



Absence Management: How to deal with mental health absences

11 March 2021



Introductions

Presenters



Victoria Templeton
HR Knowledge Manager



Sue Watson
Head of Client Services



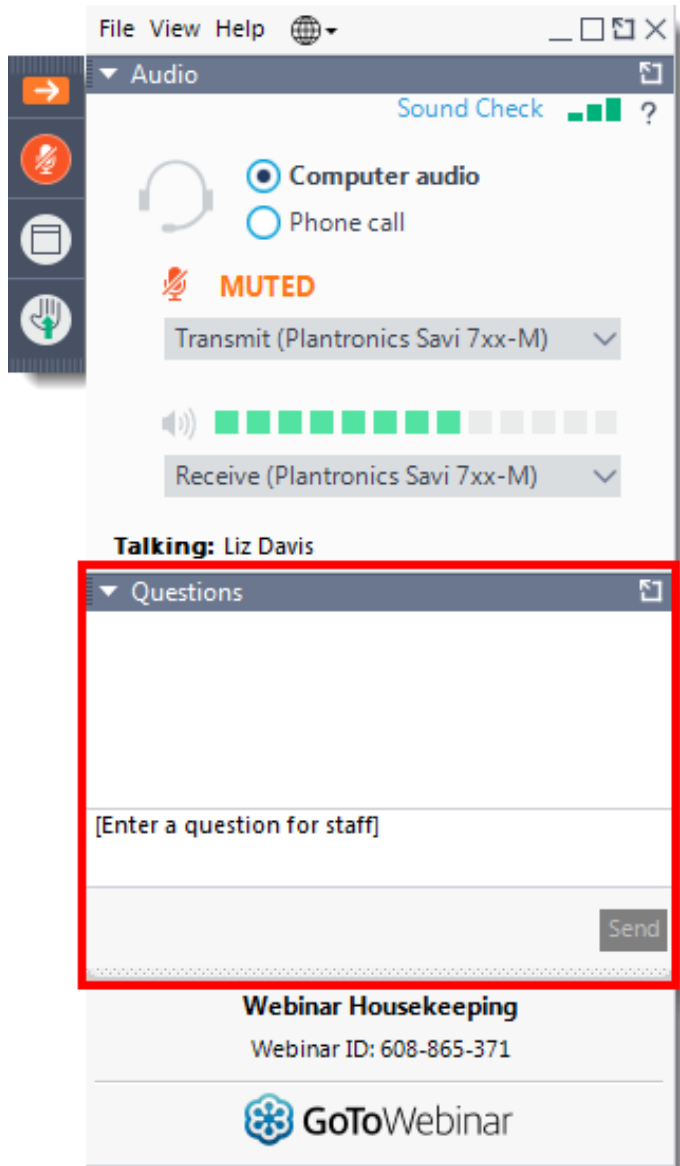
A group of diverse people are seated in a meeting or classroom setting. In the center, a man with a beard and glasses, wearing a grey cardigan, has his right hand raised. To his left, a woman with long dark hair is looking towards him. To his right, a woman with long blonde hair is also looking towards him. In the background, other people are visible, some looking towards the front. The scene is brightly lit with indoor plants and bookshelves in the background.

How to ask questions





GoToWebinar Housekeeping: Time for Questions



Your Participation

- Please continue to submit your text questions and comments using the Questions panel





Absence Management: How to deal with mental health absences

11 March 2021

Agenda

- What is mental health?
- The causes and consequences
- Ethical and moral duty
- The balancing act
- The Equality Act
- What is reasonable?
- Managing mental health
- Useful links



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- **What is mental health?**
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What is Mental Health?

“Health is a state of complete physical, mental and social wellbeing and not merely the absence of disease or infirmity...it is a state of well being in which an individual realises their own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to their community”

World Health Organisation (WHO)

What is Mental Health?

“Work related stress, depression or anxiety is a harmful reaction people have to undue pressures and demands placed upon them at work”

Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

What is Mental Health?

Conditions include:

- Anxiety disorders
- Bipolar disorder
- Body dysmorphic disorder
- Borderline personality disorder
- Depression
- Dissociation and dissociative disorders
- Eating disorders
- Obsessive compulsive disorder
- Postnatal depression
- Post traumatic stress disorder
- Psychosis
- Schizophrenia
- Seasonal affective disorder
- Stress

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Causes and Consequences

Causes

- Personal life and relationships
- Money, work and housing
- Life changes
- Health issues
- Traumatic life events
- Smoking, alcohol, gambling and drug misuse

Consequences

- Poor health
- Absenteeism
- Work performance
- Attitude and behaviour
- Relationships at work

Causes and Consequences

WHO

- Depression is the leading cause of disability worldwide
- Globally, more than 264 million people of all ages suffer from depression
- More women are affected by depression than men

MIND

- 1 in 4 people will experience mental ill health in England each year
- 1 in 6 people report experiencing a common mental health problem such as depression or anxiety in any given week in England

Causes and Consequences

HSE (2019/20)

- 828,000 workers suffered from work related stress, depression or anxiety
- 17.9 million working days lost due to work related stress, depression or anxiety
- 51% of all work related ill health cases were due to depression or anxiety
- 55% of working days lost were due to depression or anxiety
- Workload, tight deadlines, too much work or pressures were the prominent causes

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Ethical and Moral Duty

- Treating others with dignity and respect
- Through systems and processes
- With awareness, sensitivity and empathy
- Zero tolerance towards bullying, harassment and discrimination of those who suffer with mental ill health
- It is more common than we think, and it has enhanced since COVID-19
- “Treat someone just as how you would like to be treated and you can’t go far wrong”

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The Balancing Act

Organisation

Employee

Respond to
Covid-19

New customers

Profits

Occupational
Health

Sickness
Absence

Adjustments

Medical
appointments

What is reasonable?

