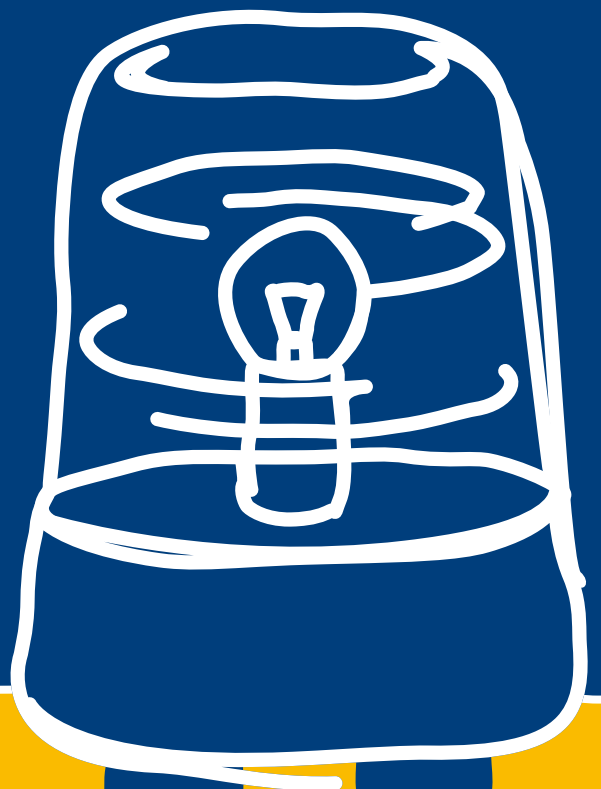


# Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop

A handbook for  
organisers and facilitators  
in the emergency services



# Introduction

If you are looking for a way to support your staff or teammates, including Blue Light Champions, to raise awareness of mental wellbeing in the workplace, then this workshop is for you.

Blue Light Champions are employees or volunteers in the emergency services, who take action in the workplace to change the way we all think and act about mental health. More information can be found online [here](#).

By delivering this workshop in your own service we can work towards better mental health in the emergency services together, both now and in the future.

# Background

**Together we can change the way we all think and act about mental health.**

The Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop has been designed to be delivered as a one day face-to-face session.

This is a workshop to support Blue Light Champions to explore ways they can take action to change the way people think and act about mental health problems in their workplace, sharing ideas and working together with fellow Champions.

## Who is the workshop for?

Blue Light Champions and anybody who is interested in becoming a Blue Light Champion. This is anybody who is a current employee or volunteer working in the police, fire and rescue, ambulance or search and rescue services who wants to raise awareness of mental wellbeing, whether or not they have personal experience of mental health problems.



# Thinking about facilitating a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop?

The first step is to read this handbook in full and the accompanying PowerPoint slides. We recommend you become familiar with the contents and format of the workshop before delivery. If you have time, take a look at the contents of Mind's Blue Light Champions evaluation, which is available [here](#).

## How to use this handbook

This handbook has been designed to support you to run your own Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop. It contains lots of information and is intended to be a flexible resource for you to use in a way that suits your audience's needs and your personal style.

This handbook offers you all the activities and resources that you will need to facilitate the sessions. See what you think, and you can always develop your own exercises or use others if you feel that it is appropriate.

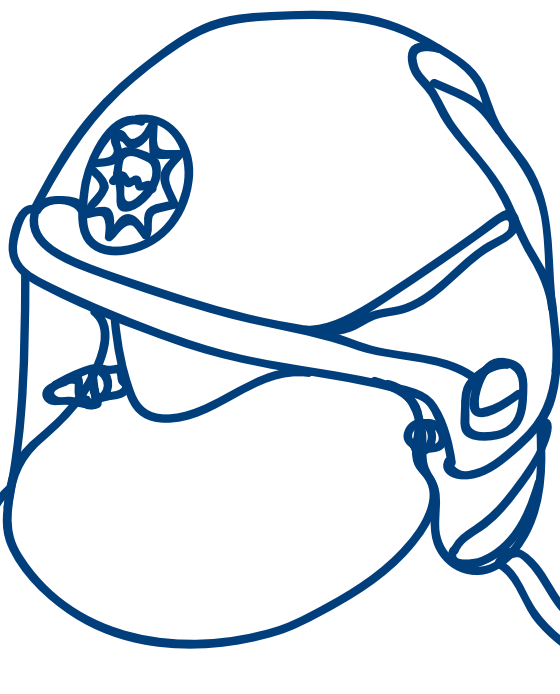
It starts out with some information on organising and running a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop and then guides you through the content of the workshop.

### This handbook is accompanied by:

- a participants' handbook: to guide attendees through the session and give them all the information to take away
- a PowerPoint slide pack
- a quick look session plan that you can add to.

## Key tip

You may want to ask Champions in your evaluation form for ideas of activities they would find useful or improvements that could be made to the ones used in the workshop.



# What the handbook contains

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All text in [purple](#) links you to more information or resources.

If you are reading this guide in print, you will be able to find all resources or links to those resources in the online version of this document at [mind.org.uk/bluelightSUSO](https://mind.org.uk/bluelightSUSO).

# Organising and running a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop

## The practicalities

- The workshop has been designed to be run as a one day, 7 hour and 45 minute workshop (including a registration period, four breaks and lunch). If this doesn't work for attendees it can be broken down and delivered in chunks. If you do this we encourage you to think about how you'll make Champions' wellbeing a core part of each section.
- We have found the workshop works best with between 15 and 20 participants. We would not advise running it with more than 25 attendees.
- Due to the group size we encourage you to have two people to facilitate each session, so one individual can be available to support any participants who may become distressed or want extra help.
- It is suitable for both experienced facilitators and those who are newer to facilitation. It's up to you to assess if you feel comfortable taking on the role and make sure you get support if you feel you need it.
- A core part of the workshop is to foster a safe environment where people can share as much or as little as they choose, and where their wellbeing is central to how the workshop is facilitated.
- Look after yourself. Facilitating this workshop and hearing people's experiences of distress can be difficult so we encourage you to think about how you'll look after yourself and your co-facilitator before, during and after the session.
- Be as inclusive as possible. Your participants might have a range of learning styles and additional needs. These could include dietary needs (if you are serving food) or learning difficulties. It's important to ask participants about any requirements they have and think about how you can ensure these needs are met.

### Top tip

Try to find a venue that has a quiet room or space nearby in case anyone wants to speak to you privately or becomes overwhelmed on the day.



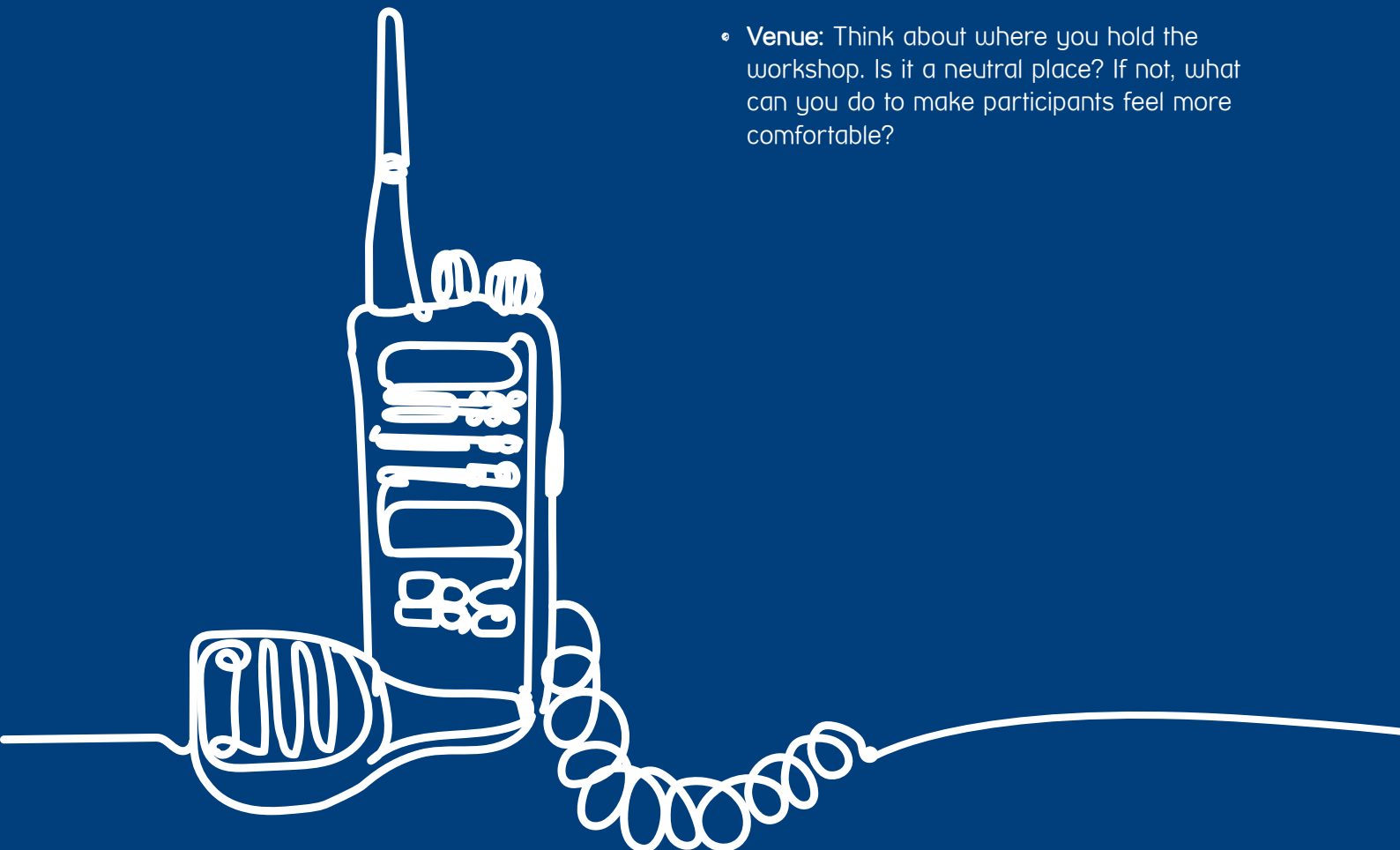
# Things to think about beforehand

## For yourself

- **Don't do it alone:** As mentioned above we encourage you to co-facilitate the workshop with another person (or other people) to look after yourselves and the group. You may also want to ask for help with setting up the workshop. This could be from colleagues in HR, occupational health, communications, training or other Champions.
- **Get comfortable with the material:** Try out the exercises, think about if different options might work better for participants, and ask for feedback. If something doesn't feel right to you – get someone else's thoughts and if it's not right think about a different way to get the information across.

## For participants

- **Information:** Give participants as much information as you can before the session. This way they will know what to expect and you can manage their expectations.
- **Keeping the group safe:** The first section of the workshop will support you to do this, think about this carefully and ask for the support you need. For example you may want to ask for a colleague from the occupational health team to be available during the day of the workshop should anyone need extra support, or for you to debrief with at the end of the day.
- **Refreshments:** Are you able to provide lunch and refreshments throughout the day? Either way let participants know ahead of time.
- **Venue:** Think about where you hold the workshop. Is it a neutral place? If not, what can you do to make participants feel more comfortable?



## For guest speakers

The workshop includes two 15 minute time slots for a Champion speaker to share their experience and answer questions, if they feel comfortable to do so. The first guest speaker slot is available for someone to share their experience of being a Blue Light Champion and the second for someone to share their story of Speaking Out about their experience of a mental health problem.

You may wish to ask if participants are interested in this opportunity when you advertise the workshop or when they sign up. It's really important that you support the guest speakers before, during and after the workshop.

- **Give them all the information:** The guest speaker may want to know more information before they can decide if the opportunity is right for them. Things like how many people they will be speaking to, who will be attending, what time in the day you would like them to speak are important to share.
- **Questions to help them think through:** You'll find template questions for each guest speaker slot in appendix 1 on page 78. This can be given to interested individuals, and you may want to talk them through it.
- **Things for them to think about beforehand:** It's your role to help the guest speaker feel prepared. You may wish to help them think through what they want to say, how they want to say it and how best to do this. In Section 4 you will find lots of tips and information on preparing to speak out which can be used to support this.
- **What support do they need?** Ask the guest speaker how you can best support them, and agree what you are going to do. It might be useful to offer some suggestions of what you are able to do. For example, would they like to sit when they speak, or would they prefer to talk at a certain time in the day?

### Key tip

A guest speaker is giving a gift to participants by speaking. It may be that on the day they don't feel up to doing this. Let them know beforehand that you appreciate this and it's absolutely not a problem if they change their mind about talking.



## Things to do during the workshop

- **Setting boundaries and managing expectations:** It's important that you let the group know you are not a subject matter expert, your role as a facilitator and how you'll deal with any questions you are not able to answer. Welcome input from everyone in the session, but let them know you also encourage constructive comments and people being mindful of other participants and their needs.
- **Be a role model:** In the Blue Light Champion role and the workshop we encourage people to put themselves first so that they can help others. So ask for help if you need it, or call an unscheduled break if you or the group needs it.
- **Sharing why you are passionate:** Sharing part of your story or what motivated you to facilitate the workshop can really help with participants feeling able to do the same. But remember to only share what you feel comfortable to and be a role model to the group.
- **Build trust within the group:** The first section of the workshop will really help with this. If you don't feel there is trust in the room you may want to think about addressing this with them, or consider amending the activities accordingly throughout the day.
- **Encourage participants to support each other, and you:** Encourage everyone to work together as a team, and look out for each other. This is what it's all about after all.
- **Look after yourself:** Plan what you are going to do throughout the day to look after yourself. This could be bringing plenty of water and snacks, or noting down things that you have found difficult to be able to work through them later.
- **Look after the group:** Encourage participants to let you know if anything is making them uncomfortable, privately or to the group. If you feel someone is struggling, check in with them when appropriate, for example at a break or sooner if you feel they are distressed.
- **Listen** and allow participants to feel heard, this is key, and don't feel under pressure to always add to what they're saying.
- **Be flexible:** You may need to adapt your style or activities to meet the group's needs.
- **Use your personal style:** We are all different and have different strengths. Use yours and maybe work with a co-facilitator who complements them.
- **Signpost to support:** During the session signpost participants to support that is available in your service and locally.
- **Let participants know what happens next:** Think about any further training or meetings that are coming up and let participants know about these. You may be seen as a point of contact after the workshop and be contacted with questions. If it's better to direct people to someone else let them know.

## Things to plan for afterwards

- **Think about what you'll need afterwards:** This will be different for everyone. It could be having a coffee and debrief with your co-facilitator for an hour afterwards, or it might be planning a long cycle to work out that adrenaline.
- **Signposting to support:** You may get participants coming to you afterwards and asking where they can get support. Why not create a list beforehand to support you with this?
- **Follow up:** Are you going to send a follow up email or materials? If so, prepare this beforehand so it can be sent out quickly.
- **Certificates:** It's a nice idea to make up and give out certificates to recognise participants' attendance. These could be printed and given out at the end, or sent with the thank you email.
- **Delegate and ask for support:** Think about what you will need help with afterwards and ask for it so it's in place.

The workshop can be very powerful, but it can also be very emotional. So we encourage you to think about that beforehand and plan to look after yourself and participants. With this in mind we encourage you to work with your organisation and colleagues to run the workshop in the safest and most beneficial manner for everyone involved. Please remember the message of the workshop in everything you do – look after yourself and ask for support if you need it.

## What we have found from delivering

- Participants enjoy the workshops having people from a mixture of services, roles and levels as it allows them to understand barriers and opportunities across the services and network.
- Having Blue Light Champions as guest speakers at the workshop is very powerful, motivational and cements learning.
- Creating a safe, informal and open environment is vital.

## Hear it from Champions

**It was good to mix with other 999s and share views, practices and policies.**

**Thoughts on how to share my experiences helped and gave me positive ideas.**

**I found the reflection exercise very powerful... Initially I felt like a bit of a fraud for not sharing my personal experiences but I have realised it's my decision to make.**



# Facilitating the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop

## Learning objectives

From attending the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop participants will gain the following:

- Improved understanding of the Blue Light Champion role and what it means for them.
- A basic plan of one thing they would like to do as a Blue Light Champion.
- The ability to identify ways to prepare and protect themselves if they choose to speak out about their own personal experiences of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems.
- Awareness of mental health, how to broach the issue and signpost individuals.
- Understanding of how to initiate a conversation about mental health, maintain boundaries and how to handle disclosure.
- Increased confidence in supporting colleagues living with or experiencing a mental health problem.
- Increased confidence in managing their own mental health as a Blue Light Champion.

**The materials for the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop consist of:**

- this handbook
- a participants' handbook
- a PowerPoint slide pack
- an editable quick look session plan. This is an example session plan, based on a course starting at 09:00 and ending at 16:45.
- a one-page document summarising the (suggested) timings and topics for the day, found on the next page.



