to take a step back and gave Abi a chance to regroup. Jon says mindfulness played a huge part in his recovery, but not all aspects. 'I enjoyed going for walks in the fresh air, lifting my head up and noticing things. I listened to podcasts and I got myself a Fitbit watch. I had two psychiatrists, one of whom played an integral part in my recovery.

When I had a panic attack at work, that was the catalyst for me asking to take time out



(From left) Fabian heard Jon and Abi share their story. 'Being a carer is full-on and all the focus is on the patient,' said Abi

'My boss was relatively new and had no first-hand experience with mental health issues. When I had a panic attack at work, that was the catalyst for me asking to take time out. I remember sitting in my boss's office with him asking why I was leaving and I had no idea, I was only thinking: I just need to get out of here and go home and get to a safe place.'

Jon's boss later admitted to him that with hindsight Jon's responses to his 'good morning' greeting had been indicating there might be something amiss. Jon said it was hard for managers. 'Every time someone says 'good morning' slightly differently, do we then check in with that person? How can we do that in an authentic way?'

Time for herself

Abi realised she had to look after herself too; if she went down, the girls and Jon

would have no-one. She had regular therapy sessions and made time to have breaks, playing tennis once a week while someone else watched over her husband. 'There's so little out there for the role of the carer,' she said: 'I asked a consultant about leaflets for advice and there was nothing. So I read every book I could on mental health and anxiety.' I then wrote a list of Top Ten Tips for Carers, which includes not taking it personally, looking after yourself, and being selfish: only do the things and see the people that make you feel good.'

Abi's advice for employers includes recognising that one size doesn't fit all, agreeing on types of contact, and, of course, keeping in touch with the carer too. ■

There's so little out there for the carer. I asked a consultant about leaflets and there was nothing

KEY TAKEAWAYS

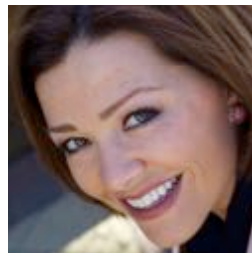
1 Look out for changes in behaviour and working patterns. Abi says: 'If you notice any sit down and have a non-invasive conversation with. Show them that you care but don't try and fix it, just signpost help that is available to them.'

2 Authenticity from an employer is a crucial aspect of offering support. Jon says: 'If you say to an employee "I want to make sure that you're okay", then you have to support that and walk the walk.'

3 'The title of this conference says it all,' says Jon, 'because this can happen to anybody, so don't just dismiss it and assume the person you're talking to is not the sort of person it would happen to. And check in properly with people, because "fine" is not really an answer.'

Fertility and Mental Health at Work

A panel reviews the relationship between fertility and workplace mental health.
How have employers supported employees experiencing difficulties in conceiving?



HANNAH VAUGHAN JONES
Journalist
Lewnah Media

PANEL

RICHARD CLOTHIER
Campaigner
NHS Fertility
Treatment Equality

ELLY McDOWALL
HR Business Partner
Merck

ANYA SIZER
Regional Organiser
Fertility Network UK

A stark point from Fertility Network UK's Anya Sizer opened the discussion. The issue of fertility is often referred to as a lifestyle choice, yet it is classified by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as a disease of the reproductive system. It affects around one in six UK couples (not including same-sex couples and single people), and it's not solely a female issue, it affects men too. So there's a real need for best practice to be put in place.

Fertility crosses class and background, said Anya – notably, hours before the panel discussion, Meghan Markle had gone public with her own miscarriage. Within all our workplaces, she said, it will be affecting someone.

She quoted two key surveys from Fertility Network UK and Middlesex University: for those undergoing long-term infertility issues, 90% had experienced some form of depression. Worryingly, 42% of that group had experienced suicidal tendencies and 75% experienced a lack of workplace policy on the subject, while 85% admitted treatment had affected their work.

'On a daily basis,' said Anya, 'the emotional fallout from infertility has a huge toll and that's on top of the logistics of having to juggle treatments and work. The key word we have heard in the surveys is "presenteeism" – showing up but not working to your best ability.'

