

The problem

With 1 in 5 people suffering from some form of mental health problem each year, it is essential that we are all clued up on the causes, signs and actions to take when we suspect or know someone needs support.

We spend the majority of our time at work, so it's vital that each individual knows that they play a key part in promoting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace.

Remember, you may not be struggling, but someone else could be.

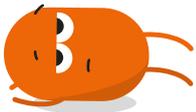


The signs

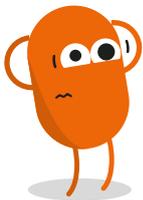
There are signs you can look out for when you think someone might be struggling. Everyone is different, but here are a few common things to look out for.



Psychological: Anxiety, distress, tearfulness, low mood, doubt, low motivation, loss of humour, being more easily upset, poor concentration, difficulty relaxing, lacking in confidence, hopelessness, pessimism, worthlessness, thoughts of hurting oneself.



Physical: Tiredness, headaches, appetite and weight changes, changes in sleep, shakiness, sweating, constantly feeling cold, tingling in hands and feet, heart racing, difficulty breathing, dry mouth, dizziness.



Behavioural: Increased smoking/drinking, irritability, anger or aggression, restlessness, being late, repetitive speech or activity, uncharacteristic errors, increased sickness absence, overreaction to problems.

Each person is different, and these symptoms will always vary. Do not make assumptions - talk to the person you are concerned about using the second part of our guide.

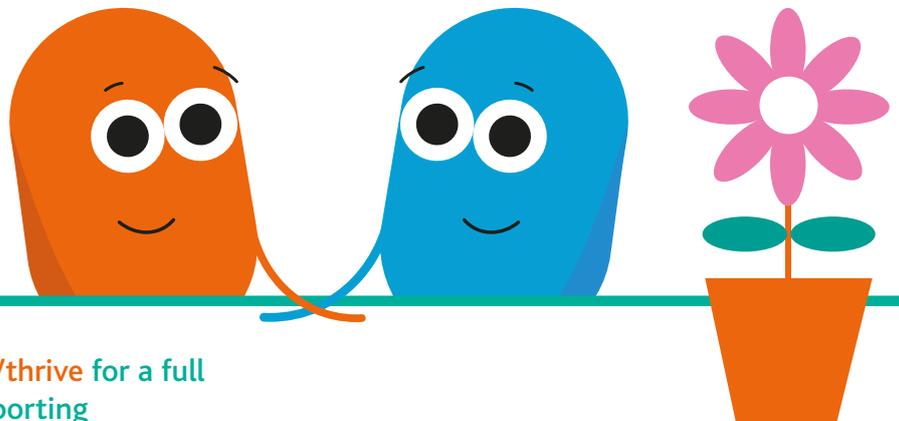
What can you do?

Some people often find it hard to ask for help or open up when they are going through a difficult time. That's why it is vital that we regularly ask each other how we are doing and openly discuss mental health.

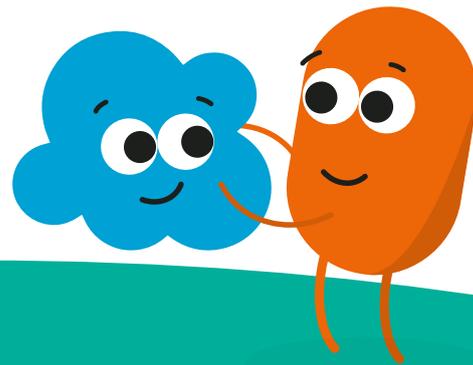
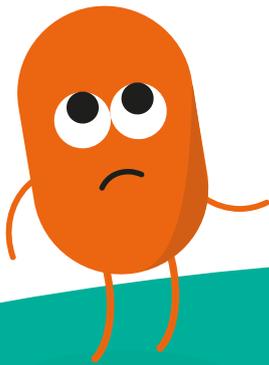
Mental health is nothing to be shy about. Talk in the same way you would about a physical health problem.

When starting a conversation with someone about mental health, it's best to take the following steps:

1. Don't make assumptions
2. Encourage seeking support from services
3. Ensure trust and confidentiality
4. Choose an appropriate place and time
5. Listen – and don't judge
6. Reassure
7. Be open about yourself
8. Check back with the person to see how they are getting on.



You can visit www.healthshield.co.uk/thrive for a full explanation and extra tips about supporting people experiencing mental health struggles.



What not to say

- You don't seem or look 'depressed'.
- You're clearly struggling.
- What's up?
- Why can't you just get over it?
- Everyone gets stressed.
- No one else is finding it hard.
- Man up about it.



What to say

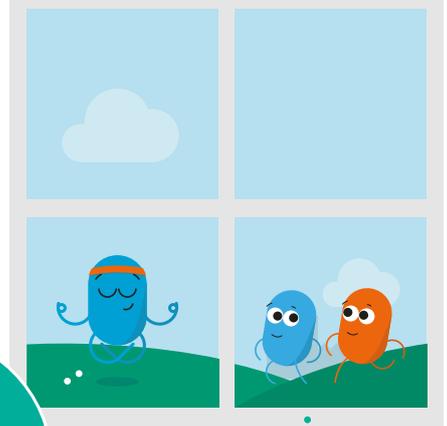
- You don't quite seem yourself.
- Do you want to talk about anything?
- I've noticed you've been a bit down recently and I wondered if you're okay?
- Is there anything I can do to help?
- I'm here for you if you want someone to listen.
- Have you spoken to anyone else or looked for support anywhere?

Promoting wellbeing

Have regular one-to-ones with a line manager

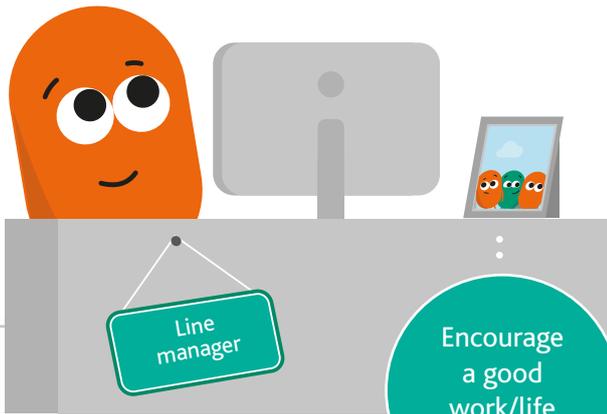


Engage in social activities



Be aware and make use of internal and external support services

Ask colleagues to go on walks at lunch

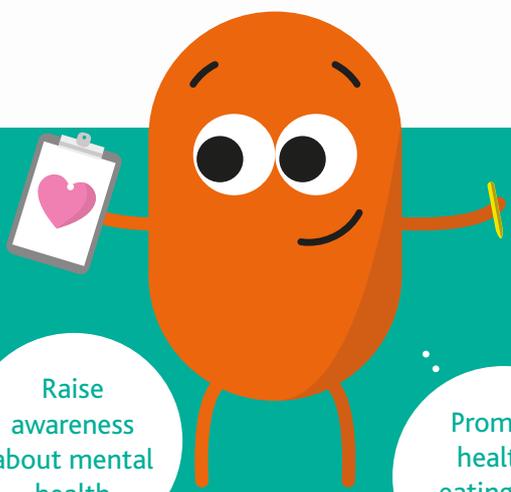


Encourage a good work/life balance

Ask when you have a question or need help



Encourage tidy workspaces



Raise awareness about mental health

Promote healthy eating and exercise

Be available to your colleagues