



# Workplace Partnership

## “Starting the Conversation”

### Starting the Conversation- encouraging people to talk about mental health

Starting a conversation can be a powerful way to challenge mental health stigma and get people to think about their perceptions.

For all of us our physical health is just as important as our mental health. Talking helps us to recognise this and can dispel misconceptions about mental health problems and the people who experience them.

### ? How can I start a conversation?

- Pick a quiet time and place and ask someone how they are doing? Take time to listen and engage with them
- Use [active listening skills](#) to show you are listening
- Ask open questions to allow the person to talk about how they feel
- Reflect their words back to them to show you are listening
- Try to imagine how that person is feeling, in their given situation



- Be open-minded. Phrases like ‘cheer up’, ‘I’m sure it’ll pass’ and ‘pull yourself together’ definitely don’t help. But giving people hope for the future by saying ‘things will get better for you’ and ‘these feelings will pass’ can be comforting.
- Don’t tell the person that you know how they feel (because you don’t!) but if you have a personal experience that you are willing to share talk to them about a time when you felt sad, worried, stressed and what you did that helped you
- Let them know that your organisation has partnered with Guernsey Mind and tell them about the help and support available through the workplace
- Let them know about any local support that you are familiar with and if you are unsure find out more by looking at the Guernsey Mind website [Signposting to other Services - Guernsey Mind](#)



## Key messages to bear in mind:

- Mental health is as important as physical health
- Mental health problems are common and can be treated
- 1 in 6 workers experience depression, stress or anxiety
- Mental ill health is the leading cause of sickness absence in the UK. 1 in 10 people have resigned from a job due to stress
- We all need support sometimes
- Ask people what they enjoy doing and encourage them to take care of themselves
- Being exposed to stressful situations directly or supporting stressed colleagues can be difficult. Encourage people to take time out when they feel they need it



## Finding the words

Finding the ‘right’ language can be difficult. There is no one term or set of terms that everyone will agree on, however, using inappropriate language can be a barrier to helping someone.

- It is fine to use the term ‘poor’ mental health when you are talking about someone feeling sad or low for a period of time.
- The term mental health problem is widely used and understood by people outside of the mental health world and is appropriate to use
- Some people will reject any form of label and don’t see their experience as an illness or a problem. Some people find their experience best understood in terms of illness and find a medical diagnosis useful to talk about and get help and support for what they are going through.
- Be guided by the language that people want to use but be mindful of your language and think about how those around you may feel.



### Some helpful questions to get you started

- What small step could you take right now?
- What thoughts are in your head at the moment?
- What do you feel is the hardest part of this?
- What support do you have around you?
- Have you ever been in this situation before? How did you get through it?
- If you were talking to a good friend, what advice would you give them?



## Supporting someone else

It can be very difficult to see someone becoming unwell, but you don't need to be an expert on mental health to offer support. Often small, everyday actions can make the biggest difference.

Set boundaries and don't take on too much. If someone is becoming reliant on you explain clearly what you can and can't provide help and support with and encourage them to seek either professional support or support from close family or friends

Supporting someone else can sometimes be stressful. Making sure that you look after your own wellbeing can mean that you have the energy, time and distance you need to be able to help.