Richard Clothier discussed his own experiences. Having tried for a while, he and his wife were diagnosed with male factor infertility. 'I found the fertility eco-system sadly lacking when I needed emotional support. I'm a private person but I did try talking to friends and family. I quickly learned that unless you have personal experience of something it can be difficult to empathise. I had moments of

I found the fertility eco-system sadly lacking when I needed emotional support

self-loathing because I could see how the issues were affecting not just me and my work but my wife as well.'

Facilitator Hannah Vaughan's experiences of 15 IVF rounds (resulting in the birth of her son last year) were threaded through a busy career as a freelance journalist. Flexibility was required for treatment appointments but her career also involved last-minute work.

To compound matters, she said, in the rush to make money to pay for treatments she had 'lost the ability to make good decisions, and do anything well other than fertility treatment.'

Confide with care

From his own work perspective, Richard had only felt comfortable discussing issues with a line manager, but he did recommend an open approach. It helps, he said, if you can share some of the tests and steps you'll go through so that colleagues know what's involved.

One big tip from Richard was in choosing a confidante. 'If you can see that someone is getting married and buying a house,' he said, 'you can guess what the next step might be.'



(Clockwise), Hannah, Richard, Elly & Anya talked of a need for more resources to help deal with the issue

If they suddenly announce they're pregnant, they probably won't be suitable confidantes any more'.

Next, Elly McDowall discussed Merck's Fertility Policy, a new venture that 'fits in nicely with our recently launched wellbeing strategy in terms of raising awareness on topics of mental health'.

Before the policy was developed, Elly's then HR role had involved carrying out conversations with employees undergoing fertility treatment, and the environment had been supportive. But Merck wanted a more formalised approach so employees could enter discussions armed with a

policy. 'We've put together a toolkit of resources that managers can use,' said Elly, 'and we're considering a buddy policy.' Richard agreed this would have been useful for him, and revealed he'd since found online platforms for sharing experiences.

'It's very important to have buy-in from a senior level,' said Elly, 'and another point is flexibility. We give days off for treatment and that covers partners too. We've also looked at working arrangements because one size doesn't fit all.'

We give days off for treatment and that covers partners too

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'Even if a man says he's feeling okay about his infertility,' says Richard, 'he's probably not. We have an equal emotional investment as our female partners, but we rarely speak out. That's something we need to encourage.'

2 When building a policy, it's vital to get the tone right. People like the Fertility Network can provide drafts to help start you off, then you can tailor the content to your business. Elly says: 'We asked for help from employees who were experiencing issues, and their input was invaluable.'

3 If you're aware of someone suffering from infertility, don't try and fix it. Richard says: 'We're all human, and we all want people to feel better, but try and avoid phrases like "I'm sure this cycle of treatment will work" – things like that are not helpful at all.'

Measurement and Understanding Impact

As more companies undertake mental health efforts, how much impact are they having? This session looks at measurement strategies



FACILITATOR:
KATIE LEGG
Director Strategy & Partnerships
Mental Health UK

PANEL

ASHISH VIJAY JAIN
Head of Employee Health & Wellbeing
GlaxoSmithKline, Asia

'Mental health is one of the biggest things to have come out of Covid,' said Ashish Vijay, opening the discussion, 'but even before that we could see that mental health was having an economic impact of more than \$1trn on an annual basis.' Ashish also cited another statistic of more than 91m lost workdays in the UK alone related to mental health – clearly, he said, this is an important theme, as is working out how we measure it.

Why is it so hard to measure in the workplace, Katie Legg began by asking Ashish. 'One of the main barriers is employees themselves, and stigma,' he said. 'People don't feel comfortable discussing things openly.'

'The second biggest barrier is with the employer. GSK is represented in more than 100 countries and we have diverse cultures. A group of people based in Asia will be very different to those based in Brazil or Europe, and that can create discomfort when discussing issues. People in emerging countries are more comfortable when talking with their nearest and dearest – it's not always easy to discuss personal issues.'

Businesses at different levels of their evolution have different approaches. A mature business will have better systems in place and see a greater inclusiveness. Those in the early stage of growth tend to have a growth mindset rather than an inclusive one.'

Another barrier for the employer, Ashish added, is lack of clarity (how do we ensure that what we are doing is sufficient?) and small employers might have budget-related restrictions (is there suitable insurance coverage for this?)