# Example programme: Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop

Time	Activity
09:00 – 09:15 (15 mins)	Arrive, sign attendance sheet and settle in
09:15 – 09:45 (30 mins)	Section 1: Welcome, group agreements and getting to know each other
09:45 – 10:25 (40 mins)	Section 2: Blue Light services and mental health
10:25 – 10:40 (15 mins)	Break
10:40 – 11:15 (35 mins)	Section 3: Being a Blue Light Champion
11:15 – 11:25 (10 mins)	Break
11:25 – 11:50 (25 mins)	Section 3: Being a Blue Light Champion (continued)
11:50 – 12:10 (20 mins)	Section 4: Thinking about sharing your story
12:10 – 12:25 (15 mins)	Break
12:25 – 12:50 (25 mins)	Section 4: Thinking about sharing your story (continued)
12:50 – 13:35 (45 mins)	Lunch
13:35 – 13:40 (5 mins)	Afternoon activity
13:40 – 14:00 (20 mins)	Section 5: Managing conversations
14:00 – 14:45 (45 mins)	Section 6: Managing and maintaining boundaries
14:45 – 15:00 (15 mins)	Break
15:00 – 15:40 (40 mins)	Section 7: Dealing with difficult situations and signposting to support
15:40 – 16:05 (25 mins)	Section 8: Looking after your wellbeing
16:05 – 16:35 (30 mins)	Section 9: Next steps and what can you expect after today
16:35 – 16:45 (10 mins)	Thank you and please complete the evaluation forms
16:45	Close

# Section 1: Creating a safe environment

## Key information

This section is all about setting out what the workshop is about, what participants can expect, what you need as a facilitator and creating a safe environment.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Understand what they can and cannot expect from the workshop.
- Have had an opportunity to ask any questions they have at this point.
- Have created a group agreement and introduced themselves.

## Length

30 minutes

## Slides

2 to 4

## Resources needed

Flipchart paper, flipchart pens, blue tac, post-it notes and pens.

## Facilitator-led introduction

### Key tip

You might want to invite along someone from your service to open the session, such as a senior leader who is passionate about better mental health.

Welcome participants to the workshop, and introduce yourselves. You may want to explain a little bit about yourself and what brought you to be here facilitating this workshop today. If applicable to you, this is a good time to acknowledge that you are not an expert in mental health, and today is all about learning from each other and sharing knowledge. If you get any questions that you cannot answer, they can be put out to the room if appropriate, or taken away and addressed as follow up.

Then explain the workshop will be covering:

- blue light services and mental health
- the Blue Light Champion role
- mental health and stigma
- reflection and storytelling
- boundaries
- confidentiality and safeguarding
- looking after your wellbeing.

You hope from this they will come away with the following:

- Improved understanding of the Blue Light



Champion role and what it means for them.

- A basic plan of one thing you would like to do as a Blue Light Champion.
- The ability to identify ways to prepare and protect themselves if they choose to speak out about their own personal experiences of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems.
- Awareness of mental health, how to broach the issue and signpost individuals.
- Understanding of how to initiate a conversation about mental health, maintain boundaries and how to handle disclosure.
- Increased confidence in supporting colleagues living with or experiencing a mental health problem.
- Increased confidence in managing their own mental health as a Blue Light Champion.

## Housekeeping

Go through any housekeeping information including breaks, refreshments, health and safety such as fire exits, and anything else important about the workshop or venue. Highlight that sensitive and potentially distressing things may be discussed in today's session, and you encourage participants to take time out whenever they need.

## Group agreement

Explain that today you'll be talking about what it means to be a Blue Light Champion and exploring issues around the role. But you will also be sharing with each other who you are – your stories – and this may include times when you've experienced emotional distress, stress or a mental health problem.

Note that you want today to be a safe space where participants feel free to share as little or as much as they would like to. And to do this, you will be creating a group agreement together which will guide how you will all work together during the day.

Explain to participants that a group agreement is a list of things agreed to by the group. If at any point anyone feels any of these are not being kept to, they can say so and bring us back to the group agreement.

### Key tip

You may want to let participants know that if someone leaves the room you will check if they are okay, so ask them to let you know when they are leaving the room to indicate that they are okay. For example if they are just going to the toilet, they could give a thumbs up. Not everyone will want to do this, so you may want to give it as an option and ask if anyone has another suggestion they prefer.

### Whole group participant activity

Ask participants to shout out what they would like to put on the group agreement and write them up on flipchart paper, clarifying anything you need.

If participants need some support with this you can offer the suggestions on the following page or add any that are missing at the end. This is a group agreement, so if possible it should be led by the group.





## Facilitator guidance

- **Confidentiality:** It's up to the group how this is approached in order for them to agree and feel comfortable. Some groups ask for anything that is said in the room to stay in the room, however this can limit the reach of the valuable knowledge they gain. Another option is to suggest that people agree they can share the learning from the day outside of the group in a respectful way, and only if it's possible to keep everyone's identity anonymous.

Anyone who would not want anything they shared repeated should note that to the group beforehand. It's important that as a facilitator you let participants know your limits to confidentiality. It's your responsibility as a facilitator to understand what your duty of care means. This includes situations where someone talks about something that leads you to believe they plan to harm themselves or others. If this happens, you may be required to talk to someone else such as their line manager.

- **Be honest:** This is a safe space but please be mindful that the discussions today may be triggering to others in the room. You might want to suggest that the group look out for the person to their right.
- **Language** is key when it comes to challenging stigma and can be very important to people. We want open discussion but also for people to feel able to challenge each other and have discussions around the language we use when talking about mental health. For example the phrase 'committed suicide' comes from when it was a crime, so using 'took their life' helps to remove that stigma. It's not about banning any phrases, but it's important that as a facilitator you model appropriate language use and support participants who are unsure of what is most appropriate.

- **Non-judgmental:** If judgements come up for you during the day, try to make a mental note of them as something to reflect on later, and refocus your attention on what is being said. It can be helpful to acknowledge that everyone's world is viewed through their unique eyes, and we may not always understand where they're coming from but can respect it.
- **This is not a game of top trumps:** You might want to say to the group – everyone's experience is unique, personal and valid. We are all here today because we want to end the stigma and discrimination about mental health problems so let's unite to do that.
- **Mobile phones:** Ask the group to have phones on silent if possible, and if they need to take a call to please leave the room to do so.
- All questions are good questions.
- This is an interactive session so ask the group to join in as much as they want to.
- Enjoy the session.

Once the agreement is complete it's an idea to put it up in the room somewhere that everyone can see so it's visible and can be referred back to.



## Icebreaker and participant introductions: 20 mins

You'll find some suggested icebreakers below, feel free to use any of these or your favourites instead.

### Connecting stories: 20 mins

**Resources needed:** post-it notes and pens.

Explain to participants that the connecting stories icebreaker requires a volunteer from each table to go first, then ask that person to write down on a post-it note an interesting story, memory or fact about themselves. For example where they last went on holiday or their first pet.

Explain that this person will then read out what they have written to their group, and then any other person on the table who has a related story is asked to tell it and write in on a post-it note and add it to the first. This will then continue for 10 minutes.

After 10 minutes ask each group to read out their first and last story and how many stories they have, then go around and introduce themselves, their service and role.

Note that the idea is that people will connect their mini stories in interesting ways and the longer the chain the better. This can also be linked to later in the workshop with regards to storytelling – that through telling our story we seek to build connections with others. If you are able to find out a little about your audience it will help you to communicate in a way that speaks to them.

### In a circle: 20 mins

This icebreaker is best used for groups of 15 or fewer. Ask participants to stand in a circle in the middle of the room. Whilst still in the circle, go around and ask participants to introduce themselves, their service and role. Explain that the idea of the icebreaker is that one person shares something and anyone else who feels the same moves (across, to the side, the direction is not important). Start by sharing something – as this is the beginning of the session this could be something like 'I love coffee' or 'I run triathlons'. Then ask participants if anyone would like to go next. Continue for up to 10 minutes. You may wish to repeat this icebreaker after lunch and see if the depth of statements has changed, starting this off by sharing something you feel comfortable to.

### Tell us about yourself: 20 mins

Go around the room and ask participants to introduce themselves, and share with the group two things about themselves that are true and one lie. Then others in the room have to guess what they think the lie may be. It's a good idea for you to start this off and let people guess your lie first.

### What has brought you here today? 20 mins

Ask participants to introduce themselves, and what has brought them to be in the room today. This could be why you became a Blue Light Champion or why they are passionate about better mental health.





## Section 2: Blue Light services and mental health

### Key information

This section gives an overview of the Blue Light Programme and its research findings. It gives attendees a chance to explore what good mental health means to them and look at what things can affect a person's mental health. It will also give a definition of stigma, and support attendees to reflect on how this may affect different people, including themselves.

### At the end of this section participants will:

- Have gained an overview of the Blue Light Programme and its research findings.
- Have an increased or consolidated understanding of mental health including what good mental health might look like.
- Be able to identify things that can affect a person's mental health.
- Have increased understanding of how stigma may make someone with a mental health problem feel, and confidence in explaining this to others.

### Length

40 minutes

### Slides

5 to 16

### Resources needed

The film, if you would like to include one, a screen and speakers, flipchart paper and flipchart pens.

## 2.1 The Blue Light Programme and research (10 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

You may want to start this section by playing one of our films featuring Blue Light Champions and other supporters sharing their experiences of mental health problems, why they support better mental health in the emergency services and how they've benefitted from the Blue Light Programme.

There are a variety of films to choose from [here](#), or you may want to use one of your own.

- Ask what participants know about the Blue Light Programme – once you have this information you can then tailor the following information to the knowledge in the room.



## Share with the group

In 2015 Mind launched the Blue Light Programme, to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales.

By raising awareness of mental wellbeing and changing the way we all think and act about mental health, the programme works in partnership with emergency services across England and Wales to provide practical and positive ways for staff to stay well for work.

### Why is this needed?

- We all have mental health just as we have physical health.
- We know that 1 in 4 of us will experience a mental health problem in any given year. This includes those working within the emergency services.

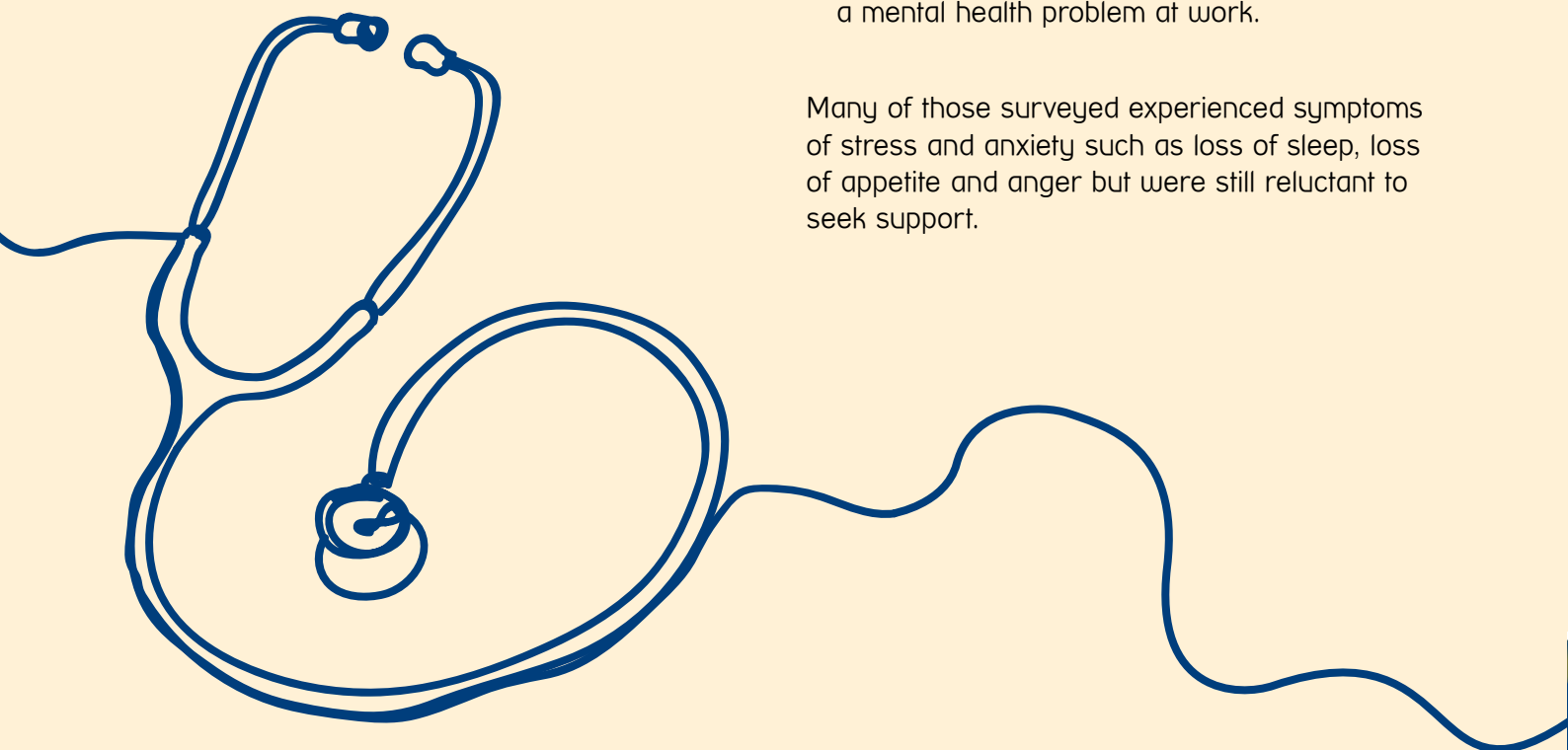
Mind conducted some initial scoping research at the end of 2014, including focus groups and a survey that received over 3,500 responses. From this independent research we know if you work or volunteer for the police, search and rescue, fire or ambulance services, that you're more at risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the general population, but are less likely to access support.

Mind found staff and volunteers tend to give long periods of service, meaning they can experience extended exposure to high levels of stress and trauma over time. This can have profound effects on mental health – 9 out of 10 of those surveyed had experienced stress, low mood and poor mental health at some point whilst working for the emergency services.

However, the research also found that:

- 7 out of 10 think their organisation does not encourage them to talk about mental health.
- Over half were not aware of the mental health support their organisation offers.
- 44% thought colleagues would be treated differently in a negative way if they disclosed a mental health problem at work.

Many of those surveyed experienced symptoms of stress and anxiety such as loss of sleep, loss of appetite and anger but were still reluctant to seek support.



**I was going to work almost crying because I was that depressed. But I loved my job and that was the frustrating thing; I couldn't tell anyone because of the stigma at work.**  
Zoe, police service

**In the ambulance service, we like to have this feeling that we're bulletproof, and sometimes you can feel a bit ashamed to admit that there's something wrong with you. But we're humans, not robots, and I want people to know that they shouldn't be afraid to talk and seek help if they need it.**  
Anon, ambulance service

## Resources and further information

- **Research findings:** Mind has carried out a large amount of research into the mental health of emergency services, the most effective ways to support them and the impact of our work with the emergency services so far. You can find all of that research [here](#).
- **Blue light stories:** Ed, Zoe, Richard, Izzy, Helen, David and Andrew have all worked in the emergency services and have all experienced mental health problems. They share their experiences [here](#).

## 2.2 Mental health (20 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

Read out the quote “Mental wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing can change, from day to day, month to month or year to year.” Mind

### Whole group participant activity

Ask participants – based on the above definition – to shout out what they think good mental health looks like. Then write answers up on flipchart paper.

After participants have given their thoughts, reveal slide 9 and read out the statements. You may want to note any similarities or differences from what they came up with. If you have good mental health you'll be able to:

- feel relatively confident in yourself
- feel and express a range of emotions
- feel engaged with the world around you
- live and work productively
- cope with the stresses of daily life and manage times of change and uncertainty.

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing, and you need to maintain both in order to stay fit and healthy.



## What can affect mental wellbeing?

Explain that we all have times when we have low mental wellbeing – when we feel sad or stressed, or find it difficult to cope.

**Your mental wellbeing can be affected by work-related factors like:**

- repeated exposure to traumatic events
- workload pressures
- long working hours
- lone working
- dealing with people who may be physically or verbally abusive.

**Your mental wellbeing can also be affected by other things in your life, for example, if you:**

- suffer some sort of loss
- experience loneliness
- have relationships problems
- are worried about money.

Sometimes, there is no clear reason why we experience a period of poor mental wellbeing.



**We all have mental health, some of us have mental health problems.**

Introduce that it can be helpful to think of our mental health as being experienced on a continuum. We can move up and down and it changes over time, which for some of us can be weekly or even daily.

