

Press Release

9thth May 2023

Preventing Mental Health Problems is Vital

Mental Health Awareness Week runs from 15th-21st May, and the theme is anxiety. Anxiety is one of the most common mental health problems we can face. A new [Mental Health Foundation Survey](#) reports widespread levels of stress, anxiety and hopelessness in response to financial concerns; a quarter of adults said they felt so anxious that it stopped them from doing the things they want to do some or all of the time.

Ahead of the Chancellor's autumn statement, the Foundation warns that action needs to be taken to prevent a significant rise in mental health problems across the UK, as large numbers of people report feeling anxious, hopeless or stressed due to their financial circumstances. Mark Rowland, CEO of the Foundation, said, "Preventing mental health problems is vital. Our mental health services are already stretched beyond capacity; we cannot sit on the sidelines and watch them collapse under ever-greater demand."

Anxiety is having a big impact. Nearly 50% of all workplace illness is due to anxiety, stress or depression (HSE, 2022) and an estimated 17 million workdays were lost due to poor mental health in the UK 2021/22 (HSE, 2022). Unchecked anxiety and poor mental health at work are estimated to cost the UK economy £118 billion annually (Mental Health Foundation and LSE, 2022)

As the leading professional association for personal and workplace stress management for over 30 years, The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) are supporting Mental Health Awareness Week. Carole Spiers, Chair, said, "It is important to look after our mental health because it affects our ability to cope with stress, build and maintain relationships, and achieve our goals. Good mental health enables us to maintain a positive outlook on life, form meaningful connections with others, and be productive. Conversely, poor mental health can lead to a range of problems, including depression, anxiety, substance abuse, and suicidal thoughts. By prioritising our mental health, practising self-care and seeking professional help when needed, we can improve our overall wellbeing and lead a happy, healthy, and fulfilling life."

ISMA^{UK} are also proud to be one of the Health & Safety Executive's Working Minds partners, who are supporting Mental Health Awareness Week with their own campaign. The Working Minds campaign seeks to raise awareness of how to support good mental health and prevent prolonged stress at work which can lead to anxiety and depression.

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Notes for Editors

- **The Mental Health Foundation** is calling on the UK Government to ensure people across the UK will be protected from the negative impact of both the cost-of-living crisis and potential cuts to public services. UK adults are most concerned about not being able to maintain their standard of living (71%), heat their home (66%) or pay general monthly household bills (61%). Significantly, half (50%) of UK adults were at least a little worried about being able to afford food over the next few months, rising to 67% of younger adults aged 18 to 34. For more information go to <https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/public-engagement/mental-health-awareness-week>
- **The Health & Safety Executive's Working Minds** campaign was launched in November 2021, and has grown from nine to 22 partners, including ISMA^{UK}. The campaign reminds businesses that the law requires all employers to assess the risk of work-related stress and assists employers to prevent or tackle any work-related stress to support good mental health in their workers, by following five simple steps based on risk assessment. For more information go to https://workright.campaign.gov.uk/campaigns/working-minds/?utm_source=govdelivery&utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=working-minds&utm_term=website&utm_content=wm-16-nov-22.
- **The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK})** is the leading professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance, promoting sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, resilience, wellbeing and mental health for over 30 years. ISMA^{UK} practitioners and consultants provide stress management services to individuals and businesses, assisting around 40,000 people who need professional help with stress-related issues every year. ISMA^{UK} endorses and uses the HSE guidelines for managing stress in the workplace. To find out more about ISMA^{UK}, visit www.isma.org.uk.
- **Press Interviews**
For all press and media enquiries please contact Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, for an immediate response on +44 (0) 77 688 78910 or at chair@isma.org.uk.