GSK's "modern employer" journey focuses on health and wellbeing inclusively and holistically.

In setting it up, 'the right environment has to be established, with specific standards, and employees had to feel they could speak out safely – that had to come right from the top.'

Relevant sources were also made available for the team and for managers.

What factors were considered when bringing people in to determine what the metric and strategy should be?

Champions for change

It came down to enablers, he said. When a team brought in enthusiastic leaders they encouraged other leaders to jump on. 'What moved the needle for us was champions: everyday employers, passionate people who wanted to get involved and make a difference.'

There is an old adage in business, "what gets measured gets done", said Ashish, and described how the strategy uses a regular survey that includes questions on health and wellbeing and looks at

What moved the needle for us was champions: everyday employers who wanted to get involved



data from anonymised inputs. Where a leader wants to go into further detail, an organisational stress-assessment is input to generate data with detail.

'We identify themes occurring at a business level, that might have occurred because of a very specific local issue. By doing this we can pinpoint hotspots. An issue might come down to a group of employees in a certain location having a high amount of stress, and the contributory factors could be as simple as change in sleep levels or job satisfaction.' In one example, a hotspot was identified where massive restructure was taking place, which always brings about anxiety and uncertainty. 'We implemented a partnership with HR that involved change management, coaching, mental health and resilience, and it really made a difference.'

Qualitative versus quantitative data was a question for Ashish, and for him

the answer was that both are useful: 'Qualitative helps us consider macro trends, but quantitative data helps us go deeper and work out what the issue is.'

Another question asked how small teams can quickly measure strategy. 'No matter how small a company, work out what matters to the team as a whole. If we have identified the top three priorities, we automatically have clarity.'

If there's one certainty, said Katie, it's change. 'We can't write off 2020 as a different year. There is always something going on, whether locally, nationally or further afield, that is having an impact on what is happening in our workplace at any one time, and it's about not putting those to one side as an anomaly – they are part of our existence.' ■

Katie and Ashish discussed how stigma, lack of clarity and diverse cultural backgrounds within a company can all pose barriers to measurement

No matter how small a company, work out what matters to the team as a whole

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'We wanted to create an environment that was supported by trust, and to ensure that leaders and managers looked at it with clarity, and create resources that helped the people understand, build up their resilience, and move forward.'

2 'The beauty of the measurement is in the outcome and the actions that we take, and what we are slowly becoming more effective at knowing is what is required. We are trying to be bespoke and target how to customise our approach.'

3 'It's about making those recommendations into a series of tangible actions that can become alive,' agrees Katie. 'Then making sure the managers have information that they can use to make a difference within their workforce.'



The Future Generation: A Global Youth Panel Discussion

The penultimate session heard from a range of voices from the next generation, What stance is today's youth taking in the mental health space across the globe?



FACILITATOR:
HARRY CORIN
Mental Health Advocate

PANEL

SWETHA AKHNOOR
Employment and Education Consultant
Global Shaper, India

DR NAREEM DALAL
Psychiatrist
Lusaka University Teaching Hospital, Zambia

FATIMA AZZAHRA EL AZZOUZI
Co-Chair, Equity & Inclusion Steering Committee,
Global Shaper, Canada

A youth panel from around the globe discussed the issues that they have navigated, and how they see the future. The younger generation can be leaders and innovators alongside the senior generation: it's about building that workplace culture.

Facilitator Harry Corin's story began one morning at work when outside his window he saw many people standing on top of the building next door – actually, these were mannequins, part of Project 84 by the charity Calm, representing the number of men who fall victim to suicide every week in the UK, and placed on the roof to publicise the issue.

'I'd lost my father to suicide at the age of 12, but it wasn't until I saw that rooftop vision that things began to change. It got me thinking, and I slowly began to realise that all my thoughts around loss were not just my own.'

Dr Nareem Dalal's father has bipolar disorder, yet Nareem always questioned the condition. In his teens Nareem lost two friends to suicide, yet he viewed the events with a question mark.

At medical school he assumed that he would learn life-saving, but he soon

realised that he was surrounded by people who were "not fine" – patients and medical students alike. 'Today I'm proud to say I'm a psychiatrist in training,' he said, 'a member of mental health youth advisory committees, and a global mental health expert.'

