

## Press Release

30<sup>th</sup> June 2021

### Opening the Door to More Collaborative Working

A new international standard, ISO 45003, has just been published, providing revolutionary guidance to organisations on how to become more sustainable and resilient, using a step-by-step approach to managing psychosocial risks and promoting wellbeing in the workplace.

Four experts on wellbeing, stress and resilience discussed the new standard at an online Masterclass hosted by the International Stress Management Association (ISMA<sup>UK</sup>) last week, entitled *How to Make Mental Wellbeing an Integral Part of Company Culture*. The new standard, they said, provides a global definition of wellbeing, which should apply from board level right through the organisation, encouraging the development of a much more person-centred culture and enabling people to flourish in the workplace.

#### Sustaining your workforce

Laura Ginesi, a lecturer in applied physiology and stress management, said that people are human beings, not just resources, and workplaces should be places where they feel comfortable. This is especially important in the light of the pandemic, which has fostered increased loneliness, isolation and redundancy. She added, 'Organisations should be thinking about the longer-term prospects for physical and emotional health and should be making "sustaining your workforce" part of their sustainability goals'.

#### Committing to continuous improvement

Jessica Smyrl, workplace wellbeing consultant and trainer, spoke of ISO 45003 as a key structure in which 13 psychosocial risk factors in the work environment are set out, ranging from presenteeism and absenteeism to lack of recognition and reward and poor performance. She said, 'The new standard provides guidance on reducing and managing these risk factors, using tools such as training and consultation to improve engagement and enhance productivity. Major issues include work-life balance, job security, and how work is organised; to manage these, there needs to be commitment to a continuous improvement process from the board, not just from middle management'.

#### Consultation is key

Hansa Pankhania, author and speaker on wellbeing, stress and resilience, gave two case studies, one in which signs of stress and burnout failed to be identified, leading to the employer's duty of care being found wanting in the High Court, with a substantial compensation pay-out being ordered. The other related to an employee whose work pressures were recognised and who undertook a stress risk assessment with her manager, leading to some of her work being allocated to others and other measures being instigated across the workforce. This was an employer who went the extra mile to help their employee. Hansa commented, 'Consultation is key', and asked, 'Could employers hearing

these stories say, hand on heart, whether they had an open and safe culture where such issues could be dealt with effectively?’

### **Working *within* an organisation**

Sally Sheen, executive coach, workshop facilitator and speaker on resilience, said, *‘People need to feel safe in organisations – this is a key element in ISO 45003. Organisations tend to frame stress as relating to the individual rather than as something in which they are implicated themselves’*. She went on, *‘The new standard deals with working within an organisation – not letting the organisation off the hook. Poor management is an issue that needs to be dealt with and the new standard takes a systemic approach to this, looking at all the building blocks, rather than just pulling one lever. When people feel they don’t have control over their work, are not recognised, or there is bullying behaviour – this is symptomatic of an organisational culture not functioning as it should. Organisations that consider people within both internal and external contexts will be opening the door to more collaborative working and to being well-run organisations’*.

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA<sup>UK</sup>, concluding the Masterclass, said, *‘Currently, stress is at an all-time high with 17.9 m working days lost due to work-related stress, depression or anxiety in 2019/20 ([Health & Safety Executive](#)), with many employees working harder than ever and not knowing how to switch off – this is a slippery slope to burnout, and once you are there, it is very hard to get back to where you were before. In this context, the new ISO 45003 standard is going to help organisations become more collaborative, developing a culture based on an understanding of wellbeing and a sustainable approach to engagement within the workplace’*.

## **Notes for Editors**

### **ISO 45003**

Published in June 2021, and written to help organisations using an occupational health and safety management system based on ISO 45001 Occupational Health and Safety. It will also be useful for organisations that haven’t yet implemented an occupational health and safety management system. It can be used with or without ISO 45001. More information can be found here <https://www.bsigroup.com/en-GB/iso-45003/>.

### **ISMA<sup>UK</sup> Masterclasses**

For information on the next Masterclass featuring Dr Andrew Sharman, consultant, author, speaker and strategic advisor to senior leaders and blue-chip corporations, go to <https://isma.org.uk/monthly-masterclass-events>.

### **Jessica Smyrl RGN, RM, BA, MBA, FISMA, FRSPH, SIIRSM**

Jessica is a workplace health and wellbeing consultant and trainer. She is the founder of YSM Solutions, providing training, coaching and absence management services, and the author of two stress management books.

**Laura Ginesi BSc(Hons), PhD, PGCE, PGCert, FHEA, FISMA**

Laura is a physiologist with more than 35 years' experience working in both FE and HE sectors, teaching applied physiology, stress management and nutrition science for the healthcare professions.

**Hansa Pankhania CQSW, BPhil Couns, Dip SM Training, BACP Snr Accred, FISMA**

Hansa is an acclaimed author and a renowned coach and speaker on wellbeing, stress reduction and resilience. She is an expert in managerial and corporate wellbeing and has provided coaching and consultancy services to over 300 companies.

**Sally Sheen MSc, FCIPD, MISMA, PSA**

Sally is the founder of Success Through Change, and an executive coach, workshop facilitator and speaker specialising in leadership and resilience. Sally developed the Inside-out Resilience Model for futureproofing organisations and addressing individual stress and burnout.

**About ISMA<sup>UK</sup>**

As a registered charity and membership-based organisation for over 30 years, ISMA<sup>UK</sup> promotes sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, resilience, wellbeing and mental health, both nationally and internationally, providing advice to a wide range of individuals, businesses and voluntary organisations. ISMA<sup>UK</sup> endorses and uses the HSE guidelines for managing stress in the workplace. To find out more about ISMA<sup>UK</sup>, visit [www.isma.org.uk](http://www.isma.org.uk).

**Press Interviews**

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