

Mental Health Awareness Week

9th - 15th
May 2022

NJC Newsletter Mental Health and Wellbeing

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Mental Health

Awareness



What does mental health mean?

A person's condition with regard to their psychological and emotional wellbeing.

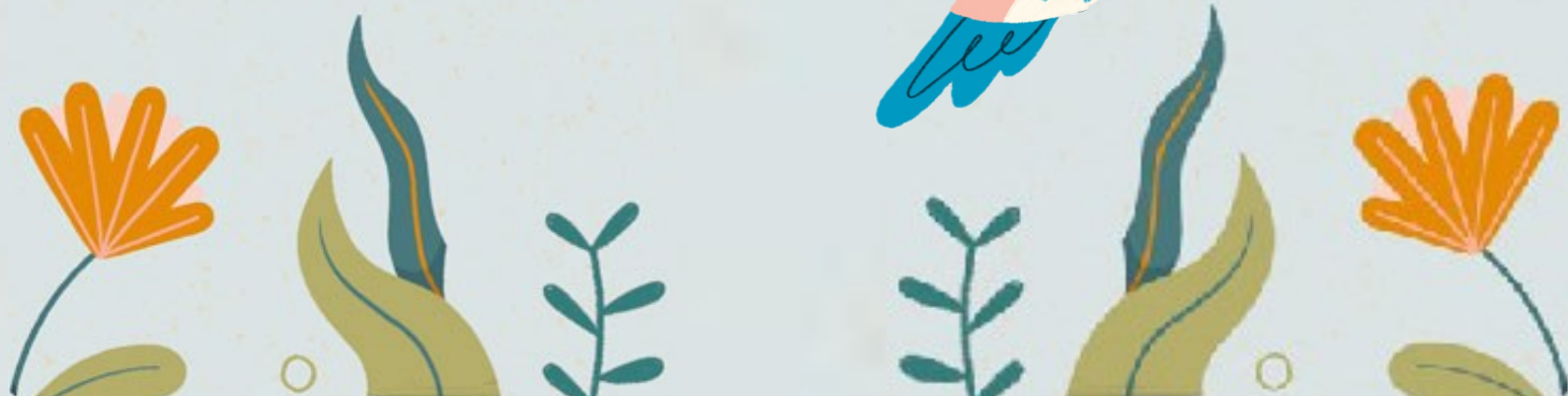


Why could you be struggling with mental health problems?

- Relationships / family problems
- Loneliness or isolation
- Bereavement
- Financial worries
- Job related stress
- Depression or thoughts of suicide
- Heavy use or dependency on alcohol or drugs
- Illness
- COVID-19 impact

What are the possible signs of Mental Health problems?

- Change in feelings
- Difficulty interacting
- Loss of interest
- Change in sleeping habits
- Low energy
- Uncontrollable emotions
- Appetite or weight change



Menopause



Raising Awareness



Why are we talking about menopause in this newsletter?

Menopause affects hormone levels and can cause mood swings, low mood and anxiety. Menopause is another taboo subject, however NJC wants to challenge stigmatisation and discuss all topics linked to mental health. It is important to raise awareness on the symptoms and self-help techniques available for women who are, or will, experience menopause.

What is the menopause?

Menopause is a natural biological process when women stop having periods and are no longer able to get pregnant naturally. It is defined as the day when you have not had a period for 12 months. The average age it occurs is 51 but it can vary. Around 1 in 100 women experience menopause before they reach 40.

What is the perimenopause?

This is the time when your body transitions towards the menopause and your ovaries slow down, which can take months or years.

Symptoms

- Hot flushes
- Night sweats
- Sleep problems
- Mood swings
- Brain fog, forgetfulness and difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in sex
- Vaginal dryness or pain
- Headaches
- Aches and pains
- Urinary tract infections

Self-help Measures

- Getting enough sleep
- Eating well
- Taking regular exercise
- Practising yoga or meditation
- Talking therapy or speaking to a GP
- Medication
- Hormone replacement therapy

Should I have antidepressants?

The Mental Health Foundation states 'the low mood you may experience with menopause is different from depression. NICE (the organisation that produces guidelines for healthcare professionals) is clear that you shouldn't be offered antidepressants as a first line of treatment. Mood changes are caused by your changing hormones, so hormone replacement therapy (HRT) can help. However, you may be prescribed a low dose of antidepressants to help with hot flushes/night sweats'. You are advised to speak to your GP.

Where can I find more guidance?

- The Mental Health Foundation
- The Menopause Charity
- NHS

The Impact of Global Events

Global events can cause uncertainty which can cause individuals fear, anxiety, a loss of control or depression. Reading news articles or watching the news on these events can affect our mental health. You may feel empathetic to the safety of others, or you may have lived through similar events in the past which may remind you of traumatic memories.