Fatima Azzahra El Azzouzi works with global shapers on mental health projects, a cause close to her heart due to her experience of mental illness in the family.

Swetha Akhnoor's experiences as an organisational psychologist had led her to see that we need to think of employees as humans first, then employees.

A generational shift

After the introductions, the panellists gave their views on attitudes to mental health among the young. 'Compared with previous generations, young people do believe mental health is necessary,' said Fatima. Many self-made initiatives started by the youth use online support to help people who are struggling.'

Dr Nareem considered identity: 'Young people look towards mental health as something that's part and parcel with them as they grow up. They're not afraid to speak out. In my work I deal with



(From left), Harry, Swetha, Nareem and Fatima talked about how young people's attitudes could be a force for change

science over stigma, something that young employees are championing. 'This is the generation that grew up with the internet at their fingertips,' said Shweta, 'so they are more aware, less afraid, to speak out.'

Harry then turned to the jobs young people were seeking in the mental health arena.

Taking it to the top level

'Young people are looking to bring their whole selves into work,' said Fatima, 'and to have courageous conversations. The challenge comes from talking to a member of the older generation who's not ready to do that. If we had senior management members who were young and came in with that culture, it would change the workplace tremendously.'

'Young people come in hoping for great things to happen and it's for the companies to embrace that mindset,' said Shweta. 'That's the positive outlook.'

But then, a recent comment from Headspace said the younger generation was disappointed by efforts made by companies to cater to their mental health needs.

Companies should take that as an opportunity to figure it out.

'There is a thin line between work and life balance,' Shweta said. 'With the internet and social media we all live a 24-hour reality with a generational gap that needs to be addressed. We need to understand where the older generation is coming from.'

Culture plays a key part, said Dr Nareem. 'I'm a third-generation Zambian but my views are not the same as an indigenous Zambian.'

Harry asked about examples of differing generational perspective. Nareem described a survey instigated by him that looked at young medics in a Zambian hospital, and revealed high levels of burnout. 'The seniors put it down as whining,' he said. He also talked about a 'trans-cultural society', where cultures from the homeland aren't catered for overseas. Is your workplace culture catering to every employee's needs? ■

This is the generation that grew up with the internet at their fingertips, so they are more aware

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'Young people should be on the board of every company,' says Shweta. Call it 'the junior board', whatever suits your company's needs, but create specific avenues for the younger generation to have a voice. Why shouldn't a young person be on the board?'

2 When hiring, Nareem says, 'Interviews can so often be one-sided. There should be a 360 structure where the person being interviewed should be allowed to ask questions. The youth have certain things they're looking for in terms of work-life balance and job satisfaction.'

3 Fatima advises: 'Every cultural change is gradual and we need to start somewhere. Maybe there'll be one CEO of a big company who takes a big step and this becomes the new fashion and suddenly everybody follows. It's about changing the culture.'

Defence Mechanisms: How the Arsenal Legend Turned Around his Addiction

In our closing keynote, ex-Arsenal and England Captain Tony Adams MBE discusses his own mental health journey



INTERVIEWED BY:
ZOE SINCLAIR
Co-Founder
This Can Happen

PANEL

TONY ADAMS MBE
Ex-Arsenal and
England Captain,
Founder
Sporting Chance Clinic

From post-game binges and blackouts to rehab champion, former football captain Tony Adams MBE talked candidly about his road from global football stardom to alcoholism, and recovery. After several crisis points and a spell in prison, a phone number slipped into his pocket was the first step on the ladder to safety.

'My first drug of choice was football,' Tony began. 'It suppressed all my thoughts and feelings.'

'I was a big kid, very tall for my age, with a broken nose, big ears and low self-worth. All my self-esteem came from what I did. I had panic attacks in the classroom before reading and that made me say things wrong, and everyone laughed and it was crippling. I had the worst attendance at my school, and I couldn't say anything to my family. So I escaped to football.'

'I signed that big contract and got lots of pats on the back for what I did, but not who I was. Then when I was 17 I broke a bone and had to stay home on a Saturday when I'd usually be playing a game. I

My first drug of choice was football. It suppressed all my thoughts and feelings

was irritable and discontent. I got on my crutches and went to the local pub, and alcohol did exactly what football usually did for me.