Having a mental health problem does not mean someone cannot have good mental health, and equally an individual without a mental health problem can experience poor mental health and distress. We all experience things differently.

## Stress versus good pressure

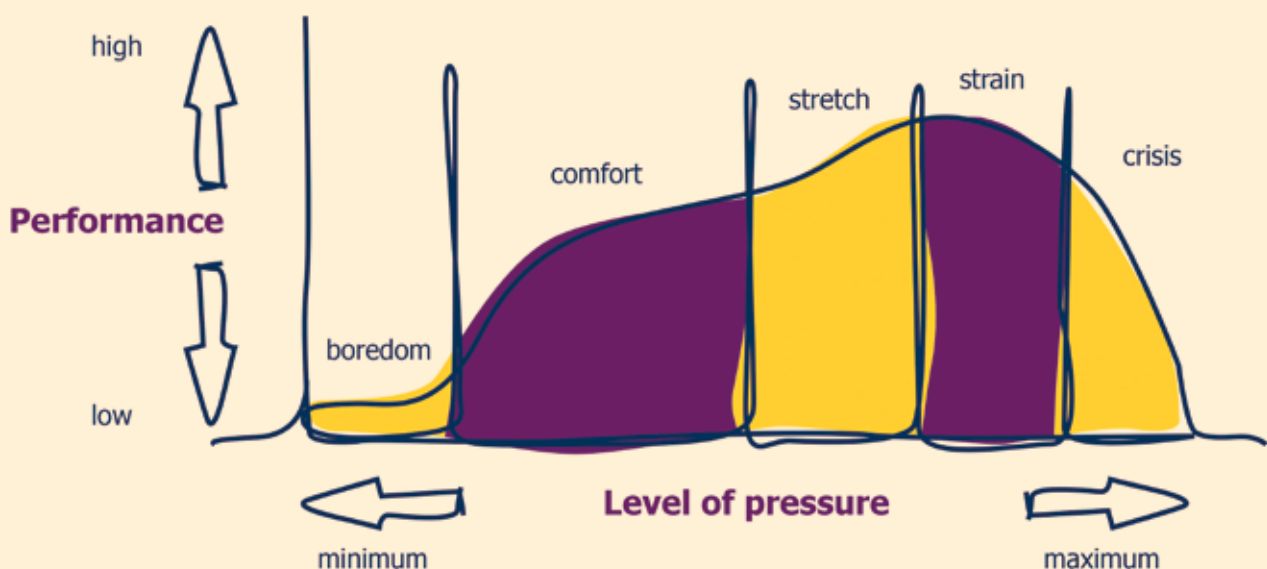
Read out the Health and Safety Executive's definition of stress: "stress is the adverse reaction people have to excessive pressure or other types of demand placed on them".



## Share with the group

We all sometimes talk about stress, and feeling stressed. This is usually when we feel we have too much to do and too much on our minds, or other people are making unreasonable demands on us, or we are dealing with situations that we do not have control over.

- Stress is not a medical diagnosis, but severe stress that continues for a long time may lead to a diagnosis of depression or anxiety, or other mental health problems.
- You can reduce the effects of stress by being more conscious of the things that cause it and learning to handle them better, using relaxation techniques as well as other lifestyle changes.



### Key tip

Introduce the above stress versus good pressure diagram that can be found on slide 12 and page 7 of the participants' handbook: this shows the effects of pressure on performance.

As 'strain' fatigue sets in, judgement can become poor and decision-making more difficult. At 'crisis', exhaustion can set in, serious health problems can occur and potentially crisis point will be reached.

## Participant activity in pairs

Ask participants to think for themselves:

- “Where do you feel you are on this scale?”
- “Where do you feel your team is on this scale?”
- “What does it feel like?”

Then ask participants to discuss this in pairs for five minutes. If people do not feel comfortable doing this, ask them to instead discuss if they think the diagram is useful.

## Resources and further information

### Service-specific information booklets

- How to manage your mental wellbeing.
- How to manage stress and anxiety.
- Seeking help for a mental health problem.
- Supporting a colleague with a mental health problem.
- For family and friends – how to support someone’s mental wellbeing.

These are all available to view online [here](#).

### Webinars

Facilitators can let participants know that a suite of webinars has been developed for the Blue Light Programme. Aimed specifically at emergency services staff and volunteers, these online films cover a range of topics, including:

- mental health awareness: aimed at everyone working across blue light services
- managing mental health in the workplace: supporting line management roles to consider personnel and their mental wellbeing, how to spot the signs of mental health problems and how to communicate with and support colleagues
- looking after your mental health: raising awareness amongst blue light personnel about how work impacts on mental health and sharing tips on how to manage mental wellbeing.

The webinars feature staff and volunteers from across the services who reflect their own experiences and share some tips. They can be viewed [here](#).

## 2.3 Stigma (10 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

#### Share with the group

##### What is stigma?

Stigma is defined as the perception that a certain attribute makes a person unacceptably different from others, leading to prejudice and discrimination against them. Stigma isolates, prevents people seeking help and stops people living the lives they want to.

The attitudes of others can stop people with mental health problems getting the help and support they need. Too many people with mental health problems are made to feel isolated, ashamed and worthless.

A key message to get across that will challenge this stigma is that someone everyone knows is, right now, experiencing a mental health problem. Mental health problems affect one in four of us every year, so it's likely that at least one of your colleagues, friends and family are dealing with a mental health problem.

As a Champion you are working to create a workplace where mental health problems are not hidden in shame and secrecy. You can help to ensure your colleagues are not afraid to speak out about their problems, or be left wondering where they can turn for help.

You have chosen to stand alongside people, to own the label of Blue Light Champion, and be the voice of change. Take a moment to celebrate that and reflect what that will mean to those around you who are experiencing distress and feel alone. Many of us want to stand up and be our own hero but it takes a lot of courage to do so.

**Everyone's attitude makes a difference.  
Your attitude makes a difference.**

From Mind's independent research of 3,627 blue light personnel in January 2015, 71% of emergency services personnel think that their organisation does not encourage them to talk about mental health – this is much higher than the general workforce population (45%). 44% thought colleagues would be treated differently (in a negative way) if they disclosed a mental health problem at work. This answer was the same if respondents had personal experience of mental health problems or not.

#### Facilitator guidance

Read out “Too many people with mental health problems are made to feel isolated, ashamed and worthless” that is on slide 14 and note this is what stigma really means.

The attitudes of others stop people experiencing mental health problems getting the help and support they need. Without support, people with mental health problems can lose their job, friends, family, or home.

Play Time to Change's video on how stigma feels that can be found [here](#).





## Whole group participant activity

Take participants through this exercise on what stigma feels like.

**Please all stand up:**

Okay, I am going to give you three different scenarios to see how open you feel you could be if you had a mental health problem to help demonstrate the fear of stigma and discrimination those of us with mental health problems sometimes face.

### 1. You are at a family wedding.

- The speeches have just finished and you are chatting with extended family (grandparents, uncles, aunties, cousins) that you have not seen for a while.
- The conversation moves onto your current health and one of your family members asks how you have been.
- Remain standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and talk to them about some of the difficulties you have recently had. Sit down if you decide to brush it off and just say "I'm fine".

**Everyone stand up again.**

### 2. You are on a first date.

- Everything is going well, you have just finished your starters and waiting for main course to be served.
- You've decided that you would quite like to see your date again as things seem to be going so well.
- The conversation moves onto mental health and you discuss a TV programme that has recently been on about this.
- Remain standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and let the other person know

about your experience and connection to the programme.

- Sit down if you say nothing at all.

**Everyone stand up again.**

### 3. You have just applied for a new job at a new organisation.

- It's your dream job and you were very excited to hear you have been shortlisted for interview.
- In the interview the discussion moves on to ask about the gap in your CV where you had to take time out from work due to your mental health problem.
- Stay standing if you feel you are able to be open about your mental health problem and explain to the panel your gap in employment.
- Sit down if you decide to make up another reason.

One day, I hope we won't have to call the people standing up brave. This is what people in your workforce are facing every day.



## Resources

- **Activities for your workplace**

Are you looking for materials to challenge misconceptions about mental health and provoke discussion? Time to Change have got a variety of quizzes, exercises and resources for you to use [here](#).

# Break

# 15 minutes



# Section 3: Being a Blue Light Champion

## Key information

This section is to support participants to discuss what being a Blue Light Champion means for them, and to help them understand the boundaries of the role. You can tailor this to the role of a Blue Light Champion within your service. It also provides an opportunity for participants to hear from a Blue Light Champion, see what activities they've been involved in and for them to share insight. This guest speaker may be one of the facilitators. This section will also start to introduce tips for talking about mental health and key messages to get across as a Champion.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Understand what the Blue Light Champion role within your service is and isn't.
- Have heard from an individual on how they have found being a Blue Light Champion.
- Have information on starting conversations about mental health.

## Length

60 minutes (plus 10 minute break)

## Slides

17 to 23

## Resources needed

Flipchart paper, flipchart pens, Champions action plan, appendix 3, page 82 and Champions activity flash cards, appendix 4, page 85.

## 3.1 What do Blue Light Champions do? (35 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

Introduce the definition of a Blue Light Champion on slide 17: 'A Blue Light Champion is an employee or volunteer in the emergency services who takes action to change the way we all think and act about mental health.' You are a growing movement of people in the emergency services changing how we all think and act about mental health problems.



## Whole group participant activity: 10 minutes

Ask participants to shout out what a Blue Light Champion is and what a Blue Light Champion isn't, and write up on a flipchart. Clarify any points that are confusing or put them out to the room for further discussion.

The below are some suggestions that you may want to offer if they are not said. Please tailor these to the role within your service if applicable:

Being a Blue Light Champion	
Is	Is not
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• raising awareness of mental health</li> <li>• signposting to support</li> <li>• feeding into policies and procedures</li> <li>• empowering people to seek help if they need it</li> <li>• empathetic and non-judgemental</li> <li>• a network</li> <li>• encouraging others to get involved</li> <li>• campaigning for change</li> <li>• offering a listening ear</li> <li>• challenging stigma</li> <li>• sharing personal experiences of mental health problems or emotional distress if comfortable to do so</li> <li>• looking after their own mental health</li> <li>• understanding their limitations and setting clear boundaries</li> <li>• a voluntary role.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a counsellor or mental health professional</li> <li>• offering professional advice (for example, medical)</li> <li>• supporting other people at the cost of their own wellbeing</li> <li>• trying to solve, or take on, other people's problems for them.</li> </ul>

## Facilitator guidance

### A great Blue Light Champion is:

- passionate about finding ways to positively and constructively challenge mental health stigma and promote wellbeing at work
- motivated to improve your colleagues' understanding of and attitudes towards mental health.

It is really important as a Champion to keep in mind what the role is about: raising awareness of mental health, challenging stigma that exists about mental health problems and signposting to support.

Champions may want to use any skills they may have gained from training such as MHFA (Mental Health First Aid), but they are acting in the capacity of a Champion, not as a counsellor or as a mental health first aider. It is important to separate their professional role and their role as a Champion. For example they may be a trained counsellor or mental health professional, however as a Champion their role is to listen and signpost, not to make a professional judgement.

You may wish to talk about how many Champions you have within your organisation and the kind of activities they have been up to.

Explain that what participants do as Champions is completely up to them and creativity is encouraged. Every activity makes a difference.

Note that there are some suggestions that they can find in their handbook on pages 12 and 13. You may wish to read out one from each section as an example.



## Share with the group

### If you've got a few minutes

- **Information sharing:** Distribute leaflets, posters and other materials developed through the Blue Light Programme. For example, promote the Blue Light Infoline and how it can support your colleagues, their families and friends.
- **Staff intranet:** Request that the Blue Light Programme's activities and resources are advertised on your intranet pages. You could also ask that more is done to highlight the support available within your organisation to staff and volunteers, so that it is easy to access.
- **Social media:** Ask your organisation to promote the Blue Light Programme on their Twitter account, tweet including @MindBlueLight or using #mybluelight or start a blog. Remember, if you choose to use social media to promote the Blue Light Programme and highlight anti-stigma messaging on a personal account, please ensure you consult and are mindful of your employer's policy on social media, seeking guidance and permission where necessary.

### If you've got a few hours

- **Speaking Up:** If you have your own personal experience of a mental health problem you may wish to speak about these to an audience of your colleagues, blog or write about them. Please note there is absolutely no pressure to do so. If you don't have personal experience of mental health problems, you can find opportunities to talk to colleagues about the importance of challenging mental health stigma and promoting wellbeing.
- **Training days and inductions:** Speak to new recruits about the importance of wellbeing and mental health during staff inductions. Flag the support that's available to them in their new workplace so that they know yours is a working environment where it's okay to talk about mental health.
- **Family and friends:** Think about how you could reach the family and friends of emergency service staff and volunteers with anti-stigma messages around mental health and details of the support available to them. For example, you could run outreach activities or host a Blue Light Programme information stall at a family or community fun day.

### If you've got longer

- **Be a point of contact:** Look into setting up a network of peers who can signpost people to mental health support, wellbeing resources, and be an additional point of contact for staff and volunteers who might need to talk.
- **Champion networks:** Share experiences, challenges and suggestions with other Blue Light Champions by building a network across local emergency services. You might find that you want to do activities together with other Blue Light Champions in your workplace or local area.
- **Events:** Get a platform at workplace events to raise the profile of mental health and wellbeing, perhaps with a table-top stand or speaking slot. Or take the lead in organising wellbeing events, using our [Blue Light Programme resources](#) to start colleagues talking about mental health.



## Group participant activity, on tables in groups of four to six, (25 minutes)

Give each table a theme of the Blue Light Champion's role (using the Champion activity flash cards) and ask them to spend 10 minutes talking about what activities they are doing around this and if there are any they would like to do around the theme in the future.

The flash cards (appendix 4, page 86):

- Raising awareness and encouraging people to talk about mental health
- Signposting to support
- Organising or attending events, meetings and training
- Speaking out about your experience of mental health problems
- Creating Champion networks
- Getting organisational buy-in.

After 10 minutes ask each group to pick one activity from their list that they are keen to take forward – it may be that one participant is already doing this and others would like to replicate or work together with them. Then give them an action plan (appendix 3, page 82) and ask them to spend 10 minutes on this.

Ask each group to feed back to everyone the activity they chose to plan around and anything interesting that came up during the action planning.

You might want to note some examples of what other Champions are doing – slide 19:

- blogs and short films about mental health
- speaking to new recruits
- creating monthly wellbeing newsletters (and putting them on toilet doors)
- supporting Champions in other organisations to get senior buy-in
- setting up networks
- co-producing policies on mental health
- recruiting new Champions – creating posters and adverts
- getting their choir involved.



## Support for Champions

Explain what support Champions from your service will receive or how you'd like them to support each other. This could include regular newsletters, meetings or training.

If you are in a position to do so, explain what support Champions will receive or ways they can support each other.

This could include:

- meetings
- further training
- newsletters
- opportunities to get involved with.

If this has not been agreed you may want to take this opportunity to ask Champions what support they need or would value.

### Key tip

You could use the H form idea (appendix 12, page 115) to help you find out what your service is doing well to support Champions, what they could do better at and suggestions for the future. You can draw this out on flipchart paper, stick it up on the wall during the session and ask participants to write on post-it notes and stick them up throughout the day.

Encourage them to think about the question 'What do you think of the support for Blue Light Champions?', and any positive or negative comments and suggestions they may have.

## Resources

- **Blue Light Champion role description:** This document explains more about the role and things you might want to do as a Champion. What you do as a Champion is completely up to you and we encourage you to get creative.
- **Things to consider document:** This document is all about things you might want to think about when you become a Champion, including if you decide to share your personal experience of mental health problems, thinking about your own mental health and getting organisational support.

# Quick break 10 minutes



## 3.2 Being a Blue Light Champion: guest speaker one (15 minutes)

As noted at the beginning of this guide we recommend that you get a volunteer guest speaker on board and support them prior to the workshop.

### Facilitator-led introduction

Introduce the Blue Light Champion guest speaker and invite them to speak for 5 to 10 minutes about their experiences of being a Champion and answer questions for 5 minutes after, if they feel comfortable.

#### Blue Light Champion: activity questions (full template found in appendix 1, page 78)

- Why did you want to become a Blue Light Champion?
- What did you do to raise awareness of mental health problems and challenge stigma in the workplace and why did you do it?
- How did your organisation support you or this activity?
- How do your colleagues feel about your involvement in this activity?
- How have you found undertaking this activity alongside your job role?
- In terms of the activity, what went well?
- In terms of the activity, what could have gone better?
- If you were doing it again would you do anything differently?
- Do you feel your activity has raised awareness and challenged the stigma around mental health problems?
- What have you gained by doing this activity?
- Any other comments?





