

Words We Rarely Use In The Corporate World

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Given the recent occurrences in the news over the past few months I feel this blog has a duty to highlight some of the words we rarely use in the corporate world. Words like stress, anxiety and the most evil of all depression.



Let's give you some facts. The total number of cases of work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2013/14 was 487,000 (39%) out of a total of 1,241,000 cases for all work related illnesses, the number of new cases in 2013/14 was 244,000 (Source HSE Labour Force Survey 2014). The statistics also show that the number of cases have remained broadly flat over the last decade. Even so, that quantity is still concerning and it clearly shows that there are an amount of people that are brave enough to let employers know that they are experiencing undue pressures or demands made upon them. I believe outside of that the figures are unknown because of the silence shrouded in the places we work.

I do not feel it will bring any value to this blog to list the causes of depression. However, it is important to highlight that these behaviours determine how we relate to one another and what is expected by the organisation on how results are delivered.

If I asked you to list the behaviours, performance levels and give views on people you work with, you would be able to freely make comments based on what you have seen and heard whether it is evidence based or your own professional/personal opinions, we all get to know each other over time. Even pre Homo-erectus we used these abilities and skills to recognise changes in behaviour of individuals or groups in the need to survive or work in partnerships. These skills are even used by animals, Charles Darwin was one of the first scientists to write about the existence and nature of emotions in nonhuman animals and over the years several cognitive tests show optimism and pessimism in a wide range of species including rats, dogs, cats, rhesus macaques, sheep, chicks, starlings, pigs and even honeybees. From this we can ascertain that we all have these inner instincts to recognise when people are displaying behaviour outside of their norm. Ever asked someone you work with if 'they are ok?'

Given we all have these skills and abilities I believe that we must be brave enough to use them to support our fellow colleagues. The moment we realise there may be something wrong we need to take action. So how can you help? Before you start you must commit to building trust and the only way you can do that is by being consistent and discreet. *Discretion is key to giving respect to the person you are concerned about and this is a very personal issue so you must tread carefully.*

I am not asking you to fix the world only recognise and support. If the issue is wider than that there are professional medical bodies that can assist. Speak to your line manager they will be able to help and support too.



Below I have created an advice sheet on how you can help further. I **must** stress if at any point you feel that you are unable to help please let someone else know that you are concerned about your colleague. Do not keep silent.

SUPPORTING THROUGH BEHAVIOUR CHANGE

Looking for the signs

FOR MANAGERS

FELLOW EMPLOYEES

Thinking

Thinking

Has their performance level dropped?
How engaged are they?
Do they find it hard to make decisions?
Are they missing their deadlines?
How do they interact with you and their colleagues?

Have your colleagues become distant or quiet?
Do they complain more than usual or are intolerant of others?
Do they have mood swings or get angry?
Do they get tearful or lack motivation?

The doing

The doing

What do they feel is going well or not so well?
What work can be delegated out to relieve pressure?
Would they like to be assigned a buddy for support or have some professional coaching?
Would they like to speak to occupational health?
Seek medical assistance – visit to the doctor.

Would they like to talk about things over coffee or go for a walk?
What do they feel is the cause of their problems and when did it start?
Reassure them that they are not alone and things can always get sorted.
Would they benefit from speaking to someone else if you cant help perhaps occupational health?
Seek medical assistance – visit to the doctor.

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And please remember, build trust, show consistency and be discreet.

