

Movember: Supporting men's mental health in the workplace

Onebright looks at how managers can improve the stigma surrounding men's mental health in the workplace with a few simple actions.

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/EINPresswire.com/ -- The Quality Care Commission highlights that up to 10 million people in the UK require mental health support, with men far less likely to seek help for mental health challenges. More often than not, the demotivator is driven by gender-related barriers and stigmas.

About Onebright: <http://onebright.com/>

Mental health is a sensitive subject, and change takes time. Talking about mental health is tough for anyone, not just for men. But as a manager, there are opportunities where they can open the door and create a safe and trusting space where people feel comfortable enough to start having real, honest conversations and ask for the help they need.

Why is men's [mental health in the workplace](#) important?

Every week, 125 people in the UK take their own lives, with 75% of these suicides being male. Suicide is the leading cause of death globally for men under 50, described by WHO as a "global silent epidemic".

Men face both social stigma from their peers and also self-stigma. The self-stigma comes from the often-unconscious masculine ideals that have been culturally conditioned and socialized into their narrative of self or their identity as men. The traditional male stereotype in several cultures includes the idea that men are expected to be assertive, ambitious, independent, self-reliant, in control, strong, and successful earners with stable jobs and high-income security.

These expectations can reduce their capacity to acknowledge and recognize their own sadness and articulate those feelings to themselves. Unheeded emotional problems can also cripple a man's ability to function fully in society, thrive in his work, and care for his family.



Why is it hard for men to talk about their mental health?

Too often in the media, men are seen as strong, resilient characters who don't show emotions, creating a taboo around mental health with men, especially those of higher authority, such as bosses or colleagues in the workplace. There may also be fear that expressing emotions will affect career progress or promotion opportunities.

Society's outlook on how men 'should' be is also a significant part of the problem, and often men have learned from past experience that the best way to deal with a problem is to keep it to themselves.

What is the purpose of expressing emotions?

Emotions make our lived experiences unique to us, and expressing these enable them to be their best selves at home and work. There is a range of studies, theories, and research into why men disproportionately find it more difficult to express emotions, but the truth is there is no one clear answer to fit everyone.

That's why raising awareness about mental health amongst men and encouraging them to seek help, speak up and talk about their problems is fundamental. There are far too many men battling alone and seeing no way out, but it is important to let men know there is always hope and the chance of a better life with support and understanding.

By encouraging people to talk about mental health, workplaces can break down stereotypes, improve relationships, aid recovery and take the stigma out of something that engages everyone. Consequently, as our mental health improves, we optimise our performance across all domains as the workplace culture improves.

What is the meaning behind Movember?

Movember looks at mental health through a male lens, focusing on prevention, early intervention, and health promotion. Whether it's been triggered by a significant life event or not, anxiety, depression, stress, and, far too often, hopelessness and suicidal thoughts result in substantial feelings and experiences felt by men across the world, many of whom are suffering in dangerous silence. Changing the culture towards a space to open up and talk about difficulties without judgement provides benefits beyond the work arena.

Some 38% of UK men fear their job could be at risk if they discuss their [mental health at work](#), and this needs to be debunked by the organizations themselves. Making everyone, including men, feel safe to discuss their issues is of paramount importance.

As an employer, a duty of care exists to manage workplace mental health and support the psychological well-being of all employees of all genders.

What can employers do to improve men's mental health in the workplace?

Supporting employees can be done in numerous ways, some small and some big. Onebright recommends encouraging managers to set an example. Often this looks like undergoing mental health training to be more confident in starting 'sensitive' conversations by first sharing personal life and work challenges and how it affects their emotional state. For example, at the identification stage, in small ways, we can reflect with our employees on a current workload priority and share how it was difficult for us; we can then ask how they are finding a similar situation.

At Onebright, mental health training is delivered by BABCP-accredited therapists, meaning businesses get the highest standard of CBT-based programs possible. Talk to Onebright today about mental health training for management teams and business team leaders.

PR & Media Enquiries

Onebright

+44 20 7785 7383

[email us here](#)

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