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Legal Framework

- Equality Act 2010
- Employment Rights Act 1996
- Data Protection Act 2018 & UK GDPR
- Health & Safety at Work Act 1974
- The Management of Health & Safety at Work Regulations
- Claims:
 - Discrimination
 - Constructive/Unfair Dismissal
 - Personal injury

The Equality Act

*“A person has a disability if they have a **physical** or **mental** impairment and the impairment has a **substantial** and **long term** adverse effect on their ability to carry out **normal day to day activities**”*

The Equality Act

- Physical or mental
- Substantial
- Long term
- Normal activities

The Equality Act

- Comply with the duty to make reasonable adjustments
- To not discriminate because of the disability
 - Direct
 - Indirect
 - Harassment
 - Victimisation
 - Arising from the disability
- [Employment Tribunal and Employment Appeal Tribunal Tables 2019/20 – Disability Discrimination Claims](#)
 - Average award £27,043
 - Median award £13,000
 - Maximum award £265,719

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What is Reasonable?

- Employment tribunals will consider the size of the business, its financial resources and administrative set up
- When considering what is a reasonable adjustment consider...
 - The extent to which the adjustment would ease the disadvantage
 - The practicality
 - The cost
 - The extent to which the adjustment would disrupt activities of the business
 - Financial and other resources available
 - Availability of external finances or other assistance
 - Size and nature of the business

What is Reasonable?

- Working hours – number and structure
- Periods of unpaid leave
- Dedicated quiet areas to allow hot desking during periods of stress
- Time out of the workplace to attend counselling relating to the mental health
- Support with managing workload
- Adjustment to the company absence triggers
- Job Redesign or Redeployment (with agreement)

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Managing Mental Health: Informally

- Don't ignore
- Signpost and encourage professional support
- Deal with issues promptly
- EAP
- Mental Health First Aiders
- Line management training on managing mental health
- Regular 121s to check in
- Return to work interviews

Managing Mental Health: Informally

- Wellness Action Plan
- [HSE Management Standards](#)
- Stress risk assessment
- Set up of dedicated quiet spaces
- Provide access to meditation apps and other online resources
- Supportive conversations
- Medical guidance
- Seek help and support yourself

Managing Mental Health: Formally

Organisation

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New customers

Profits

Occupational Health

Sickness Absence

Adjustments

Medical appointments

Managing Mental Health: Formally

- Aim to improve attendance/get the employee back to work
- Short/Long term absence procedures
- Act consistently
- Adapt procedures to take account of the condition
 - Extending the right to be accompanied
 - Adapt absence triggers
 - Meeting location

Managing Mental Health: Formally

- Seek medical advice
- Research the mental health condition using reputable sources (NHS)
- Potential for adjustments to be a legal requirement
- Income protection scheme
- Redeployment

Managing Mental Health:

- A careful supportive approach is required
- Style of communication
- How you position your discussions
- Their absence is genuine and serious
- Honesty and transparency are key
- Obligated to inform them of the long term implications of continued poor attendance



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Useful Links

<http://www.anxietyuk.org.uk>

<http://www.bipolaruk.org.uk>

<https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/beatstress.uk>

<http://www.mind.org.uk>

<http://www.samaritans.org>

<http://www.refuge.org.uk>

<http://www.alcoholics-anonymous.org.uk>

<http://www.cruse.org.uk>

<http://www.rapecrisis.org.uk>

<https://www.talktofrank.com>

<http://www.b-eat.co.uk>

'Shout' crisis text line. Text SHOUT to 85258

Samaritans – call 116 123

MIND – Information Line: 0300 123 3393 or text 86463





UPCOMING WEBINARS

SME Challenge: Managing your Cyber Security

18 March, Thursday | 2pm – 3pm

Health & Safety at Work: General Fire Safety

24 March, Wednesday | 12pm – 1pm

Data and GDPR – Compliance and Implications after Brexit

15 April, Thursday | 10am – 11am

Save your spot!

HR Knowledge Base | Events

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www.hrsolutions-uk.com/upcoming-webinars



UPCOMING WEBINARS

****NEW PROGRAMME****

Employing People: 10 things you need to get right
22 April, Thursday | 10am – 11am

How to deal with bullying and harassment
13 May, Thursday | 10am – 11am

Coronavirus: Returning to work after lockdown
20 May, Thursday | 10am – 11am

Save your spot!

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UPCOMING WEBINARS

****NEW PROGRAMME****

How serious allegations can be handled safely
17 June, Thursday | 10am – 11am

What are Protected or “without prejudice” conversations?
15 July, Thursday | 10am – 11am

Remote working: How can you manage performance?
12 August, Thursday | 10am – 11am

Save your spot!

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SUPPORTING YOUR STAFF

The 'First Aiders for Mental Health' qualification helps to provide a positive mental health culture within the workplace.

It provides learners with knowledge of the most common mental health conditions and the skills to be able to act should a condition be suspected.

Mental Health Training

www.hrsolutions-uk.com/training-courses
0844 324 5840



SUPPORTING YOUR STAFF

An EAP gives employees the support that they need to help them manage their health and wellbeing issues effectively.

It provides an independent, impartial service to help your employees resolve their difficulties more quickly, and minimize the impact on your business.

Employee Assistance Programme

[www.hrsolutions-uk.com/services/
employee-assistance-programme](http://www.hrsolutions-uk.com/services/employee-assistance-programme)
0844 324 5840



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Further questions?

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TO US

After the webinar, we shall be sending a short survey to capture your feedback, it would be appreciated if you could complete this survey so that we can constantly improve.



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