## 3.3 Key messages (10 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

As a Blue Light Champion starting conversations about mental health is key to raising awareness and changing the way people think about it. Highlight the below tips for starting conversations about mental health. You may want to add things you have personally found successful, or that didn't go so well but you learned from.

#### Tips for talking

- Talk about why you became a Blue Light Champion.
- Start with a fact, for example: one in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year. Anyone can experience a mental health problem.
- Ask someone how they are doing, and take time to listen and engage with their response.
- If you have your own personal experience of mental health problems, and if it feels right for you, and you know how much of your story you want to share, you can talk about this personal experience with your colleagues or team.
- Talk about what helps you maintain wellbeing, relax or de-stress. Ask your colleagues what helps them.
- Use news stories related to mental health to start a discussion.
- Share some of the Blue Light Programme's findings from our survey of more than 3,000 emergency services staff and volunteers, which show:

Almost 9 out of 10 respondents had experienced stress, low mood or poor mental health at some point whilst working for the emergency services.

8 out of 10 respondents thought colleagues would be more comfortable talking about physical health than mental health.

Half of respondents were not aware of the mental health support their organisation offers.

- **Think about what you want to say and when:** You don't need to be an expert to talk about mental health, but you might find it helpful to think about what you want to say in advance. It might help to say it out loud or to a friend first. This will help you hear how it sounds and notice how it makes you feel. Also think through where and when you may want to start a conversation. For example, if you want to ask a colleague how they are feeling, make sure you have time to listen to the response and are not likely to be interrupted.
- **Less can be more:** Our mental health is as much a part of us as our physical health, but the stigma surrounding mental health can make it hard for some people to talk about it. Keeping it bite-sized and asking open questions can help you make headway.



- **Give them time:** Your colleague may simply not wish to engage with the subject straight away, or they might initially react in a negative or dismissive way. Give them time and this may change, even if it's not right away. And take opportunities to talk when these present themselves. If someone asks you about mental health or the Blue Light Programme, take the opportunity to have an open conversation.
- **Have some information ready:** Sometimes people want to find out more in their own time – why not have some Blue Light Programme materials to hand? The person you are talking to might have lots of questions and want more information.
- **You may get different reactions:** These could be positive or negative and may be hard to predict. Think about how you will keep to your boundaries. What parts of your story do you want to share and what do you not want to share? Have information to hand in case a colleague has questions. Your colleague may join in at first, but then become uncomfortable and change the topic – if this happens don't be disheartened. It's still helpful that the first step has taken place.
- **Courage is contagious:** Often, once the subject of mental health is out in the open, people want to talk. Your first conversation could prompt many more.

## Finding the words

Finding the 'right' language to describe emergency services staff and volunteers' experiences of mental health problems will always be difficult. There is no one term or set of terms that everyone will agree on.

Some people reject any form of label, and some don't see their experiences as an illness or a problem at all. Conversely, some people find their experience best understood in terms of illness, and find a medical diagnosis a useful way of talking about, and getting support for what they are going through. There are many people with personal experience of mental health problems who have diverse points of view. It's not your role as a Blue Light Champion to decide which of these points of view is 'right', or to tell anyone what language they should use to talk about their own experiences.

It is up to you to choose language that you feel comfortable with and feel is appropriate. What we do ask is that you are mindful of the language you use and think about how those around you may feel about it.

**On a personal level, being a Blue Light Champion has helped me, too. I feel it is a lot easier talking about my illness, and I have found that by doing so my supervisors and managers have a better understanding about me and my illness.** Helen, police service

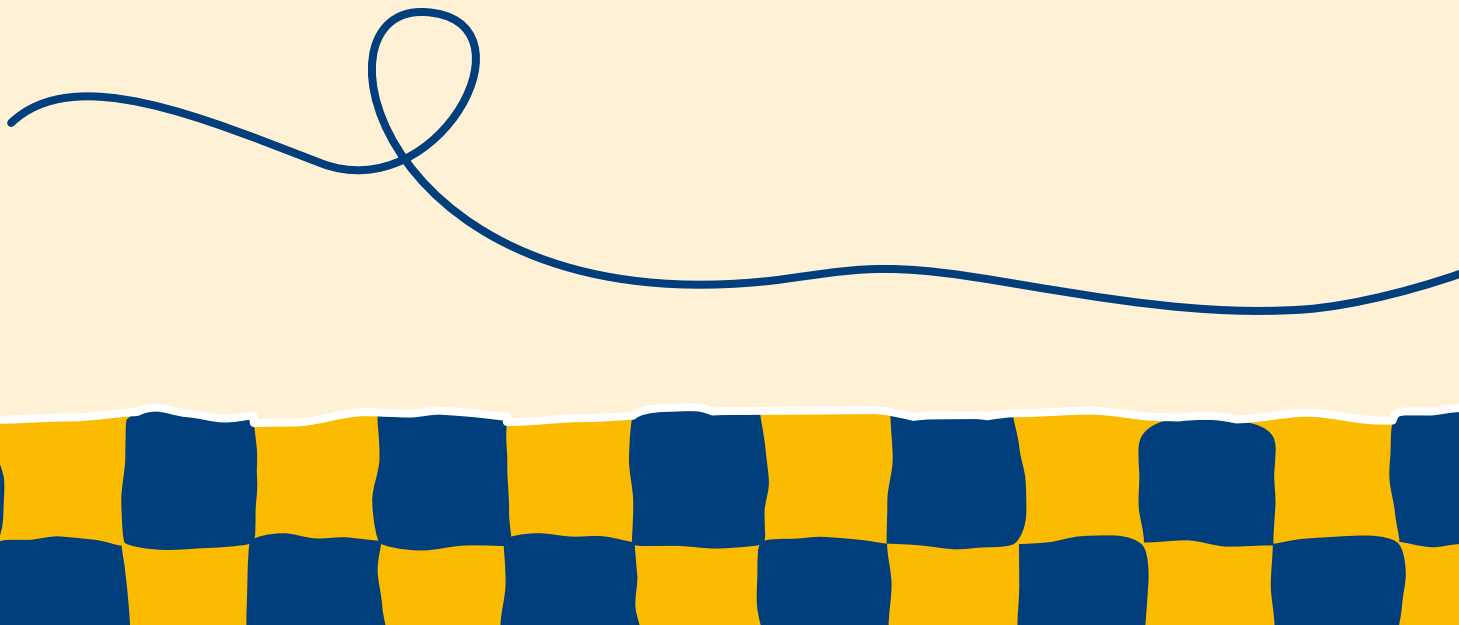


As a Blue Light Champion you will be challenging the stigma around mental health in the workplace. Here are some key messages to support you in doing this.

**Key messages about mental health:**

- We're all human and we all have mental health.
- Mental health is just as important as physical health.
- Mental health problems are common and can be treated.
- It helps to talk about mental health, but it can take courage. Just asking 'how are you?' – and taking time to listen properly to the response – can make an enormous difference.
- We all need support sometimes.
- Look out for signs of unmanageable stress in you and a colleague: what could you do to take care of yourself?
- The effects of dealing with stressful situations every day can build up over time. Through their role individuals can be constantly exposed to traumatic situations, either in person or through their support for colleagues, where they need to 'stay strong' for others. This can include moving on to the next situation without knowing what happens after their involvement is over.

**We're all human. We all have mental health.  
Talking about it makes a big difference.**



## Section 4: Thinking about sharing your story

### Key information

This section allows participants an opportunity to reflect on their own experiences of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems. Participants will receive information on how best to prepare to speak out about their experience of mental health problems or emotional distress.

Participants can also have the opportunity to hear from a Blue Light Champion who has spoken out about their experience of mental health problems or emotional distress. As noted at the beginning of this guide we recommend that you get a volunteer guest speaker on board and support them prior to the workshop. This guest speaker may be one of the facilitators.

### At the end of this section participants will:

- Have had the opportunity to, or been given a tool that will help them to, reflect on their own experiences of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems.
- Understand that sharing your experience of mental health problems, or emotional distress is completely optional and not right for everyone.
- Have information on preparing to speak out to support them, if they wish to do so.
- Have heard from an individual on how they have spoken out.

### Length

1 hour (plus 10 minute break)

### Slides

24 to 34

### Resources needed

The reflection activity on page 22 of the participants' workbook. You may also want to print a few copies (pages 38 and 39) in case participants do not want to write in their workbooks.

A clock or something that tells the time.



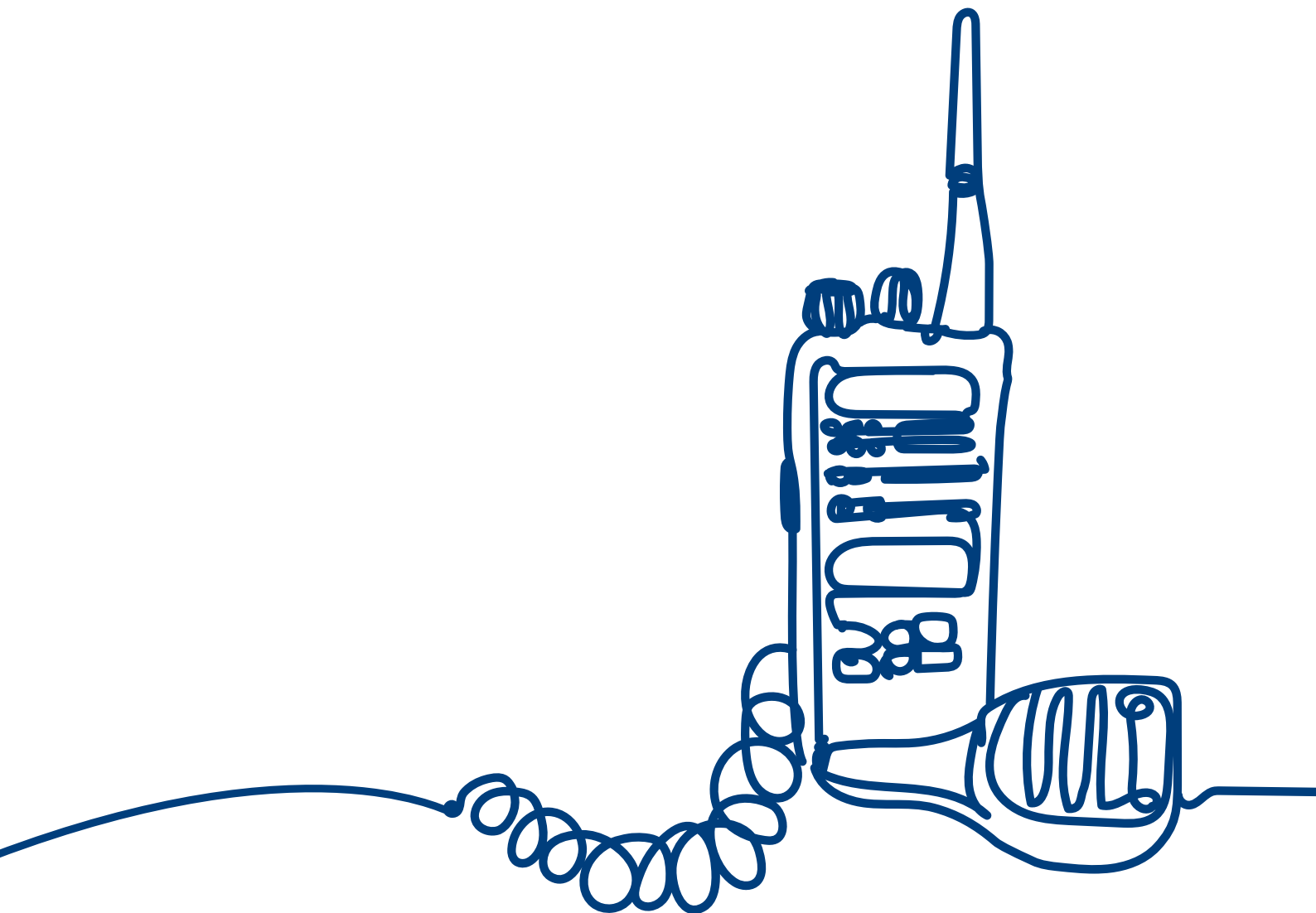
## 4.1 Reflection exercise (20 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

#### Share with the group

We often don't take the time to reflect on what has happened in our lives and how we felt about it, how we got through situations, what helped and what didn't.

This next exercise is to help you reflect on your own experiences of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems so you can start to think about whether you might like to share any of your story as a Blue Light Champion. It allows you to express non-judgementally to yourself about your experience.



## Individual participant activity (15 minutes)

The exercise can help you reflect on challenges you have faced in life such as relationship breakdowns or issues at work, whether you have experienced a mental health problem or not.

Note that:

- The exercise will involve reading statements and writing, drawing or thinking about what comes to you. One way of doing this is to keep writing, even if it's "I think this is stupid, when is the tea break?" or if you prefer to write just a few words and stop do that – it's all about what works best for you.
- Note they have 10 minutes for the exercise. You will keep time but ask them to move through the exercise that can be found on page 22 of their workbooks at their own pace.
- It is completely voluntary to take part. If anyone would prefer not to, encourage them to take this time to look at the information provided on your table or take a short comfort break. All that we ask is that you don't chat in the room or disturb others who are taking part.
- Please listen to yourself. If anyone doesn't want to continue with the exercise then please stop. To illustrate this point it might be good to give an example of when stopping can be the right thing to help participants feel comfortable to do this.
- Note the quiet room and mention the option to speak to yourself or a fellow facilitator if anyone needs to.
- The questions are phrased in the past tense, although you may connect with things you experience now or on an ongoing basis.
- It's a good idea for you to try this activity before you facilitate it and reflect how you find it. You may find useful things you can share with participants from this.

## Key tip

You may want to consider playing some background music as silence can sometimes make things feel uncomfortable. Think about something that is relaxing but not distracting.

# Personal reflection

What motivated you to come along today?

Thinking about a difficult time you've experienced, this could be your experience of a mental health problem, a life event such as a bereavement, relationship breakdown or a challenging time at home or work.

Did you tell anyone how you were feeling? What was their reaction?



What concerns did you have about sharing how you felt?

What helped you the most at that time?

Since this experience what do you do differently to look after yourself and those around you?

End of reflection





Let participants know that the 15 minutes is over and thank them for taking part in the exercise if they felt able to.

### Participant activity in pairs (5 minutes)

Ask participants to share in pairs how they found the activity – note you are not asking them to share the content of their thoughts but how they found doing it.

Suggest that individuals who chose not to take part may wish to share their reasons why or just listen to how their partner found it.

If you found the exercise brought out any surprises or are feeling like you'd like to chat more about it grab one of us and we'd be more than happy to talk things through.

### Comfort break 15 minutes

Be available for questions and to support following the reflection exercise.



## 4.2 Your story is a gift (5 minutes)

### Share with the group

Stories are important. Stories get people to understand the real impact and see things from a different perspective. Stories give people courage to seek help and speak out. Stories create an environment for change.

More importantly your story is your own, it is a gift, and it's your gift. So it's your place to keep it precious and give it only when you feel comfortable, to those who deserve to hear it.

A previous workshop participant said:

**I found the reflection exercise very powerful... Initially I felt like a bit of a fraud for not sharing my personal experiences but I have realised it's my decision to make.**

No one should feel under any pressure to publicly tell their story, it belongs to you and it's a very personal decision whether you choose to share it as part of your role as a Blue Light Champion.



As we change and grow so do our stories; yours may evolve but it will always be yours to own and for you to share how you wish.

Everybody has a story to tell. Sharing your own experience of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems can be a powerful weapon in smashing stereotypes. If you have your own personal experience of mental health problems there is absolutely no requirement to share your story as a Champion. We recognise this is a big and very personal decision. Please don't force yourself out of your comfort zone just because you think you should.

Brené Brown, research professor at the University of Houston, says that:

**“Vulnerability sounds like truth and feels like courage. Truth and courage aren't always comfortable, but they're never weakness.”**

Sharing your story is a vulnerable choice.

## Considering sharing your story? What happens next?

Think about what you would feel comfortable sharing, and the impact this will have on you and those around you.

You may want to ask participants what they think being 'comfortable' means, and clarify that in this context being comfortable is knowing or feeling something is the right decision for you.

- Initially, tell someone you trust.
- Consider making a 'timeline' of things you would be happy to share with others and those parts of your stories that are just for you. You can find a timeline to get you started on page 25 of your workbook.
- Remember you are in control of how much you disclose. How much of your story are you willing to share? You can create your own boundaries, and only share information that you wish to.
- The timing has to be right for you. Think about how you'll stay well whilst sharing your story.
- Think about how you might feel sharing your personal experience of mental health problems at work. If you are disclosing to your employer, consider waiting until you feel comfortable.
- Think about the impact of sharing your story on yourself and those around you – it may be helpful to tell your family, friends or partner that you are thinking about sharing your experiences and get their thoughts. If you have not told anyone before you might want to think about someone in your life you would feel most comfortable to talk to.