We have experienced many scary events around the world recently:

- COVID-19 and new variants
- The war in Ukraine
- Gas prices rising etc

If the news is having a negative impact on your mental health, try the following measures:

- Take a short break from the news
- Mute or turn off news notifications on your smartphone
- Mute or unfollow social media accounts that are reporting on it
- Limit your news intake to once a day
- If you feel isolated, get involved in local volunteering opportunities or online organisations
- Empower your voice, be engaged in a political community, a peace rally, or a relevant event
- Talk to a friend, family member , GP or helpline

Follow other techniques to look after your mental health detailed in this newsletter.

Anxiety

Anxiety Management

What is Anxiety?

Anxiety can affect both your body and mind. It is normal to feel anxious sometimes and it is not always a bad thing as it is how we respond to feeling threatened, under pressure or stressed and can motivate us to solve problems or make us aware to risks. However, anxiety is a problem if it starts to affect your life and makes you feel like it is out of proportion to the situation, or if it feels ongoing or hard to control. This could be a sign of a mental health problem.

Help is available in many forms to assist you with different severities of anxiety.

Symptoms on your mind include:

- A feeling of dread or fearing the worst
- Feeling on edge or panicky
- Difficulty concentrating
- Irritability
- Feeling detached from yourself or the world around you

It can also affect your behaviour.

Symptoms on your body include:

- Restlessness
- Feeling dizzy or light headed
- Wobbly legs or pins and needles in your hands and feet
- Shortness of breath and hyperventilating
- Heart palpitations
- Nausea
- Needing the toilet more or less often
- Sweating
- Sleep problems
- Panic attacks
- A feeling in your chest or another part of your body

Getting Support

- Speak to your GP
- Self-help resources such as workbooks, researching , online CBT courses, apps etc
- Talking therapy or talking to someone
- Medication—talk to your GP
- Breathing exercises
- Joining a peer group
- Eating well, staying active, getting enough sleep etc—see the rest of the newsletter



Mental Health

Mindfulness



*‘Knowing what is happening,
while it is happening,
without preference’.*

What is ‘Mindfulness’?

The goal of mindfulness is to wake up to the inner workings of our mental, emotional and physical processes. If we have an awareness about our thoughts and feelings we can work proactively to maintain a positive state of mind.

Daily Life Techniques

Pay attention to your senses, your feelings, triggers and how you process negative thoughts. Learn to be in “the moment”. For example, ask yourself what are you feeling? If you are anxious, why are you feeling anxious? What triggered that feeling? What could you do to reduce that feeling?

Meditation Techniques

This involves sitting silently, paying attention to thoughts, sounds, breathing, parts of the body and bringing your attention back to you. Yoga and Tai Chi can help with developing awareness of your breathing. Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth, breath in gently and count to five in your head, then let it flow out and repeat for three to five minutes. Colouring is also a simple technique that allows us to switch off our brains.

Loneliness



The importance of connections

Loneliness is the Mental Health Foundations theme for this years mental health awareness week.

Loneliness remains one of the key indicators of poor mental health. Research shows that being connected to other people in a way helps us feel valued, which is fundamental to our mental health. We have been reminded of this during the pandemic, the need for other people and social interaction. During the lockdowns, the Mental Health Foundation states loneliness was almost 3 times that of pre-pandemic levels.

Long term feelings of loneliness have also been associated to higher rates of mortality and poorer physical health outcomes. Loneliness can cause mental health problems, however there are ways you can help.

During mental health awareness week, why don't you:

- Get in touch with a friend or neighbour you have not spoken to in a while
- Have a look at, and share, the Foundations podcasts, animation, personal stories, social posts, research, policy and tips which will be published this week
- Take part in our charity events detailed in this newspaper to raise money for the Mental Health Foundation
- Share your own stories with others, this can help reduce the stigma around loneliness and challenge stereotypes
- Be compassionate to others, we have all at some point in our lives probably felt a moment of loneliness
- Provide an act of kindness to someone who may be struggling

If you are currently feeling lonely, look at our support page, charities, or look at involving yourself in some social groups.



Self Help Tips

To reduce mental health problems



Talk about it



Ask for Help



Exercise



Breathing Techniques



Learn about Mental Health



Me Time



See a GP



Mindfulness



Get Enough Sleep



Avoid Bad Habits



Connect to People



Try to be Positive



Eat Well



Breathing

Techniques



The information below is a calming breathing technique from the NHS for stress, anxiety and panic. It only takes just a few minutes and can be done anywhere.

You will get the most benefit if you do it regularly, as part of your daily routine. You can do it standing up, sitting in a chair that supports your back, or lying on a bed or yoga mat on the floor. Make yourself as comfortable as you can. If you can, loosen any clothes that restrict your breathing.

Lying Down

If you're lying down, place your arms a little bit away from your sides, with the palms up. Let your legs be straight, or bend your knees so your feet are flat on the floor.

Sitting or Standing

If you're sitting, place your arms on the chair arms. If you're sitting or standing, place both feet flat on the ground. Whatever position you're in, place your feet roughly hip-width apart.

