

Supporting staff to have conversations about health

Having conversations about health can be difficult for frontline workers. This briefing outlines the key ways in which organisations can ensure their staff have the resources and support they need to feel more confident when having health-related conversations.

7. Celebration & recognition

To foster wellbeing at work, it is important to take time to recognise when things have gone well.

People may have complicated health issues which are not easily resolved. Noticing the things that have gone well, however small, is important.

Acknowledging successes can increase job satisfaction and motivation, and create bonds within the team.

Organisations can do this by making time to talk about successes in team meetings and creating a culture where small successes are noticed, commented on, and celebrated.

1. Ensuring staff feel supported

For some staff, having conversations about health is outside their comfort zone. Organisations need to ensure the right support is in place for staff to feel confident.

This includes emotional and professional support as well as having access to the right information and training so staff can feel confident carrying out their role. Making time for regular de-briefs & reflective practice will prevent staff burnout.

2. Prioritising staff wellbeing

Staff working in homelessness settings are exposed to and witness trauma on a regular basis. This can lead to vicarious trauma whereby staff experience trauma symptoms which may lead to burnout. Homeless Link has a [podcast series](#) on the impact of working in the homelessness sector on individual wellbeing.

NCVO have published a range of [resources](#) on supporting the wellbeing of staff.

'[Five Ways to Wellbeing at Work](#)' is a guide about how organisations can foster wellbeing in the workplace.

Mind have produced a [guide](#) to promoting wellbeing and good mental health in the workplace.

3. Colleague connections

Organisations should ensure that there are regular opportunities for staff to connect and interact through team meetings and by creating shared spaces and other opportunities for connection.

[This article](#) outlines the importance of positive relationships in the workplace.

[This blog](#) suggests wellbeing activities to create connections in team meetings.

4. Reflective practice

Reflective Practice describes an individual or a team taking time to think about their role, including what is going well, what is difficult, how staff are feeling, and how they make others feel.

[This guide](#) provides an overview of reflective practice and some case studies.

[This webinar](#) discusses reflective practice & staff wellbeing, with a focus on working in the Covid-19 pandemic.

IRISS have produced a free [online training module](#) on reflective practice which explains the background and basic ideas.

5. Formal support structures

Having effective formal support structures in place will help staff to feel confident in undertaking work they may consider being outside their comfort zone.

All staff should receive regular supervision with their line manager and should be made aware of any additional organisational support services available.

NCVO have a range of [resources](#) on how to effectively support and manage staff.

6. Training & information

In order for staff to feel confident having conversations about health, they need access to the right training & information.

Organisations need to ensure that staff are made aware of key agencies and contacts in the local area & that they are confident in the referrals process.

Please use our '[Health Services Directory](#)' template to gather useful contact information along with our existing training & resources briefing.