If any colleagues, friends and family are not currently aware of your experience of mental health problems, it is likely they will find out once you share your story.



If you feel participants sharing their story may have any other implications at work, for example the possibility of being moved onto restricted duties, flag this and if possible signpost them to the policies or individuals who will be able to provide further guidance on this.

## Key tip

You may want to suggest participants complete the timeline activity a few times on different days or times – as what they are comfortable to share may change depending on how they are feeling.

Telling your story can be rewarding, liberating and promote confidence and a discovery of yourself. Sharing the gift of your story may offer someone else hope.

Most importantly sharing your story is a very personal decision and is not right for everyone. Own your story and only share it if you are comfortable doing so.

Timeline

Happy to share



Just for me

## 4.3 Preparing to Speak Out (5 minutes)

You may want to see how many people in the room want and feel ready for this information today. It is all available in the participants' handbook to refer to later, so you can tailor this section accordingly.

### Share with the group

#### Five questions to ask yourself before telling your story

**1. Why are you telling this story?**

What do you hope to accomplish? Will your story inspire a colleague? Or maybe give a compelling reason for implementing a specific policy recommendation within your organisation?

**2. What do you feel comfortable sharing?**

Think carefully and decide what personal information you feel comfortable sharing with your colleagues about your own mental health experiences, and whether it is helpful to disclose this information in certain situations.

**3. What more could your workplace do to support mental health problems?**

Based on your experience, how do you think positive change around mental health can be achieved within your organisation? What have you seen that is done well and what needs improvement?

**4. Who needs to hear your story?**

Who do you think needs to be involved in making changes within your workplace? Will your story reach them? If not, how can you make it reach them? How can others help?

**5. In your experience, did someone help you in a memorable way?**

Can their actions be copied, or improved upon, to help create cultural change within your organisation? It could be worth highlighting this in your own story.



## 12 steps for sharing your story successfully

1. **Be prepared:** Think about the different reactions, positive and negative, that the person might have so you're prepared. The person will be thinking about their perception of mental health problems, you as a person and how the two fit together.
2. **Choose an appropriate time:** Choose a time and place when you feel comfortable and ready to talk.
3. **Be ready for lots of questions, or none:** The person you are talking to might have lots of questions or need further information to help them understand. Don't worry about this, you're the expert on your own experience and feelings. However, they might feel uncomfortable and try to move the conversation on – if this happens it's still helpful that the first step has been taken.
4. **An initial reaction might not last:** The person might initially react in a way that's not helpful – maybe changing the subject, using clichés rather than listening. But give them time.
5. **Have some information ready:** Sometimes people find it easier to find out more in their own time – why not have some Blue Light Programme materials ready to hand them?
6. **Keep it authentic:** We know that sometimes people are afraid to talk about mental health because they feel they don't know what to say or how to help. So keeping the conversation true to you and how you communicate best will help make you and your audience feel relaxed.
7. **Take opportunities to talk:** If someone asks you about your mental health, don't shy away, be yourself and answer honestly.
8. **Courage is contagious:** Often once mental health is out in the open people want to talk. Don't be surprised if your honesty encourages other people to talk about their own experiences.
9. **Manage your expectations:** It might not go how you'd planned, or you might not get to make all your points before your time runs out. Focus on what went well and reflect on what you've learned from the experience.
10. **Be honest about where you're at:** We are all at a different stage in our journey. Try to be honest about where you're at in your recovery and the difficulty or setbacks you've experienced.
11. **Use prompts if you need them:** Don't be self-conscious about using cards. They tell your audience that you care enough about them to prepare in advance (even if your 'audience' is only one person!).
12. **Ask your audience questions:** "Everyone has dark days whether they have a mental illness or not. What helps you in your dark days?" People love the opportunity to analyse themselves and to engage personally, so try giving them the opportunity to do so.

## Managing your experience when Speaking Out

This could be speaking at events, writing a blog, talking in a team meeting or on film etc.

- Prepare an outline of what to include about your personal experience.
- Be clear about the key messages of the Blue Light Programme – these can be found online and in the [Champions toolkit](#).
- Know your strengths as a communicator – is this public speaking, one on one, the written word, painting etc.
- Identify ways you can best prepare and protect yourself. Looking after your wellbeing is the most important thing.
- Consider presentation tools – if you are speaking this may be a presentation, TED-style talk (5–18 minutes, you can find out more [here](#)) or using an object like a firefighter's helmet. Think about what your audience will connect with.
- Give information about where to find resources, further information and how to access support.
- You are not expected to be an expert, but you might want to educate yourself about mental health and be ready for questions.
- Practise beforehand by role-playing what you will say. This might include thinking of phrases you feel comfortable using to explain difficult experiences and feelings.

**Since I have spoken out, other colleagues including senior officers have told me how they went through that 20 years ago or whatever it was. It's comforting to know that I'm not the only one, that people do get through it and progress.**

Richard, fire service



## Resources

- **The little book of storytelling** from Time to Change. This booklet has been created by working with many of you who are reading this to make sure that, together, we can help Champions to share your stories to inspire minds and change hearts. Enjoy reading stories and finding new stories, and remember that you have an amazing story to tell.

### 4.4 Speaking Out guest speaker two (15 minutes)

#### Facilitator introduction

Introduce the Blue Light Champion guest to speak for 5 to 10 minutes about their story of Speaking Out about their experience of a mental health problem and answer questions for 5 minutes after if they feel comfortable.

#### Blue Light Champion: Speaking Out (full template found in appendix 2 on page 80)

- What motivated you to speak out about your own personal experience of mental health problems?
- What did you think about before making the decision to speak out?
- How did you speak out? Was it at events, with colleagues or in a blog?
- How did your organisation support you?
- How do your colleagues feel about you speaking out?
- How have you found undertaking this alongside your job role?
- In terms of the speaking out, what went well?
- In terms of the speaking out, what could have gone better?
- If you were doing it again would you do anything differently?
- What have you gained by speaking out?
- Any other comments?

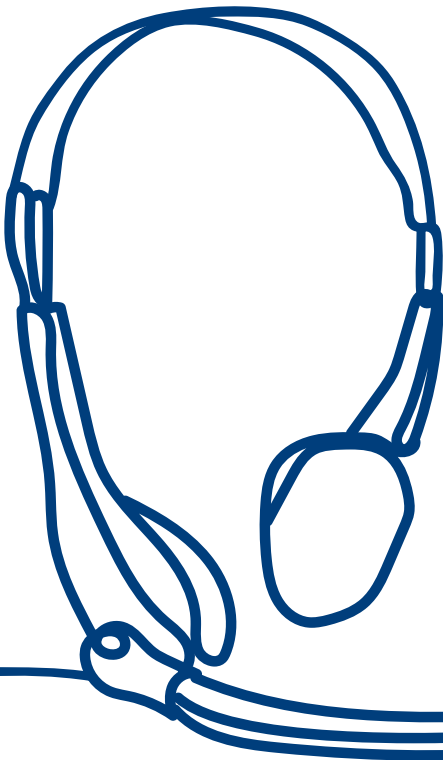


Lunch break –  
45 minutes



## Afternoon activity

You may want to kick off the afternoon with an activity. This could be something grounding like a mindfulness exercise or something energising, depending on what you feel participants need. There might be something that comes to mind, if not you'll find lots of options and things to try online.





# Section 5: Managing conversations

## Key information

This section is to give Champions some tips on managing conversations about mental health.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Understand how to initiate and close a conversation about mental health, whilst maintaining boundaries.
- Have a chance to role play a conversation about mental health and get feedback from their peers.

## Length

20 minutes

## Slides

37 to 40

## Resources needed

If you plan to run the alternative activity, conversation case studies, the resources are in appendix 8, page 100.

Read the quote on slide 37.

“This kind of sensitive, active listening is exceedingly rare in our lives. We think we listen, but rarely do we listen with real understanding, true empathy. Yet listening, of this very special kind, is one of the most potent forces of change that I know.”

Carl Rogers, psychologist – 1902–1987



## Share with the group

### Key tip

You may like to ask the group if anyone has heard this quote before, or another one that helped them to reflect on active listening.

You may wish to play Brené Brown's video on empathy that can be found [here](#), or another resource that you feel will support participants to reflect on empathy.

This quote is helpful in thinking about active listening – often we listen to respond and not to hear. Yet, just being present and focused on the person speaking is often enough to make them feel supported and heard.

As we talked about before it's important to remember your role is to listen and signpost, not to be a counsellor or a mental health professional.

It is as simple as actively listening to the person and giving them your undivided attention, not listening for anything in particular or thinking about what you are going to say next.

## Managing conversations about mental wellbeing

As a Blue Light Champion, you may find colleagues start to share their experience of mental health problems with you. This may be new to you or you might have lots of experience of managing sensitive conversations.

### Here are some tips for managing these conversations

Such a situation might be new to you, or you may have lots, or some experience of managing sensitive conversations because of your job role. The suggestions that follow are based on what we've learned can work well. Communication is a very personal thing, so use what feels right for you based on your experience of managing sensitive conversations.

### Remember, each conversation will be different

Think about the individual situation and person. One person may simply want to tell you their story, whereas someone else may be telling you as a first step to seeking support. Exploring why your colleague is starting the conversation will help to shape how you manage it.



## Managing conversations about mental wellbeing

- Find a quiet place with an informal atmosphere, perhaps in a café or over a coffee – this shouldn't feel like a formal interview.
- Actively listen to the person, by giving them your undivided attention. Try to leave any questions or comments you may have until the person has finished so you don't interrupt them. Once a person knows they are being given the space and time to talk, they will.
- Use positive body language, and encourage the person to continue with small verbal comments like 'I see' or 'what happened next?'. This will let them know that you are paying attention to what they are saying and actively listening to them.
- Check your understanding by paraphrasing what the person has said back to them.
- Reflect actual words they have used back to them, as this can encourage them to open up more. For example, a good reflection to 'I just feel so alone' could be 'alone?'.
- Respond by using empathetic statements such as: "I appreciate this must be difficult for you..."
- Avoid clichés. Comments like 'Pull yourself together' or 'You're just having a bad day' are not helpful.
- Dispel any myths. Mental health problems are more common than people think and can affect anyone at any time.
- Try to avoid asking too many questions, especially questions that only require a 'yes' or 'no' answer, or that begin with the word 'why'. Ask open questions to invite a more detailed response:
  - How are you feeling?
  - How do you look after yourself?
  - What support do you have in place?
- Reassure them that it is positive that they want to talk about their experience, what's happening with them, or that they are looking for support (if this is the case).
- Is the individual aware of sources of support? Signpost to further information and support. It may be helpful to ask the person: "What would you like to happen in this situation?" This will help to empower and encourage them to take the course of action that seems right to them. Be clear about what you can do, as well as what you can't.
- The important thing is to listen, rather than give advice – the individual needs to be able to act for themselves. Signpost the individual to sources of support, rather than telling them what you think is best. We'll talk more about this in the next section on managing boundaries.

Sometimes when someone takes the courage to talk to you it may not be possible for you to give them the time they need there and then. You will be the best judge of this. Remember to always show you recognise that they have taken a positive step by speaking to you, explain why you cannot talk now and arrange a better time to have the conversation.

Conversations can trigger painful memories – listening to others' experiences that are close to your own may trigger thoughts about your experience of mental health problems or traumatic events you have encountered. Think about how you might look after your own wellbeing as a Champion and remember your health comes first. If you do not feel able to continue the role for any reason, you can stop at any time.



## Top tip

If someone is highly emotional, give them time to settle. It can be a bit disconcerting at first to watch a friend or colleague being in the throes of emotional distress. Stay calm, sit quietly and use expressions like:

- Whatever it is we can beat it.
- You aren't on your own, I'm here with you.
- Take your time, only talk when you feel ready. If you don't want to talk that's okay too.

Note that if someone is in urgent need of help always signpost immediately to support. You may want to help them by going to the Mind website and clicking on the yellow tab at the top which says, 'I need urgent help'.

Alternatively you can call the Samaritans 116 123 (UK) – lines are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

## Closing conversations about mental health

- Sometimes conversations will come to a natural end. However if this does not happen give the person a gentle indication that the conversation needs to come to an end. You could say something like: "It's been good to talk, we've covered a lot and we will have to wrap up soon because I have a meeting." Or whatever you feel is appropriate.
- Summarise your conversation and anything you have both agreed to do. For example: "You have told me that you are going to speak to your GP about how you are feeling, and I will text you by the end of the day with the details of how to access counselling sessions through our Employee Assistance Programme."
- Ask practical questions such as 'Is there going to be someone there when you get home?' or 'Is there a friend you can go and see?'
- Remember offering a 'listening ear' and showing your acceptance, warmth and respect will go a long way to help someone. It may not be possible to get a clear idea of the next steps the person will take as a result of talking to you.
- Ending the conversation by inviting them to take some time to reflect on what has been discussed and to consider what they may want to do going forward could be the best way to bring the conversation to a close, especially if you feel that there is nothing more you can say at that time.
- If you feel it would be helpful, and you are able to commit to giving more of your time in this way, you may want to arrange another time to meet up and talk.
- Remember to always show you recognise that they have taken a positive step by speaking to you, explain why you cannot talk more now and arrange a better time to have or continue the conversation if appropriate.

You might like to add in your own suggestions and also flag any relevant policies and guidelines your organisation has in place to guide Champions.

## Participant activity in threes (15 minutes)

Ask participants to get into threes and choose someone to take the below roles.

Roles:

- A: Talk about an issue you are facing or have faced for three minutes (choosing something you feel comfortable to talk about).
- B: Actively listen.
- C: Observe – and be ready to give feedback.

After three minutes ask everyone to swap roles in their groups. After a further three minutes ask participants to swap roles again so everyone will have had a go at each role.

Bring the group back together and ask how participants found the exercise and if they noticed anything new.

Alternative activity: Conversation case studies, appendix 8, page 100.

## Participant activity on tables (15 minutes)

Give each group a case study, and 10 minutes to think about and discuss:

- What do you say?
- What would you do?

Then ask each group to feed back (5 minutes).



# Section 6: Setting and maintaining boundaries

## Key information

This section focuses on the importance of setting and maintaining boundaries as a Blue Light Champion. It also gives participants space to discuss and reflect on safeguarding, and the limits to confidentiality as a Champion.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Understand how to set and maintain boundaries and how to handle disclosure.
- Have increased confidence in communicating as a Blue Light Champion.

## Length

45 minutes

## Slides

41 to 45

## Resources needed

Flipchart paper and flipchart pens.

## 6.1 Setting and maintaining boundaries (25 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

#### Facilitator notes

Boundaries need to be there to keep people safe. Simply put they are what you are and are not ok with. Having boundaries can help clarify your role as a Champion and the relationship you will have with colleagues.

It's important to be aware of the organisation's policies and guidelines. If you are able, give an overview of your organisation's guidelines on this topic.



## Participant activity in threes (20 minutes)

Give participants a number (one, two or three) and ask them to gather around a table with others with the same number. Then give the ones role boundaries, twos organisational boundaries and threes personal boundaries.

Then ask the groups to think about what the boundaries could be for each area. Give them 10 minutes to do this and then ask each group to feed back.

Note some of the below if they are not mentioned.

### Role boundaries

- **Time:** Knowing how much time you could offer to the role and support you can provide to colleagues.
- **Skills and abilities:** Being clear about what skills and abilities you do or don't have to help others.
- **Confidentiality:** Being clear on what you can and can't keep confidential.
- Keep in mind the remit of Champion role.
- Signpost individuals to further information and support.
- Manage expectations of colleagues by explaining role and limits.
- Communicate reasons for your boundaries, for example, "I'm not a mental health professional", "I have to leave by a certain time", "I can signpost you to support", etc.
- Don't make promises that you can't keep.

### Organisational boundaries

- Working within your organisation's policies and guidelines.
- Follow your organisation's process to escalate any gaps that you have identified in current policies etc.
- **Data protection and confidentiality:** What's your organisation's take on this?
- **Safeguarding:** If your organisation has a policy, be familiar with it.
- **Not an advisory role:** Signpost to other internal processes or HR when appropriate.
- Work with line managers and other colleagues.

### Personal boundaries

- Be kind to yourself if you get it wrong, and do it differently next time.
- Talk to someone; you are encouraging others to talk about their mental health, you could do the same for yourself.
- If you feel others are not respecting or are unclear on your boundaries – speak to them.
- If you find subjects distressing or triggering then be honest and avoid.
- Have appropriate support in place.
- If you feel under pressure and have a heavy workload you can opt out of the role temporarily.