Breathing Technique

- Let your breath flow as deep down into your belly as is comfortable, without forcing it.
- Try breathing in through your nose and out through your mouth.
- Breathe in gently and regularly. Some people find it helpful to count steadily from 1 to 5. You may not be able to reach 5 at first.
- Then, without pausing or holding your breath, let it flow out gently, counting from 1 to 5 again, if you find this helpful.
- Keep doing this for 3 to 5 minutes.



Cleaning



The relationship with mental health

There are many techniques people may use if they are experiencing mental health problems such as yoga, mindfulness and other ways, as identified on the previous page. However, some people may find cleaning and having an organised home, or workspace, beneficial to them to help them de-stress and unwind.

Research shows that cleaning, or in fact the lack of cleaning, can have a direct impact on mental health. It is argued that clutter may lead to decreased focus, confusion and tension. A cluttered or dirty space can make it overwhelming for people to focus on other issues, therefore clutter and mess is linked to negative emotions whilst an organised tidy space tends to produce more positive emotions like calmness and a sense of wellbeing. Research states that cleaning can help you gain a sense of control over your environment and engage your mind in a repetitive activity that can have a calming effect.



Cleaning can also benefit physical health, which releases endorphins assisting us with our mental health.

Cleaning has therefore been found to improve a persons mood as well as provide a sense of accomplishment and satisfaction whilst reducing stress and anxiety. It is evident clean environments contribute to a holistic wellbeing space to improve peoples mood.

Mental Health

Support



Are you worried about your mental health?

If you're having mental health problems, **you're not alone**.

Did you know that 2 out of 3 people will experience mental health problems at some point in their lives or that in the UK, men are 3 times as likely to take their own lives than women because they are more reluctant to talk.

Talking is the best approach. Try talking to a friend, family member, colleague, GP or therapist.

If you need urgent help please do not hesitate to contact:

- NJC EAP: 03334000545
- Samaritans: 116 123
- MIND: 03001233393
- Text Shout 85258
- Your GP

Raising Awareness



How to show your support



The green ribbon is the international symbol for mental health awareness. Wearing a green ribbon pin raises awareness on the subject and demonstrates your support to the cause.

You can obtain a pin at our NJC Head Office and on the Mental Health Foundation website.

Whilst face coverings are no longer a legal requirement, face coverings can still reduce transmission of infection and can provide individuals more confidence to go out in public. You can purchase a mental health face covering on the Mental Health Foundation website.



Please donate to our NJC Mental Health Awareness page to raise money for the Mental Health Foundation to champion 'good mental health for all' at:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/njc-limited1>

Alternatively, go to our LinkedIn to access the donation page.

All proceeds fund the Mental Health Foundations' life changing work as a UK charity dedicated to mental health.

You are more than welcome to organise your own event to raise money for charity, or to raise awareness.

Tea Time

It's Time to Talk



9th May • Tea Time • Head Office • 1pm

**Have a natter.
Raise money.
Change lives.**



Talking about anything is good for your mental health, just building social links and relationships can lead to happier and more mentally healthy communities.

Join us at our head office for 'Tea Time' on Monday 9th May at 1pm for a gathering with tea and cake to bring us all together and speak about mental health, relax and have a good natter.

Showcase your baking skills and bring in some home-made cake or biscuits, or buy something from the store if you are less confident in the kitchen!

For those who can't join, we welcome you to organise your own 'Tea Time' event with friends, colleagues or family to raise awareness.



To take part and attend, please come along and donate money to the Mental Health Foundation on our donation page:

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/njc-limited1>

NJC's EAP

Employee Assistance Programme



What is it?

An employee assistance helpline that provides **free** confidential counselling and legal information, that operates 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to NJC employees.

How can professional counsellors help you?

The counsellor can help with a wide range of problems at any time of the day or night. The counsellor will ensure that you have the time to talk through your concerns and feelings, helping you to clarify the practical and emotional issues and providing information when appropriate.

You can also receive guidance about issues concerning the law which may be causing you distress, personal matters such as:

- Domestic problems
- Personal injury claims
- Motor related disputes
- Property worries
- Consumer rights
- Employment matters

Employees are also entitled to 6 free face to face counselling sessions per topic.

NJC and you...

NJC cares about your wellbeing and the EAP has been implemented to support our employees through difficult times.

Please call NJC Employee Assistance Programme (EAP): **0333 400 0545**.

Quote: Not Just Cleaning, or go to njc.hapi.benefits.com

NJC and You



Healthy and Happy Workforce

NJC is nothing without our employees. Employees are at the heart of the NJC DNA and are imperative to the success of the business. It is imperative that all employees come to work healthy and happy.

We are continuously reviewing and improving our wellbeing strategy and objectives to meet this. We have a wellbeing policy available to all staff in their site folders informing you of NJC's commitments towards your wellbeing.

We could not be prouder of our workforce, a strong resilient team willing to go the extra mile, a team who has kept working throughout the pandemic. Whilst we now approach a new phase of the pandemic with a new sense of 'normal' we want to thank each and every one of you for all your hard work and commitment, thank you.

We challenge you to share and discuss the contents of this newsletter with friends, family and colleagues to continue to raise awareness on mental health.

