



Increasing Awareness of Mental Health in Families, Workplace, and Communities for Mental Health Awareness Week 2023

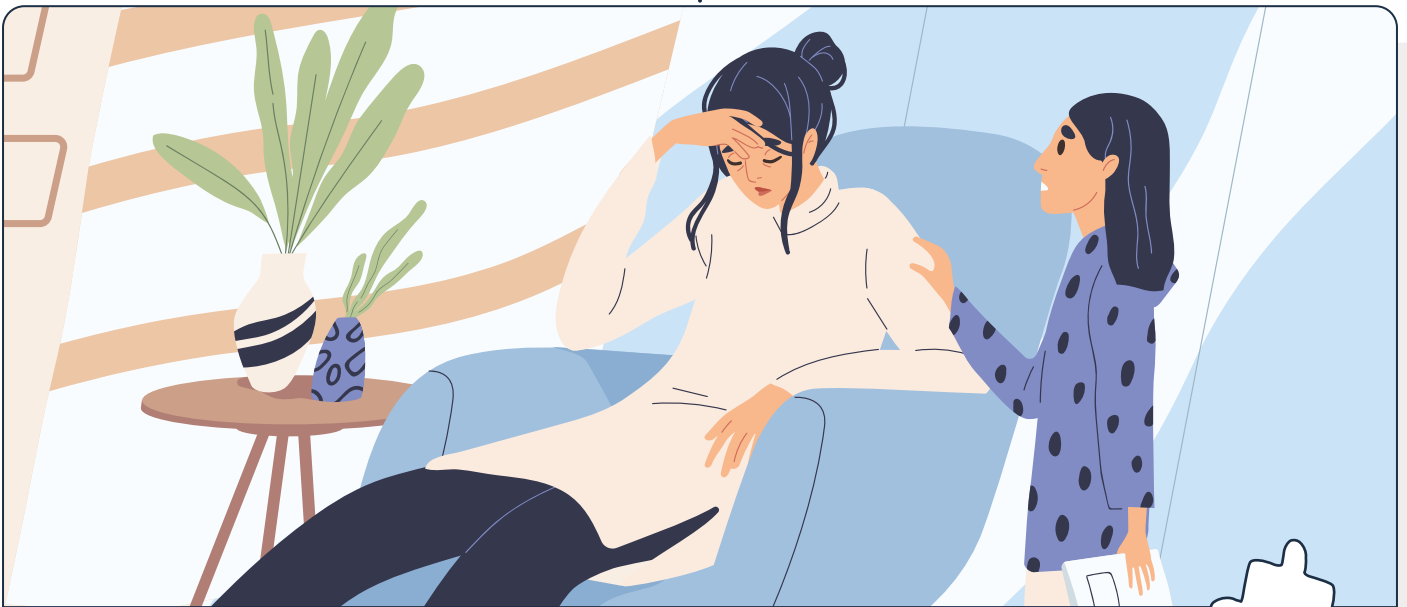


Mental Health Awareness Week 2023 is approaching, and increasing awareness of mental health issues in families, workplaces, and communities is essential. In this article, we'll discuss why raising awareness of mental health is more important now than ever with tips on encouraging open discussion around mental health at home, work, and in the wider community.



Raising awareness of mental health is more important now than ever

It was estimated that in 2022, around one in four people in the UK experienced a mental health problem, with this number expected to rise in 2023, according to Mind. Research also shows that mental health issues are affecting people at a younger age. According to the Mental Health Foundation, half of all mental health problems start before age 14. Raising awareness of mental health issues is now more important than ever to ensure people can access the support they need.



Mental health at home

Encouraging open conversation around mental health at home can help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues and ensure that family members can access the support they need. One way to encourage open discussion is to normalise conversations about mental health.

This can be done by talking openly about the importance of taking care of our mental health just as we do our physical health. Encouraging family members to share their experiences and feelings can also help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues.



Normalise conversations about mental health:

- ✓ Make it a regular topic of discussion and create an environment where everyone feels comfortable talking about their own mental health experiences.

Share your own experiences:

- ✓ Lead by example and share your own mental health experiences with your family. This can help to reduce stigma and encourage others to open up.

Listen without judgement:

- ✓ When someone shares their mental health struggles, listen to them without judgement or criticism. Show that you understand and care about their feelings.