## Share with the group

### Establishing and maintaining boundaries

Boundaries exist to protect everyone. Establishing boundaries can help to clarify your role as a Blue Light Champion and the relationship you'll have with colleagues when in that role. Being clear about what you can and cannot offer as a Blue Light Champion will help you enjoy the role and manage other people's expectations.

These are some suggestions of things for you to consider but is not an exhaustive list or a guide to be followed.

Remember, the Blue Light Champion role is not a 'pastoral' role. It's important that others don't see you as a counsellor and that you don't feel that you have to go beyond your abilities and role to provide ongoing emotional support to someone because of your role as a Blue Light Champion.

### Be clear

- Explain your role and its limits to colleagues so you can manage people's expectations. Be clear about the activities you will be doing as part of your role. For example, you could say "My role as a Blue Light Champion is to share information that promotes awareness of how to keep yourself mentally well."
- Communicate the reasons for the boundary. If someone is asking for direct advice or help beyond your role, you could say: "Sorry, I am not the best person to advise you on that and do not have the knowledge, skills or experience to help you with this. I am not a mental health professional and stepping outside of my abilities as a champion might be unhelpful to you. But I can suggest other sources of help and support you may wish to access." The explanation shows that you understand and believe in the reasons for the boundary.
- Don't make promises you may not be able to stick to. For example don't tell someone everything they tell you is completely confidential if there is a chance that what they say means you need to alert someone else in your service.
- Signpost individuals to further information and support. It may be helpful to ask the person: "What would you like to happen in this situation?" This will help to empower them and encourage them to take the course of action that seems right to them. Be clear about what you can do, as well as what you can't.





## Identifying when boundaries are not working

Be mindful of your own wellbeing and take the time to notice any changes that could indicate that you need to take on a little less. Reflecting on your role regularly can help you to identify whether you are taking on too much.

- If you feel others are not respecting or are unclear on your boundaries, speak to them. Own your statement by starting with 'I' and going on to describe what you think or feel. For example, you could say: "I don't feel comfortable continuing this conversation until we're both clear about what my role is in supporting you." By using 'I' in this way, you take ownership of the statement, which is both powerful and demonstrates that you personally care about the outcome.
- Be kind to yourself if you get it wrong. Identify what happened and how you can do it differently the next time.
- Talk to someone. Just as you may want to encourage conversations about mental health with your colleagues and for them to chat about how they are feeling, make sure you also take time to have these conversations yourself.

### Key tip

Reassure participants that they are not alone, and they can ask for help if they need it. They can access support within the service, or signpost them to the [Blue Light Infoline](#), or speak to other Blue Light Champions if they have a situation they are unsure how to deal with.

## Sharing your story

Part of the role of a Blue Light Champion is encouraging more open discussion of mental health in the workplace. As a result, you may find that colleagues tell you about their own thoughts, feelings, experiences and concerns, as part of seeking support around their own mental health.

- Think carefully and decide what personal information you feel comfortable sharing with your colleagues about your own mental health experiences, and whether it is helpful to disclose this information in certain situations. For example if someone tells you they think they may have PTSD (post-traumatic stress disorder), and you have had a similar experience, it may be useful for you to explain how you sought help and what worked for you. However, it may not be helpful to talk at length and in detail about the sensitive details of your own story. While you may have experienced something similar, the circumstances and feelings will not be exactly the same and may be overwhelming for the other person. A good question to ask yourself is – how will this person benefit from hearing about my own experience?
- Remember if you have your own personal experience of mental health problems there is absolutely no requirement to share your story as a Blue Light Champion. We recognise this is a big and very personal decision.
- Listening to others' experiences that are close to your own may trigger thoughts about your experience of mental health problems or traumatic events you have encountered. Think about how you might look after your own wellbeing as a Blue Light Champion and remember your health comes first. If you do not feel able to continue the role for any reason, you can stop at any time.



## 6.2 Safeguarding (20 minutes)

### Facilitator-led introduction

In the context of being a Blue Light Champion, what does safeguarding mean to you? According to the Care Quality Commission, “Safeguarding means protecting people’s health, wellbeing and human rights, and enabling them to live free from harm, abuse and neglect.”<sup>1</sup>

It’s important that we set clear expectations as a Champion. In the next exercise we are going to explore what the key things are you need to get across when you introduce yourself as a Champion. How might you say this?

### Participant activity on tables (15 minutes)

What are the key things you need to share with people as a Champion? Ask participants to work on their table to think about what they would like to get across when introducing themselves as a Champion. Give 10 minutes for this.

If required note ideas such as:

- what the role is all about
- why they became a Champion
- what they can and can’t help with
- limits to confidentiality.

After 10 minutes ask the groups to come up with how they might say this, thinking about language and authenticity.

You may want to type these up and email them around to the group afterwards. If this is not possible maybe suggest people take photos on their phone if the group is comfortable with this.

### Key tip

If you have been able to find out what policies and guidance your employer has about limits to confidentiality please share this now.

Alternatively you might want to encourage participants to discuss with HR or occupational health so that they clearly understand your organisation’s policies and guidance. This will help Champions feel prepared and able to respond effectively within your organisation’s guidelines.

### Limits to confidentiality

The capacity to keep what people tell you confidential is an essential part of the role. However, there may be occasions when you need to break this confidentiality. It is important that the individual is aware of this from the start so they are aware and do not feel their trust has been broken. If this happens, you need to tell the person that you are going to tell someone else about what they have told you. Examples could include:

- self-harm or suicidal intent
- violence, abuse
- criminal activity.

Don’t forget the **Blue Light Infoline** – for yourself or for someone you are supporting.

1. [cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/safeguarding-people](https://www.cqc.org.uk/what-we-do/how-we-do-our-job/safeguarding-people)

## If someone discloses thoughts about harming themselves or others to you

In your role as a Blue Light Champion, there is a possibility that your colleagues may disclose thoughts about harming themselves or others to you. Before you start your role as a Blue Light Champion, it is important that you find out what policies and guidance your employer has in place in case this happens. It might be useful to discuss this possibility with HR or occupational health so that you clearly understand your organisation's policies and guidance before your Blue Light Champion role starts. This will help you feel prepared and understand how to respond effectively and within your organisation's guidelines.

As a Blue Light Champion you are first and foremost an employee or volunteer of your organisation. So, if an individual discloses thoughts of harming themselves or others it's helpful to understand they are not telling you as an individual, they are telling your organisation. Every organisation has a duty of care to all its employees and volunteers to provide them with information and support. If you are unsure about a situation speak to your manager, a member of HR or another member of staff who supports you.

We encourage you to think carefully about how you'll look after your own wellbeing as a Blue Light Champion and how you can make sure you have appropriate support in place. We'd encourage you to make a plan for looking after yourself – consider a Wellness Action Plan (WAP). The WAP is inspired by Mary Ellen Copeland's Wellness Recovery Action Plan® (WRAP®): an evidence-based system used worldwide by people to manage their mental health.

The WAPs are a personalised, practical tool we can all use – whether we have a mental health problem or not – to help us identify what keeps us well at work, what causes us to become unwell, and how to address a mental health problem at work should you be experiencing one. You can find a copy of the WAP on pages 39 to 43 of your workbook. This is also found in appendix 7, page 95, of this handbook. Please note that more guidance on using the WAP for employees and managers can be found [here](#).

## Resources

- **Wellness Action Plan (WAP):** an easy, practical way of helping you to support your own mental health at work.

# Break 15 minutes



# Section 7: Dealing with difficult situations and signposting

## Key information

This section focuses on raising awareness of difficult situations that individuals may face as a Champion. It provides case studies to allow participants to think through how they would deal with certain situations, and explains the importance of setting and maintaining boundaries. It also focuses on the importance of signposting to further support.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Have increased confidence in supporting colleagues living with or experiencing a mental health problem.
- Have an awareness of how to signpost individuals to further support.

## Length

40 minutes

## Slides

47 to 49

## Resources needed

Dealing with difficult situations case studies, appendix 10, page 111.

## Facilitator-led introduction

### Dealing with difficult situations

## Participant activity on tables (35 minutes)

Give each group a case study, found in appendix 10, page 111 and 15 minutes to work through the questions:

- How does it feel to be in this situation?
- What would you do?
- Would you involve anyone else?
- How would you support yourself after?

Then ask each group to give feedback (10 mins).



## Share with the group

### Knowing when to signpost elsewhere

If someone needs help or advice that you are not qualified or able to provide, it's important to signpost them to support. You may find it helpful to have information available about both internal and external sources of help in your area.

Being prepared with this information means you can direct your colleagues to support while maintaining boundaries and ensuring you do not take on too much.

Ask attendees to shout out sources of support and then reveal examples on slides 48 and 49.

Flag the Blue Light Champion signposting to support document (on the next page), and on pages 45 and 46 of the participants' handbook, that they can use to create a list of support or local signposting resources you have created. An editable version is available [here](#).



Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

## Practitioners and therapists

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

## Associations

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

## Peer support

[mind.org.uk/bluelight](http://mind.org.uk/bluelight)

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

Organisation	
Contact details	
More information	
Website	

## Employee assistance

Organisation	
Contact details	
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Organisation	
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## Mindfulness

Organisation	
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Please note that the contact information listed below is correct at the time of publication.

<b>Mind Blue Light Infoline</b> 0300 303 5999 (Monday to Friday, 9am to 6pm, local rates) text: 84999 <a href="mailto:bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk">bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk</a> <a href="https://mind.org.uk/bluelight">mind.org.uk/bluelight</a>	Confidential Infoline for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families.  Our team can look for details of help and support in your area.
<b>Be Mindful</b> <a href="https://bemindful.co.uk">bemindful.co.uk</a>	Information, and details of local mindfulness courses and therapists.
<b>Bereavement Advice Centre</b> 0800 634 9494 <a href="https://bereavementadvice.org">bereavementadvice.org</a>	Support for people who have been bereaved.
<b>Blue Lamp Foundation</b> 0871 2345 999 <a href="https://bluelamp-foundation.org">bluelamp-foundation.org</a>	Financial aid to emergency service workers injured in the course of duty.
<b>British Association for Behavioural and Cognitive Psychotherapies (BABCP)</b> 0161 705 4304 <a href="https://babcp.com">babcp.com</a>	Lists accredited therapists.
<b>British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP)</b> 01455 883 300 <a href="https://itsgoodtotalk.org.uk">itsgoodtotalk.org.uk</a>	Practitioners in your area.
<b>Citizens Advice</b> 03444 111 444 (England); 0344 477 2020 (Wales) <a href="https://citizensadvice.org.uk">citizensadvice.org.uk</a>	Confidential advice on a range of issues.
<b>Cruse Bereavement Care</b> 0844 477 9400 (national helpline) <a href="mailto:helpline@cruse.org.uk">helpline@cruse.org.uk</a> <a href="https://cruse.org.uk">cruse.org.uk</a>	Bereavement charity offering online, telephone and face-to-face support.
<b>Direct.gov.uk</b> <a href="https://direct.gov.uk/en/employment">direct.gov.uk/en/employment</a>	Information about employment rights and services, and career advice.
<b>Samaritans</b> Freepost RSRB-KKBY-CYJK Chris, PO Box 90 90, Stirling, FK8 2SA 24-hour helpline: 116 123 <a href="mailto:jo@samaritans.org">jo@samaritans.org</a> <a href="https://samaritans.org">samaritans.org</a>	Emotional support for anyone in distress.
<b>United Kingdom Council for Psychotherapy (UKCP)</b> 020 7014 9955 <a href="https://psychotherapy.org.uk">psychotherapy.org.uk</a>	List of registered practitioners.

<b>LINC</b> 020 7921 5200 (available 24 hours) <a href="http://lasunison.com/linc">lasunison.com/linc</a>	A peer support network for the London Ambulance Service, promoting physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing of any member of staff.
<b>The Ambulance Services Charity (TASC)</b> 0800 1032999 (support line) <a href="http://theasc.org.uk">theasc.org.uk</a>	Provides support to current and retired ambulance services personnel, their families and dependents.

# Fire

<b>Big White Wall</b> <a href="http://bigwhitewall.com">bigwhitewall.com</a>	Online community and forum overseen by trained advisers.
<b>The Fire Fighters Charity</b> 0800 389 8820 <a href="mailto:info@firefighterscharity.org.uk">info@firefighterscharity.org.uk</a> <a href="http://firefighterscharity.org.uk">firefighterscharity.org.uk</a>	The Fire Fighters Charity provides services that enhance quality of life for serving and retired firefighters, fire personnel and their families.
<b>Women in the Fire Service UK</b> 01366 381 237 <a href="http://nwfs.net">nwfs.net</a>	Voluntary organisation aimed at supporting women in the fire service and promoting gender equality.

# Police

<b>Disabled Police Association</b> <a href="http://disabledpolice.info">disabledpolice.info</a>	Promotes equality of opportunity for disabled people working within the extended police family.
<b>Flint House Police Rehabilitation Centre</b> 01491 874499 <a href="http://flinthouse.co.uk">flinthouse.co.uk</a>	Provides individually planned, intensive, rehabilitation services for sick and injured, serving and retired police officers.
<b>National Association of Muslim Police</b> <a href="http://nampuk.org">nampuk.org</a>	National organisation that aims to support Muslim officers and staff.
<b>Police Treatment Centres</b> <a href="mailto:enquiries@thepolicetreatmentcentres.org">enquiries@thepolicetreatmentcentres.org</a> <a href="http://thepolicetreatmentcentres.org">thepolicetreatmentcentres.org</a>	Treatment centres where serving and retired police officers can receive rest, recuperation and treatment following an illness or injury.
<b>SafeHORIZON UK</b> <a href="http://safehorizon.co.uk">safehorizon.co.uk</a>	Support and advocacy services for police officers and their families affected by psychological injury, stress and mental ill health.

# Section 8: Looking after your wellbeing

## Key information

This section highlights to participants how important it is to look after your own mental health as a Champion. It gives information on different ways to look after your wellbeing and empower participants to take forward ideas that work for them.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Have increased knowledge of information and tools to support in managing their own mental health as a Blue Light Champion.
- Have increased awareness of how important it is to look after their wellbeing as a Champion, and that this is the priority.

## Length

25 minutes

## Slides

50 to 52

## Resources needed

Five ways to wellbeing handouts, appendix 6, page 94.

## Facilitator-led introduction

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing, and maintaining both is an important part of staying fit and healthy. Whether you have a mental health problem or not, there may be times or situations in your life that are more difficult than others.

It's important to note that the emphasis is on trying and finding things that work for them. You may wish to acknowledge that looking after your wellbeing can be difficult, especially with the pressure of our job roles and personal lives. Nonetheless our health is the most important thing, and so it's vital that we try to find things that help us stay well.



## Top tip

You may want to create a 'self-care menu' of your favourite self-care activities. This might be a breathing exercise or spending time with a good friend, anything that helps you look after yourself really. You can try something off the menu daily or however often you feel able to. You might want to put the list up somewhere you'll see as a reminder.

- **Talk about the way you feel:** As a Champion you may find lots of people coming to you to talk, so make sure you have someone to talk to: another Champion, your line manager, a friend. This is especially important if you are facing a difficult time. At first this may be hard because, when you're going through a difficult time in your life, your immediate response might be to keep your feelings to yourself rather than share them with others. However, the best thing you can do to build resilience is to talk to someone about the way you feel. Your colleagues, friends or family may be able to offer you practical help or advice and give you another perspective on what is causing your problems. Even if they can't help, often just talking something through and feeling that there is someone to listen and understand you can make you feel much better.
- **Identity your triggers:** This can help you work out what affects your mental wellbeing and recognise changes in your mood that would be difficult to spot otherwise. For example, you may realise that seeing a certain person has an effect on your mood. Knowing what affects your moods can help you take steps to avoid these situations or mitigate against the negative impact a certain situation may have on you.
- **Doing something you enjoy can help you stay well:** Make time to do things you like, whether it's cooking, seeing your friends or DIY. Some people find that doing something creative, such as drama, drawing or sewing,

helps them to express themselves positively and deal with any difficult emotions in a positive way. Learning something new, or taking up a new hobby, can also boost your confidence and occupies your mind in a positive and active way. If you want to try a new hobby, think about what you are good at, or things that you have always wanted to try. You can find information about volunteering organisations and local groups, clubs or classes at your local library, in local newspapers or magazines, or online.

- **Relax:** It is important to make time for yourself and relax. In order to look after others you need to first care for yourself. Self-care is not self-indulgent, it's essential. Do something you like, or even just take a five-minute break to look out of the window. Learning a relaxation technique, such as yoga, meditation or mindfulness (find out more at [bemindful.co.uk](http://bemindful.co.uk)) can also help you relax and reduce stress levels.

Think about things you can do if you start to feel overwhelmed. There may be things you know have worked in the past, you know have worked for friends or things to try from our information on what you can do when you're feeling overwhelmed.

