

International Safe Places to Work Day: Expert Shares Six Tips on How to Better Support Employees' Mental Health and Wellbeing

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International Safe Places to Work Day celebrates the vital role of psychological safety in the workplace, encouraging organisations to work towards creating safe and secure work environments.

Work is a huge stressor for most, with [79%](#) of people frequently experiencing work-related stress, and [one in five](#) having taken time off due to stress in the last year.

The link between stress and mental health issues is a robust one, making the need for wellbeing resources and support in workplaces even stronger.

The growing numbers of individuals experiencing mental health issues in the UK are having severe repercussions as highlighted by recent figures, which tell us that work-related stress and burnout is resulting in [23.3m](#) sick days per year.

And despite the new Government's [pledge](#) to recruit 8,500 more mental health staff, there are significant issues surrounding the availability of mental health services, meaning there's still a huge responsibility falling on employers.

Here, Manuela Ladd, operations director of [Red Umbrella](#), discusses six ways businesses can make a positive difference by creating environments where employees' mental health and wellbeing is supported.

Building a safe and supportive environment

“Building safe and supportive places to work should be a priority for all employers,” she commented. “And crucially, it’s about more than just attempting to tick a few boxes to display an effort to support staff. It’s an ongoing commitment to safeguarding employees through effective strategies designed to truly make a difference.

“If you’re the CEO or the managing director of a company, you have to be in tune with what your employees may be experiencing, and not just from a work perspective. If you see certain mental health or stress related issues in your own family, for instance, this should make you think your staff could be going through that too. When it comes to mental health, it’s about bringing that personal level of care from the top down.”

Be aware of outside pressures

“Our modern world is filled with pressures and stressors such as AI, social media and technology, making it easier than ever to be constantly available and connected, so it comes to no surprise that so many are struggling.

“Employees in a range of industries are now looking at AI and thinking ‘what am I working for if I’m soon going to be replaced by a software or a robot that can do my job more efficiently?’ People find a sense of purpose in their work, and having that taken away from them can be disheartening and upsetting.

“There’s also a vicious cycle linking wellbeing at work to overall wellbeing, because what happens at work affects home life, and what happens at home affects work.”

Identify gaps

“Employers should start by identifying gaps in their current support resources, and actively seek out feedback from their employees as to what they’d like to see implemented.

“In turn, this will help open up conversations about mental health in the business, showcasing a commitment to protecting employees. This can help reduce stigma, too, which is unfortunately still common in some workplaces.”

Introduce mental health training

“Mental health training is a vital resource all business leaders should consider. It could involve training for just specific teams such as HR and management, but also training in light of specific circumstances, issues or accidents.

“Training can help educate employees and promote a culture of solidarity and understanding, as well as ensure team members are able to recognise signs of mental health struggles and appropriately support others.”

Invest in Mental Health First Aid training

“Mental Health First Aid is one of the most effective resources employers can adopt when it comes to training. We all know how important it is to have someone trained in handling a physical health

emergency, and it's pivotal that the same level of support can be offered to someone experiencing a mental health crisis.

"This type of training is particularly valuable in ensuring individuals in need are guided towards the appropriate support resources or even professional help."

One size does not fit all

"It would be great to see the new Government invest in mental health resources, but regardless, business leaders have a key role to play.

"And if business leaders simply don't know where to start, they should employ the assistance of experts in the field that can provide the advice and solutions their business needs.

"It's all well and good putting resources in place, but these should be bespoke to the needs of the workforce in order to make a positive impact in the long term, as there isn't and will never be a one-size-fits-all approach to mental health support."