Tony gave an overview of his increasing alcoholism over the next 12 years.

'My drinking and football careers ran side by side. After a match I wouldn't go home, I'd get smashed to oblivion, have blackouts, sleep with people I didn't want to sleep with.'

'I drank eight pints every Monday but that wasn't drinking lager, it was playing darts. On Thursdays, I wasn't drinking eight pints of Guinness, I was playing snooker. I sobered up on Friday to play on Saturday.'

The consequences began adding up.

'In 1990 I went to prison, where I got no help whatsoever. In 1992 I married a barmaid whose drug of choice was cocaine and somehow we had two kids. It was no relationship.'

'In January 96 I put her into treatment – I drove her there drunk. Her counsellors asked me how I was feeling, and driving home I saw the first crack in my armour.'



Tony shared stories of a chaotic life lived alongside an elite football career



Tony told Zoe: 'as soon as Gareth missed the penalty I was off on a bender. I don't want that time back again'

But still I did nothing.

In February 96 I damaged my cartilage so I couldn't play football. In March 96 I took my kids to lunch, drank six bottles of wine and passed out. My mother-in-law took the kids.'

Turning the tide

April 1996 saw the first turning point.

'My mother-in-law put a phone number in my pocket and said: "That's the number you need to try and understand what your wife is going through." The number was for my wife's counsellor.'

'I went to meet him and said "I don't know who I am" and that was a major start.'

'In June I went to Euro 96 clean, but as soon as Gareth missed the penalty I was off on a bender. I don't want that time back again, and that's why I'm still in counselling and visiting AA.'

Alcoholism isn't pretty, as Tony described,

and the spiral continued. In tears over a drink one night there was a shift, and something inside made Tony realise he was done.

'It was my jumping-off point. I didn't want to live any more, I wanted out. At 29 this was the first time I'd cried. Next day at work it so happened there was a guy who was 18 months clean and he invited me to a meeting. I went along and loved it; it all made sense.'

Zoe asked, how can we make the workplace kinder?

'I was a bully when I was drinking in the changing room, so when I was clean I tried to create a working environment that was open and honest, with good communication throughout and respect; everything was on my agenda. One man I was dealing with was in trouble and I gave him that special gift – I gave him a contact number.' ■

I was a bully when I was drinking, so when I was clean I tried to create an open working environment

KEY TAKEAWAYS

1 'Drinking accelerated my illness and got me to my bottom quicker but recovery was also quick. I went on to play sober for six more years. Some people claim you lose your mojo when you give up drink but I'm not one of those. I was more successful than ever.'

2 'I'll never put work in front of things again. I'm setting up a new business but I'm not writing emails at 3am, I have weekends off – I've got balance. It's difficult to put my phone down every Sunday, but I've got to have healthy boundaries, because I'm an addict.'

3 How do we put addiction on the agenda at work? 'As a manager, hand it over to the professionals. Your HR department should know the resources to call upon and the experts to intervene. Get your employee the best help you possibly can. Don't try and fix it yourself.'

Views from the frontline

Our workshops gave a mouthpiece to representatives from a range of businesses and mental health organisations, who shared their perspectives on a topic that this year has been brought into sharp focus. From dealing with bereavement to avoiding digital burnout, our speakers offered advice informed by their research and expertise and invited our viewers to explore how these ideas would work in their own organisations.

Now, more than ever, we need compassion in our lives

BUSINESS MENTAL WELLBEING



BUSINESS MENTAL WELLBEING

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Leaveism: Is this the 'ism' we should be most worried about?