Most of all be kind to yourself. We are all human and we are all different. Try not to compare yourself to other people and be realistic – you don't have to be perfect.

## Whole group activity (5 minutes)

Ask if participants have heard of the five ways to wellbeing and then briefly explain the below.

You may want to give one of your own examples for each of the five ways, instead of those provided.

## Share with the group

The following steps have been researched and developed by the [New Economics Foundation](#).

### Connect

There is strong evidence that indicates that feeling close to, and valued by, other people is a fundamental human need and one that contributes to functioning well in the world. It's clear that social relationships are critical for promoting wellbeing and for acting as a buffer against mental health problems for people of all ages.

#### Examples of doing something to connect:

- Talk to someone instead of sending an email.
- Speak to someone new.
- Ask how someone's weekend was and really listen when they tell you.

### Be active

Regular physical activity is associated with lower rates of depression and anxiety across all age groups. Exercise is essential for slowing age-related cognitive decline and for promoting wellbeing. But it doesn't need to be particularly intense for you to feel good – slower-paced activities, such as walking, can have the benefit of encouraging social interactions as well providing some level of exercise.

#### Examples of being active:

- Take the stairs not the lift.
- Do some 'easy exercise', like stretching, before you leave for work in the morning.
- Walk to someone's desk instead of calling or emailing.



## Take notice

Reminding yourself to 'take notice' can strengthen and broaden awareness. Studies have shown that being aware of what is taking place in the present directly enhances your wellbeing and savouring 'the moment' can help to reaffirm your life priorities.

Heightened awareness also enhances your self-understanding and allows you to make positive choices based on your own values and motivations. Take some time to enjoy the moment and the environment around you.

### Examples of 'taking notice':

- Have a 'clear the clutter' day.
- Take notice of how your colleagues are feeling or acting.
- Take a different route on your journey to or from work.
- Visit a new place for lunch.

## Learning

Continued learning through life enhances self-esteem and encourages social interaction and a more active life. Anecdotal evidence suggests that the opportunity to engage in work or educational activities particularly helps to lift older people out of depression. The practice of setting goals, which is related to adult learning in particular, has been strongly associated with higher levels of wellbeing.

### Why not learn something new today? Here are a few more ideas:

- Find out something about your colleagues.
- Sign up for a class.
- Read the news or a book.
- Set up a book club.
- Do a crossword or Sudoku.
- Research something you've always wondered about.
- Learn a new word.

## Give

Participation in social and community life has attracted a lot of attention in the field of wellbeing research. Individuals who report a greater interest in helping others are more likely to rate themselves as happy. Research into actions for promoting happiness has shown that committing an act of kindness once a week over a six-week period is associated with an increase in wellbeing.

### Examples of 'give':

- Do something nice for a friend or neighbour.
- Volunteer your time.

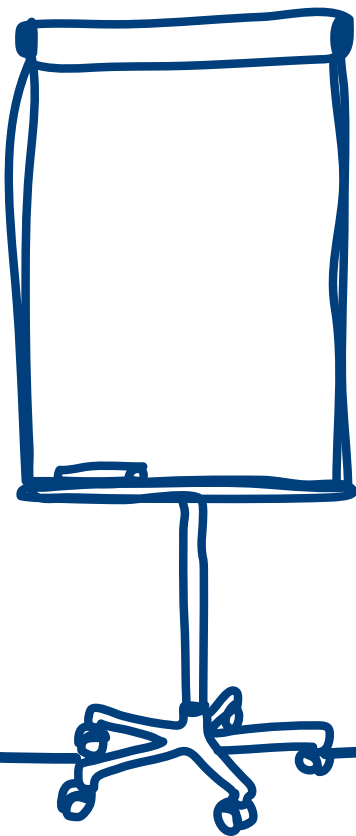
## Participant activity on tables (15 minutes)

Ask participants to imagine they are speaking to a new recruit to their role who is asking for ways they can look after their wellbeing.

Hand out one of the five ways to wellbeing (appendix 5, page 94) to each table. Give participants 10 minutes to focus as a group on the way to wellbeing they are given and create suggestions on what the individual could do to focus on this way to wellbeing.

Then ask each group to feed back a few things they have come up with.

You may want to type these up and email them around to the group afterwards. If this is not possible maybe suggest people take photos on their phone if the group is comfortable with this.





## Take care of your wellbeing



One in four people in the UK will experience a mental health problem in any given year. But our independent research shows that the estimated quarter of a million people who work and volunteer in the emergency services are even more at risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the general population due to the challenging nature of your roles.



### What can I do on a day-to-day basis to stay mentally well?

Mental wellbeing is just as important as physical wellbeing, and maintaining both is an important part of staying fit and healthy. This guide is to help you think about ways you can keep yourself well, what you can do if you are feeling overwhelmed and where you can go to find the right support for you if you need help. If you need support now or are feeling overwhelmed please turn over for more information.



#### Keep physically active

Doing regular exercise can be very effective in lifting your mood and increasing your energy levels. It doesn't have to be very strenuous or sporty to be effective – the important thing is to pick something you enjoy doing, so you're more likely to stick with it.

### Build healthy relationships with people

Building and maintaining constructive relationships with people is an important part of staying mentally well. If you spend time around positive and supportive people, you are more likely to have a better self-image, be more confident and feel able to face difficult times. In return, if you are caring and supportive to other people, you are more likely to get a positive response from them. This is particularly important if working alone is a significant part of your job.

#### Relax

It is important to make time for yourself and relax. In order to look after others you need to first care for yourself. Self-care is not self-indulgent, it's essential. Do something you like, or even just take a five-minute break to look out of the window. Learning a relaxation technique, such as yoga, meditation or mindfulness (find out more at [bemindful.co.uk](http://bemindful.co.uk)) can also help you relax and reduce stress levels.

#### Identify mood triggers

Keeping track of your moods in a mood diary can help you work out what affects your mental wellbeing and recognise changes in your mood that would be difficult to spot otherwise. For example, you may realise that seeing a certain person has an effect on your mood. Knowing what affects your moods can help you take steps to avoid these situations or mitigate against the negative impact a certain situation may have on you.

#### Diet

Explore the relationship between the food you eat and your mood. Improving your diet can help give you positive feelings, clearer thinking, more energy and calmer moods.

Think about how regularly you eat – if your blood sugar drops you might feel tired, irritable and experience low mood. You need to eat regularly to keep your sugar level steady, and choose foods that release energy slowly like protein, nuts and seeds, oats and wholegrains.

#### Are you having too much caffeine?

Caffeine is a stimulant. Having too much can make you feel anxious and experience low mood, disturb your sleep, or give you withdrawal symptoms if you stop suddenly. Caffeine is in: tea, coffee, chocolate, cola and other manufactured energy drinks. You might feel noticeably better quite quickly if you drink less caffeine or avoid it altogether.



### Learn to accept yourself

One of the most important steps in maintaining mental wellbeing is to learn to accept yourself. If you value yourself, you are more likely to have positive relationships with other people and find it easier to cope with difficult times in your life.

#### Here are some tips to help you increase your self-esteem:

- Try not to compare yourself to other people.
- Acknowledge your positive qualities and things you are good at.
- Learn to identify and challenge unhelpful thinking patterns.
- Use self-help books and websites to help you change your beliefs.
- Spend time with supportive people.
- Be assertive – don't allow people to treat you with a lack of respect.
- Engage in hobbies that you enjoy.

### Sleep

There is a close relationship between sleep and mental health. If you're finding it difficult to sleep, don't try to force it – get up, go to another room, and try to relax there. Do something soothing, such as listening to music, until you're tired enough to go back to bed. If you are awake for long periods, repeat this process as many times as you need to.

[mind.org.uk/BlueLight](http://mind.org.uk/BlueLight)  
[bluelight@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelight@mind.org.uk)

[t](#) @MindBlueLight #mybluelight  
[f](#) Mind

We're a registered charity in England (no. 219838)

Funded by

 Cabinet Office  
 Image: West Midlands Police





# Need support?

## Samaritans

24-hour emotional support for anyone struggling to cope.

24-hour freephone helpline: 116 123  
Email: [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)  
[samaritans.org](http://samaritans.org)

## The Blue Light Infoline

Confidential, independent and practical support, advice and signposting around mental health and wellbeing. The Infoline is just for emergency service staff, volunteers and their families, to help keep you or those you care about well for work.

The Infoline does not provide ongoing emotional support but will give you information on accessing services and help in your local area.

Our team provides information on a range of topics including:

- staying mentally healthy for work
- types of mental health problems
- how and where to get help
- medication and alternative treatments
- advocacy
- post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- existing emergency service support
- mental health and the law.

## The Blue Light Infoline:

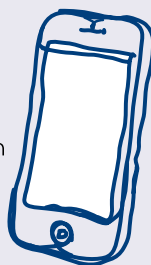
**0300 303 5999**

Lines are open 9am to 6pm,  
Monday to Friday  
(except for bank holidays)

[bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk](mailto:bluelightinfo@mind.org.uk)  
Text: 84999

## Local services

Find your **local Mind** and the services such as crisis helplines, drop-in centres, counselling and befriending they offer [here](#).



## Look after yourself during difficult times

Everyone has times when they face challenging situations and find it difficult to cope. If you are experiencing a difficult time, or are unwell, it's important to look after yourself and ask for help if you feel you need it.

# What can I do when I'm feeling overwhelmed?

## Try a breathing exercise

For example breathe in through your nose and out through your mouth. Try to keep your shoulders down and relaxed, and place your hand on your stomach – it should rise as you breathe in and fall as you breathe out.

## Take a break

If it's possible, step away from what you are doing. You could read a book or a magazine, even if it's only for a few minutes.

## Picture yourself somewhere you feel calm

Even if you can't physically get away, your imagination can transport you to somewhere you feel calm. Think of somewhere relaxing and peaceful. You might choose a memory of somewhere you've been, or a place you have imagined.

## Listen to music

Really listen to the music. Can you hear a drum beat or a certain rhythm? Focus on the music, and let other thoughts fade away.

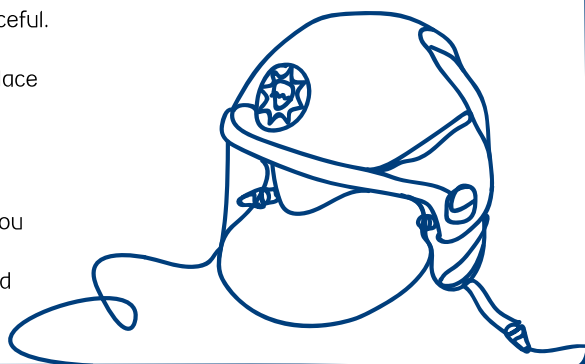
## Try a grounding exercise

To reconnect you with your surroundings. Look for and find one thing you can see, one you can touch, one you can hear, one you can smell and one you can taste.

## Stay safe

If your feelings become overwhelming, and you have suicidal thoughts or you think you may self-harm, remember that you can pick up the phone at any time of night or day and talk to the Samaritans on their 24 hour freephone helpline: 116 123.

You might also find that our information on [how to cope with suicidal feelings](#) is helpful.



## Notes


# Section 9: Bringing the workshop to a close and next steps

## Key information

This section is focused on bringing the workshop to a close, giving participants space to ask questions and reflect on their learning. It allows you the opportunity to explain the next steps for participants, or give them ideas of what these could be.

## At the end of this section participants will:

- Have had space to reflect on their learning during the workshop, and an opportunity to ask any questions.
- Have an understanding of the next steps as a Champion within your organisation.

## Length

30 minutes

## Slides

53 to 56

## Resources needed

A ball.

## Facilitator-led introduction

If you are in a position to do so you may wish to share what participants can expect after today as a Champion. This could be:

- meetings
- further training
- newsletters
- opportunities to get involved with.

Alternatively you may wish to take this opportunity to find out what the people in the room would find useful.

## Whole group activity

Ask the group if they have any questions or ideas they'd like to discuss. Allow 10 minutes for questions and if possible be available after the workshop for one-to-one questions.

## Whole group activity

Ask participants to share one thing with the group they will take away from today (maybe something they have learnt or are going to try) and one thing they will leave here today (something they previously did that was unhelpful or a concern or question that has now been answered). You may want to use a ball so people can pass it to each other after they have taken their turn.

## Share with the group

### Tonight do something just for you

You may have heard the oxygen mask analogy: if you have taken a flight before you will have heard the safety instructions that you should fit your own oxygen mask before helping others. This is true in life as well. In order to help others we must first look after ourselves. There is nothing self-indulgent or selfish about looking after your wellbeing. It's vital, it helps you do everything you do.

So tonight do something just for you.

### Top tip

You may want to start by sharing what you will be doing first.

## Thank you

Thank all the attendees and ask them to complete the evaluation forms, found in appendix 11, page 113, if you are using them.

## Implementing the workshop in your service

You should now have a good idea of what organising and facilitating a Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop involves. We hope you feel inspired to work together with Champions in your service to bring this workshop to life and continue working towards better mental health in our emergency services.

If after reading this handbook you do not feel confident to deliver the workshop, we'd encourage you to think about if it's right for you, and to work with your service to find a way to be involved in the workshop in a way that makes you feel comfortable.



# Glossary

## Terms used in this handbook

### Discrimination

When someone dislikes, or is prejudiced against, a certain group of people and treats people from this group unfairly. People can face discrimination because of their gender, race, sexual orientation, age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, religion or beliefs, or because they have a mental health problem.

### Mindfulness

Mindfulness is a way of paying attention to the present moment, using techniques like meditation, breathing exercises and yoga. It has been shown to help people become more aware of their thoughts and feelings, so that instead of being overwhelmed by them, it is easier to manage them.

### Resilience

The capacity to adapt and cope in the face of challenging circumstances, such as having a baby, being socially isolated or dealing with stressful workplace situations, whilst maintaining a stable mental wellbeing. Resilience can be taught and learned.

### Stereotype

When someone has a generalised or simplified idea about what people from a particular group are like, leading them to believe that people from this group are all the same. More often than not, stereotypes are negative. So when someone says all people with mental health problems are violent, this is an example of negative stereotyping. In reality people with a mental health problem are more likely to be a victim of violence themselves.<sup>1</sup>

### Stigma

When a person, group or condition has very negative or bad associations attached to it. There is a powerful stigma attached to mental health problems, which causes people to discriminate against or stereotype people with mental health problems.

### Webinar

A short informative film that can be accessed via the internet.

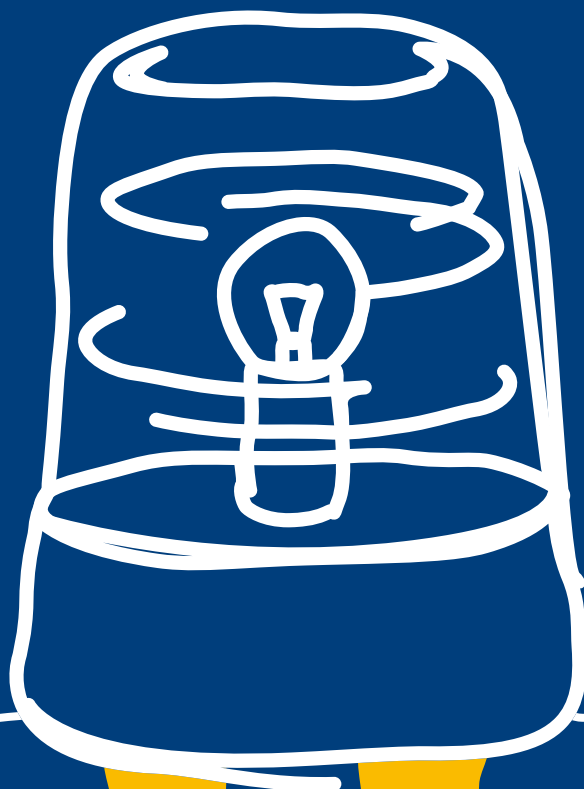
### Wellbeing

Mental wellbeing describes your mental state – how you are feeling and how well you can cope with day-to-day life. Our mental wellbeing can change, from day to day, month to month or year to year. The World Health Organisation states: “Mental health is defined as a state of wellbeing in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community”.<sup>2</sup>

1. [time-to-change.org.uk/news-media/media-advisory-service/help-journalists/violence-mental-health-problems](https://time-to-change.org.uk/news-media/media-advisory-service/help-journalists/violence-mental-health-problems)

2. [who.int/features/factfiles/mental\\_health/en/](https://who.int/features/factfiles/mental_health/en/)

# Appendices



# Blue Light Champion: activity questions

## Questions

Why did you want to become a Blue Light Champion?

What did you do to raise awareness of mental health problems and challenge stigma in the workplace and why did you do it?

How did your organisation support you or this activity?

How do your colleagues feel about your involvement in this activity?

How have you found undertaking this activity alongside your job role?

In terms of the activity, what went well?