Use open-ended questions:

- ✓ Ask open-ended questions to encourage discussion, such as "How are you feeling?" or "Is there anything you want to talk about?"

Educate yourself and your family:

- ✓ Read up on mental health topics and share what you've learnt with your family. This can help to increase awareness and understanding.

Seek professional help:

- ✓ If anyone in your family is struggling with mental health, encourage them to seek professional help. This can include therapy, counselling or medication.

Create a safe space:

- ✓ Make sure that everyone in your family feels safe and supported when discussing mental health. This can include finding a quiet and comfortable place to talk and establishing ground rules to ensure that the conversation stays respectful and positive.

Stay patient:

- ✓ Mental health struggles can be challenging, so it's important to stay patient and positive. Let your family know that you're there for them and encourage them to take small steps towards better mental health.





Mental health **at work**

Recent research shows employees who feel supported at work have better mental health. Employers can create a culture of openness by normalising conversations about mental health.

This can be done by promoting mental health awareness campaigns and training managers and employees on supporting colleagues with mental health issues.

It's also important for employers to provide access to mental health support services, such as employee assistance programmes and counselling services. Employees should feel comfortable discussing their mental health with their employer and be assured they will receive support without fear of discrimination.

- ✔ **Promote mental health awareness:**
Educate your employees on mental health and create a culture where mental health is seen as a priority.
- ✔ **Normalise conversations about mental health:**
Make it clear that mental health is a regular topic of discussion and create an environment where employees feel comfortable talking about their mental health experiences.
- ✔ **Encourage senior management to lead by example:**
Senior management should lead by example and share their own experiences with mental health. This will help to reduce stigma and encourage others to open up.
- ✔ **Provide resources:**
Offer employees access to resources such as mental health support services and information about coping mechanisms.
- ✔ **Use open-ended questions:**
Encourage open conversations by using open-ended questions to ask how employees are feeling or if they want to talk about anything.
- ✔ **Offer flexible work arrangements:**
Provide flexible work arrangements such as remote working or flexible working hours to help employees manage their mental health.
- ✔ **Create a mental health policy:**
Develop a mental health policy that outlines the company's commitment to supporting employee mental health.
- ✔ **Train managers on mental health:**
Provide training for managers to help them recognise the signs of mental health struggles and provide support to employees.
- ✔ **Foster a positive work environment:**
Promote a positive work environment that encourages teamwork and healthy relationships between colleagues.
- ✔ **Celebrate mental health awareness days:**
Use mental health awareness days to highlight the importance of mental health and create opportunities for open conversations about mental health at work.



Mental health in the wider community

Schools face a significant lack of awareness and understanding of mental health issues. Schools can promote mental health awareness by providing education on mental health issues and creating a safe space for students to discuss their mental health.

Meanwhile, community centres can also promote mental health awareness by providing mental health support services and hosting mental health awareness events. Social groups can also help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health issues by encouraging open discussion about mental health.



- ✓ **Organise community events:**
Organise events such as mental health walks, workshops or talks to encourage the community to come together and learn more about mental health.
- ✓ **Collaborate with local mental health organisations:**
Work with local mental health organisations to provide resources and information to the community.
- ✓ **Promote mental health awareness days:**
Use mental health awareness days to highlight the importance of mental health and create opportunities for open conversations about mental health.
- ✓ **Use social media:**
Use social media platforms to raise awareness about mental health, share resources and encourage open conversations.
- ✓ **Talk about mental health:**
Start conversations with friends, family, and neighbours about mental health to help reduce stigma and encourage open discussion.
- ✓ **Provide mental health resources:**
Provide mental health resources such as pamphlets or brochures to local community centres or libraries.
- ✓ **Offer mental health support groups:**
Organise mental health support groups in your community to provide a safe and supportive environment for those struggling with mental health.
- ✓ **Educate local schools and workplaces:**
Educate local schools and workplaces on the importance of mental health and encourage them to prioritise mental health in their policies.
- ✓ **Volunteer with mental health organisations:**
Volunteer with local mental health organisations to help support those struggling with mental health in your community.
- ✓ **Use community newsletters:**
Use community newsletters to raise awareness about mental health and promote upcoming mental health events.



Contact your HealthHero or Validium service for more support. Together, we can reduce the stigma around mental health and ensure everyone has the support they need to thrive.



HEALTH HERO