When we're unable to leave work at work, the lines become blurred and stress can mount up. Staff can end up working lots of unpaid hours, become emotionally drained and suffer burnout. CEO Craig Fearn talked through some simple techniques to make sure the balance between work and home is maintained – even when our home becomes our workplace. ■

CHAMPS CONSULTING

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Manage with Mental Wealth in Mind

As a leader, looking after the team's wellbeing alongside business performance in uncertain times might feel like the straw that will break your already over-burdened back. Champs CEO Tara Kent shared some simple tips on creating a team environment that promotes positive Mental Wealth, aiming to show that managing a team's wellbeing and managing their performance needn't be mutually exclusive agendas. ■



Champs

GRIEF ENCOUNTER

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Supporting bereaved employees and colleagues

Director of Clinical Services Liz Dempsey talked of an exponential expansion of corporate bereavement strategies in recent years. She estimated that there are currently 250,000 people in the UK grieving as a result of coronavirus, and as they return to work it's imperative that we create a workplace culture that openly talks about death and grief. She outlined how to spot the signs of overwhelming grief and open up conversations, how to support staff and how a proactive and robust bereavement policy, within your organisation's mental health strategy, will encourage a healthy, open workspace. ■

gr'ef encounter



headspace



HEADSPACE

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Creating happy, healthy workplaces through compassionate leadership

GM International's James McErlean suggested that now more than ever, we need compassion in our lives. Science shows that compassion at work matters and it starts with leaders, who have the unique opportunity to create healthy, happy and productive workplaces. James discussed what compassion is, and how we can cultivate it within ourselves and teams, and the latest research on workplace stress and mindfulness. He also offered up ideas and practical ways in which leaders can support employees and be kind to their minds. ■

LIVED EXPERIENCE TRAUMA SUPPORT

livedexperiencetraumasupport.com
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From Trauma to Triumph

Founder Michael Byrne shared his own lived experience of incredible personal trauma, including domestic violence in his childhood home, the murder of his father and surviving the Clutha disaster in Glasgow. All this ultimately led to Michael's mental health breakdown. He talked about how to look after your own mental health both at work and home and to 'Be the Change' needed in an uncertain world. ■



LIVED EXPERIENCE TRAUMA SUPPORT (LETS) LTD

WORKSHOPS

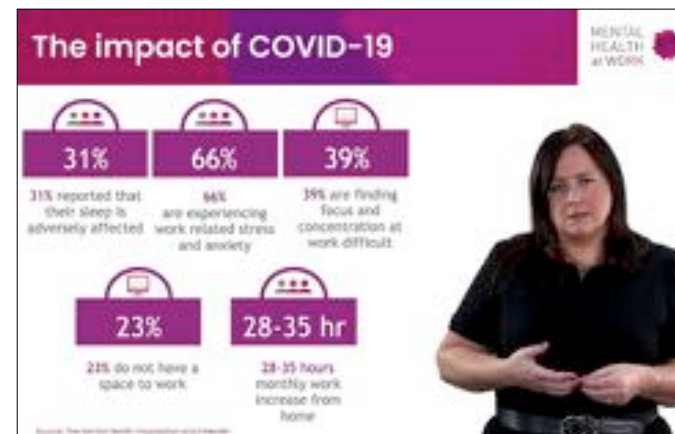
MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

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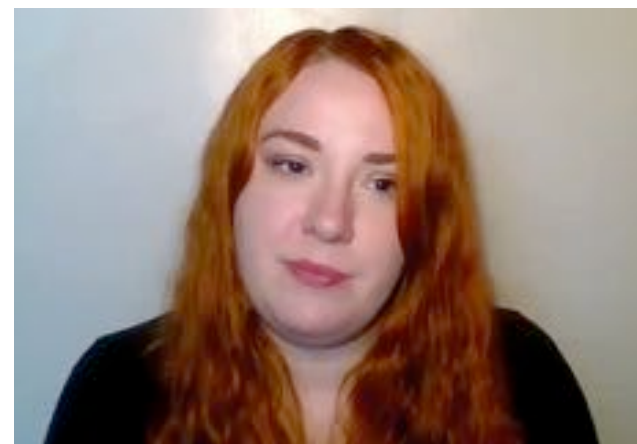
Situational anxiety and what the workplace needs to know

With the challenging events of 2020 continuing to have an impact on our mental health, Operations Manager Anna Chart considered their impact in the workplace and explored situational anxiety as one of the driving factors. She explained what this is, why we may experience it and how workplace culture can adapt to notice changes and signpost for support. ■

MENTAL
HEALTH
at WORK



Mental
Health
UK



MENTAL HEALTH UK

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Employee resilience during change