In terms of the activity, what could have gone better?

If you were doing it again would you do anything differently?

Do you feel your activity has raised awareness and challenged the stigma around mental health problems?

What have you gained by doing this activity?

Any other comments?



# Blue Light Champion: Speaking Out questions

## Questions

What motivated you to speak out about your own personal experience of mental health problems?

What did you think about before making the decision to speak out?

How did you speak out? For example, at events, with colleagues or in a blog.

How did your organisation support you?

How do your colleagues feel about you speaking out?

How have you found undertaking this alongside your job role?

In terms of the speaking out, what went well?

In terms of the speaking out, what could have gone better?

If you were doing it again would you do anything differently?

Do you feel your speaking out has raised awareness and challenged the stigma around mental health problems?

What have you gained by speaking out?

Any other comments?

# Champions action plan (to be printed A3)

What do you want to do?

What would you like to achieve?

Have you made any assumptions?

Support: What support do you need, from your organisation, colleagues, or fellow Champions?

Your wellbeing: How will you look after your own mental health?

Plan: How will you promote your activity? What resources can you use? How will you make it as accessible as possible?

Evaluate: How will you know if your activity has been successful?

What happens next? How can you build on this activity?

Raising awareness and  
encouraging people to  
talk about mental health

# Signposting to support



# Organising and attending events, meetings and training

# Speaking Out about your experience of mental health problems

# Creating Champion networks

# Getting organisational buy-in

# Personal reflection

What motivated you to come along today?

Think about a difficult time you've experienced. This could be your experience of a mental health problem, a life event such as a bereavement, relationship breakdown or a challenging time at home or work.

Did you tell anyone how you were feeling? What was their reaction?

What concerns did you have about sharing how you felt?

What helped you the most at that time?

Since this experience what do you do differently to look after yourself and those around you?

End of reflection

# Always remember your story is a gift so keep it precious.

## Considering sharing your story? What happens next?

Think about what you would feel comfortable sharing, and the impact this will have on you and those around you.

- Initially, tell someone you trust.
- Consider making a 'timeline' of things you would be happy to share with others and those parts of your stories that are just for you.
- Remember you are in control of how much you disclose.
- Reflect on what your motivations are and the message you want to get across.
- The timing has to be right for you. Think about how you'll stay well whilst sharing.
- If you are disclosing to your employer, consider waiting until you feel comfortable.
- Educate yourself about mental health and be ready for questions.
- Practise beforehand by role-playing what you will say.
- Telling your story can be rewarding, liberating and promote confidence and a discovery of yourself.
- Sharing your experiences may offer someone else hope.

Most importantly sharing your story is a very personal decision and is not right for everyone. Own your story and only share it if you are comfortable doing so.



## Five ways to wellbeing

Connect

Be active

Take notice

Learn

Give





## Wellness Action Plan template

**A WAP reminds us what we need to do to stay well at work and details what our line managers can do to better support us.**

It also helps us develop an awareness of our working style, stress triggers and responses, and enables us to communicate these to our manager. The information in this form will be held confidentially and regularly reviewed by you and your manager together. You only need to provide information that you are comfortable sharing and that relates to your role and workplace.

This form is not a legal document but it can help you and your manager to agree, together, how to practically support you in your role and address any health needs.

It is the responsibility of the employer to ensure that data gathered in this form will be kept confidential and will not be shared with anyone without the permission of the member of staff. Certain circumstances may require confidentiality to be broken – refer to further guidance [here](#) for more information on this.

Below you will find a WAP template. You may wish to take a look at the [full guide](#) on using it before getting started.

### 1. What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?

For example taking an adequate lunch break away from your desk, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunchbreak, light and space in the office, opportunities to get to know colleagues.



## 2. What can your manager do to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work?

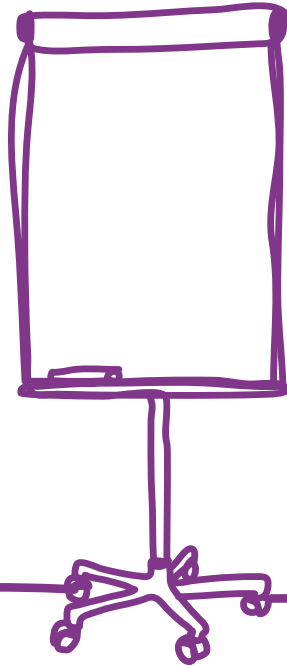
For example regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working patterns, explaining wider organisational developments.

## 3. Are there any situations at work that can trigger poor mental health for you?

For example conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan.

## 4. How might experiencing poor mental health impact on your work?

For example you may find it difficult to make decisions, struggle to prioritise work tasks, have difficulty with concentration, drowsiness, confusion, headaches.



**5. Are there any early warning signs that we might notice when you are starting to experience poor mental health?**

For example changes in normal working patterns, withdrawing from colleagues.

**6. What support could be put in place to minimise triggers or help you to manage the impact?**

For example extra catch-up time with your manager, guidance on prioritising workload, flexible working patterns, reasonable adjustments.

### 7. Are there elements of your individual working style or temperament that it is worth your manager being aware of?

For example a preference for more face-to-face or more email contact, a need for quiet reflection time prior to meetings or creative tasks, negotiation on deadlines before they are set, having access to a mentor for questions you might not want to bother your manager about, having a written plan of work in place which can be reviewed and amended regularly, clear deadlines if you have a tendency to overwork a task or a tendency to have particularly high or low energy in the morning or in the afternoon.

### 8. If we notice early warning signs that you are experiencing poor mental health, what should we do?

For example talk to you discreetly about it, or contact someone that you have asked to be contacted.

9. What steps can you take if you start to experience poor mental health at work? Is there anything we need to do to facilitate them?

For example you might like to take a break from your desk and go for a short walk, or ask your line manager for support.

10. Is there anything else that you would like to share?

Employee signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Line manager signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Date to be reviewed \_\_\_\_\_

# Conversation case studies

## Conversation – scenario one

Tom has been absent from work for the last three weeks. He is due to return to work tomorrow. He has told you that his absence is due to stress.

You are not sure what caused the stress. You have Tom's phone number but are nervous about talking to him. You've not experienced this situation before.

What do you say?

What would you do?

## Conversation – scenario two

Samantha has disclosed to you that she is experiencing depression due to all the changes at work.

She doesn't want to tell her line manager because she is afraid she might lose her job.

What do you say?

What would you do?

## Conversation – scenario three

You have noticed that Mohammed has not been himself lately; he has stopped joining group conversations and has been keeping to himself.

You are worried about him but you know other people at work who are closer to him.

What do you say?

What would you do?

## Conversation – scenario four

Bethan has been very short with you and your other colleagues lately, which is really unlike her.

You want to ask her how she is and if you can support her in any way, but don't know if or how to approach it as she is your manager.

What do you say?

What would you do?



## Conversation – scenario five

Toni comes to you and tells you that he has been feeling anxious and finding it hard to come into work at the moment.

He tells you that he has been late a number of times last week and is worried that his manager has started to notice.

What do you say?

What would you do?

# Managing boundaries case studies

## Case study one

An individual from another department has emailed you to say they heard you were a Blue Light Champion and writes that he has been feeling very down lately.

He mentions that he has been having thoughts of suicide.

How would you approach this situation?

How does it feel to receive this email?

What questions would you like to ask this person?

What would you do?

Would you involve anyone else?

## Case study one – part two

You send a reply, saying you're happy to talk to him and signpost him to the Samaritans and the Mind Blue Light Infoline.

You see that his email was sent on Sunday, and it is now Monday. You then find out that this officer has gone home sick and so won't see your reply.

### How would you approach this situation?

What are your first thoughts?

What questions would you like to ask this person?

What would you do?

Would you involve anyone else?

Does it trigger any emotions in you, if so where might you want to seek support?

## Case study two

A colleague has come to you with problems very similar to those you experienced yourself a few years ago. You feel very empathetic towards him and find yourself giving him more peer support time than you would normally give to other people. You find yourself worrying about him a lot outside of working hours.

How would you approach this situation?

How does it feel to be in this situation?

What questions would you like to ask this person?

What do you think you should do?

Would you involve anyone else?

## Case study two – part two

When he comes to you in distress one day, you give him your personal mobile number in case he needs to talk to you outside of work.

He starts to ring you frequently on this number and it has begun to disrupt your home life.

### How would you approach this situation?

What are your first thoughts?

What would you do?

Would you involve anyone else?

Does it trigger any emotions in you, if so where might you want to seek support?

## Case study three

A colleague has come to you feeling harassed and isolated within her team. She says “I can handle the stress of the job if the team is generally a good team, but not if the team is a bad team.” She is feeling very depressed and anxious, but is too scared to approach her line manager because she is not sure of the response she will get. What support will you offer her?

How would you approach this situation?

How does it feel to hear this?

What questions would you like to ask this person?

What would you do?

Would you involve anyone else?

## Case study three – part two

She has now been to see her GP who has signed her off sick for two weeks. She has come to you for help in planning her return to work.

What might you do to support her?

How would you approach this situation?

What are your first thoughts?

What would you do?

Would you involve anyone else?

Does it trigger any emotions in you, if so where might you want to seek support?

# Dealing with difficult situations

## case studies

### Case study one

You arranged to go to a number of other teams' meetings and talk about the Blue Light Programme and your experience of mental health problems. You have just disclosed at a team meeting and it's clearly gone really well as people are asking you loads of questions and seem massively interested. You start to find this overwhelming, especially as one person pipes up loudly about how brave you are, how amazing you are, that you are really going to change people.

A couple of hours later you reflect on what you said and start to feel that you overshared. You are having second thoughts and wish you hadn't spoken out at all.

### Case study two

You are working with your HR department to review your organisation's policy on wellbeing. In a meeting about this, one of the HR managers says, "I know a few Champions have been speaking. I think it's been a form of therapy for some of them." You want to ask them what they mean by this, but decide it's not the right time. Later in the meeting another individual mentions how an individual, "who has been off for months with depression still feels they're entitled to a promotion, as if".

This really upsets you. You recently had time off due to postnatal depression and constantly worried it would impact future promotions, something you told yourself wouldn't be true. You want to challenge this comment but feel worried about the reaction you may get.



## Case study three

You are very open about your depression, happy to discuss it at length with others. Your previous line manager John was very supportive of you. Sarah your new line manager has since taken up the post and in your first supervision flags a dip in your performance and asks about it. You explain to her that two weeks ago you decided to increase your antidepressants dose as the current one is no longer effective. The new dose resulted in some strong side effects that include lack of sleep, lack of appetite, feeling spaced out and highly lethargic. You go on to explain the ways John supported you to manage your depression at work.

Sarah makes comments on how lenient John had been and that she wonders if the poor performance is related to mental health problems or indeed if it is another issue – training or competency.

## Case study four

You are at an event to deliver a presentation about the Blue Light Programme and as part of that presentation you share your personal experiences of mental health problems and how you stay well. After your presentation there is a break and a number of people come up to you and then go on to tell you their experiences. You feel good that speaking out has encouraged others to talk about their experiences.

As you get ready to leave, feeling really empowered, David – one of the delegates – tells you he appreciates you telling your story but as a line manager his staff often 'go off sick with stress' and he thinks most of them are faking it. You are a manager yourself and are shocked at what he is saying. You are now feeling quite angry with David.

# Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop – evaluation survey

We'd be so grateful if you could answer the questions below – your responses will help us improve our future workshops.

Q1. Now for some questions on the workshop today – please circle the relevant number on each row:

	Not at all	Not very	Fairly	Very	Don't know / can't say
How interesting did you find the workshop?	1	2	3	4	5
How relevant was the event to your role as a Blue Light Champion?	1	2	3	4	5
How motivating did you find the workshop?	1	2	3	4	5

Q2. To what extent do you agree/disagree with the following statements?  
Please circle the relevant number on each row:

	Strongly disagree	Tend to disagree	Neither agree nor disagree	Tend to agree	Strongly agree	Don't know / can't say
After today's workshop, I feel able to identify ways to prepare and protect myself if I choose to speak out about my personal experience of stress, anxiety, low mood or other mental health problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6

After today's workshop, I feel inspired to run activities to change the way we all think and act about mental health problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6
After today's workshop I feel more confident in starting conversations about mental health within my workplace.	1	2	3	4	5	6

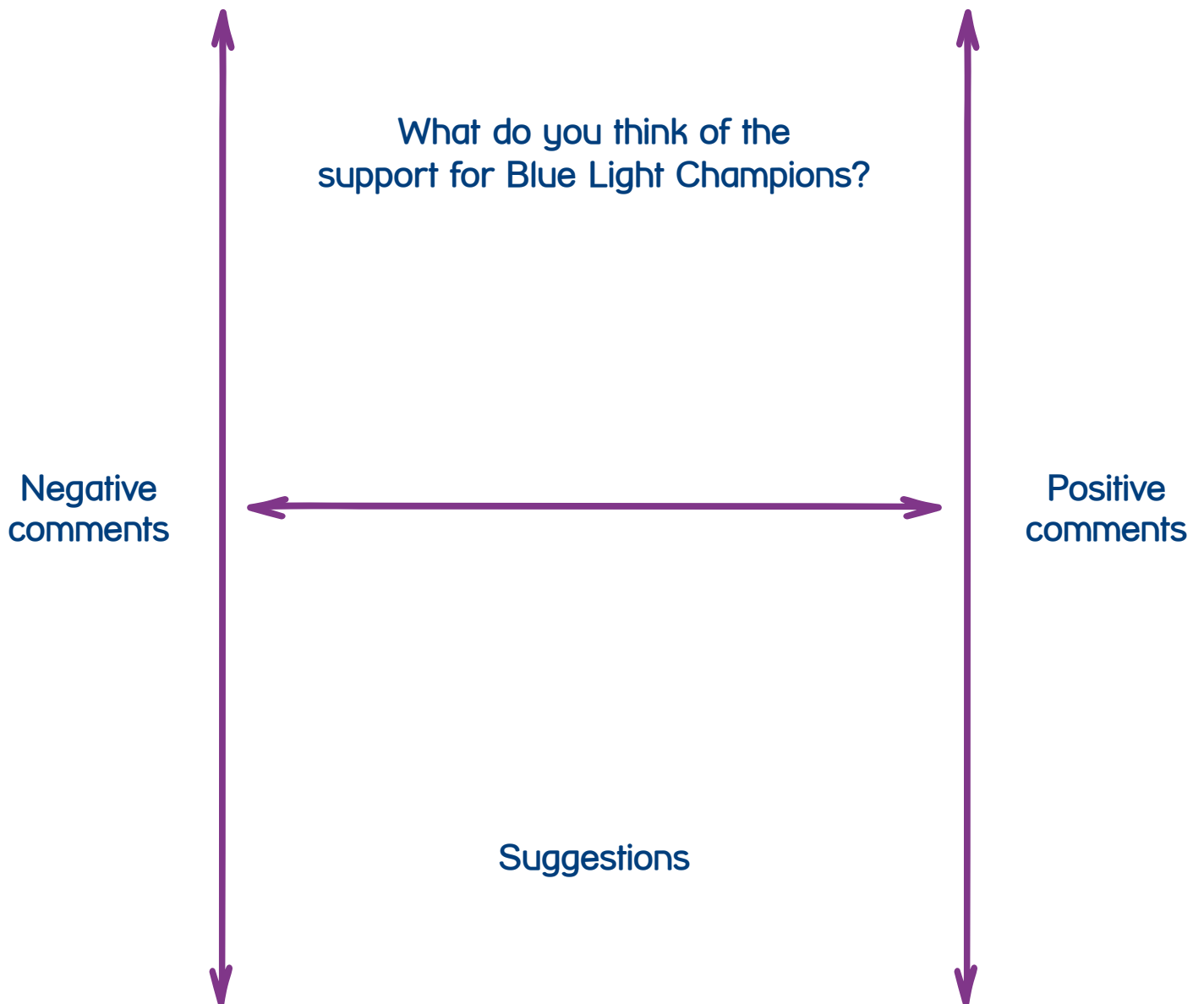
Q3. What worked well for you during the workshop (and maybe let us know what your favourite thing was)?

Q4. What worked less well?

Q5. Do you have any suggestions for how we can support you as a Blue Light Champion or how the support available could be improved?

Thank you for taking the time to give feedback on today's event.

# H form



The Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop originally came from Time to Change. As part of the Blue Light Programme, Mind delivered the Speaking Up, Speaking Out workshop to Blue Light Champions across England and Wales.

The Blue Light Programme was set up to provide mental health support for emergency services staff and volunteers from ambulance, fire, police and search and rescue services across England and Wales.

## We're Mind, the mental health charity.

We're here to make sure anyone with a mental health problem has somewhere to turn for advice and support.

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 Mind

We're a registered charity in England (no. 219830)

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