Covid. Furlough. Redundancy. Recession. Homeworking. 2020 has seen huge changes to normal working life. Senior Trainer and Consultant Lorna O'Connor invited attendees to think about the emotions they'd experienced during a big change in their life such as moving job or house. She said we all experience a similar range of emotions when faced with change, and that employers needed to appreciate and understand these emotions to support the health and wellbeing of their staff. She went on to explore how change can cause emotional distress and look at practical models for supporting staff. ■

OKINA DESIGNED BY PEOPLE MATTER

people-matter.org.uk
mark@peoplematter.tech

Breaking Bad – From burnout to thriving cultures

Rapidly increasing levels of burnout and associated mental health problems are a huge concern for organisations globally. R&D Director Amy King looked at ways in which you can avoid workplace burnout and inspire action. She used reflective exercises to encourage attendees to assess their workplaces, and build a systematic culture of wellbeing that will help employees build resilience and be at their best. ■



WORKSHOPS

SCHRODERS PERSONAL WEALTH

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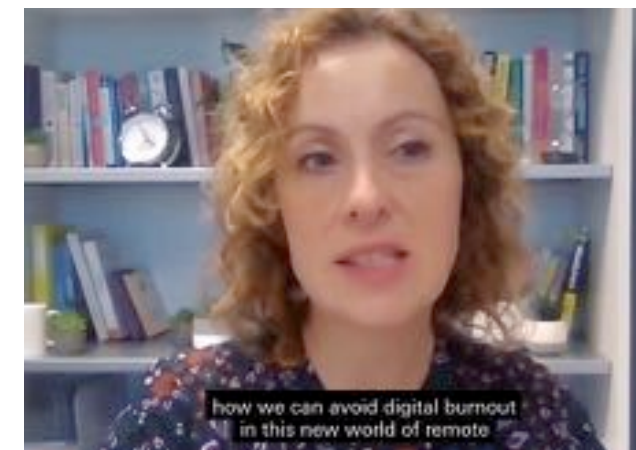
Why poor financial wellbeing is holding the UK back (and how to change it)

David Thomas, Head of Business Development at Schroders Personal Wealth, explained the impact poor financial wellbeing can have on employees' productivity, and what Schroders Personal Wealth is doing to help people gain control over their finances. This includes creating a one-stop-shop to provide support, signposting services which can provide help – such as banks and lenders, financial advisors like SPW, government bodies – and encouraging individuals to engage with services as well as their own finances. ■

Schroders
personalwealth



shine
offline



SHINE OFFLINE

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Working from home or sleeping at work?

In this timely and important workshop, Laura Willis from digital wellbeing experts Shine Offline explored how to avoid digital workplace burnout in remote workers. With people working on average 28 hours a month overtime from home during the pandemic, and stress and overwhelm having increased by 84 to 90%, she said, companies need to look at their tech and make sure that it is not causing toxic stress for their employees. Strategies need to be in place to ensure that people can step away from their work and maintain a positive work/life balance. ■

TOGETHERALL

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Solutions before the problem: preventative measures and the power of connection.

In this workshop, Togetherall asked experts their views on how organisations can use connection with others to prevent poor mental health in the workplace. Gregor Henderson from Public Health England, Online Community Manager Ian Toman and Vitality's Dr Ali Hasan talked about how community and connection is a powerful and often missing piece in helping employees cope. They discussed various ways in which that connection can be made and used to greatest effect. ■



WORKSHOPS

UNMIND

unmind.com

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Mental health training: The single greatest opportunity for organisations in 2021?

In a working world that's constantly changing, digital mental health training needs to be a cornerstone of every workplace wellbeing strategy. In this session, Demand Generation Manager Louise Day and Mental Health Technology Specialist Daisy Abbott explored how a credible, efficient and accessible programme won't just improve the employee experience, but also your organisational performance. ■



WORK WELL NW

WORK WELL NW

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15 Minute Yoga Reset Practice

Maria Tran from WorkWell NW guided attendees through a gentle yoga sequence to reset the body and mind. It has never been more important to develop practices of self-care. Mindfulness meditation and yoga are scientifically validated interventions to decrease stress, anxiety and depression. This calming session taught how to breathe deeply and move with intention as a way to recharge your batteries for whatever your day has in store. ■



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