

Press Release

Monday 21st February 2022

We Are All Key Players in Suicide Prevention

“Suicide is complex. There is no one reason why an individual may die by suicide or experience suicidal thoughts and behaviours. This complexity makes it difficult to predict who may be affected by suicide and what warning signs to look out for. We are all key players in suicide prevention, as a member of society, as a parent, as a colleague or as a friend. Through action, we can all make a difference. We can all play a role in supporting those experiencing a suicidal crisis or those bereaved by suicide.” (Extract from Champion Health’s [Suicide Prevention Guide](#).)

The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) are holding an Online Masterclass on *Suicide Prevention: How You Can Make a Difference* on Thursday 24th February from 7.30 pm. A panel of experts will discuss suicide prevention and how each of us can play a role in supporting those experiencing suicidal thoughts, hopelessness or isolation, and therefore finding it difficult to have a reason to live. The panellists, moderated by Marie Faire, Co-founder and Owner of [The Beyond Partnership](#), are Harry Bliss, Owner and Founder of [Champion Health](#), Louise Aston, Wellbeing Campaign Director, [Business in the Community](#), and Andy Baines-Vosper, Training Delivery Volunteer, the [Samaritans](#).

The World Health Organization estimates that over 700,000 people take their own life each year – that’s one person every 40 seconds. In the UK alone, there are on average 109 deaths by suicide per week. Despite the progress we’ve made around normalising mental health, suicide remains a misunderstood and taboo topic. This stigma persists throughout our communities and wider society, despite many of us being touched by suicide in some way. It’s time this changed.

One of the Masterclass panellists, Harry Bliss of Champion Health, explained how his company became involved with suicide prevention: “Six months into Champion Health’s journey, I received a phone call telling me that a friend and mentor, a director of a global organisation, had taken his life due to a short bout of stress. This really shook me; he had no history of mental ill health, he had a wife and two children, and an extremely successful career. After this tragedy, we set out on a mission to change and save lives”.

Another panellist, Louise Aston of Business in the Community said, “The stigma of disclosing a mental health issue at work is still one of the biggest barriers to ensuring that people have the support they need, when they need it. All employers need to create open cultures which give their people the confidence to speak up and ask for help, without fear of negative consequences. The approach of every organisation to wellbeing needs to be proactive, but also needs to incorporate a suicide prevention strategy at the severe end of the mental health spectrum”.

Marie Faire of The Beyond Partnership, who is moderating the discussion, will ask the panel to respond to questions such as, “Why is mental health so difficult to talk about? In particular what are the fears and myths around suicide ideation? How do we, as individuals with organisational responsibilities, get it put on the agenda, and how can we enable people to talk about it? And why are three-quarters of suicides male?” Marie added, “Showing empathy and being ready to listen are important. Talking about it and using appropriate language – not the language of failure – can help to overcome fear and may make a positive difference to those contemplating suicide as well as to those who have been bereaved by suicide”.

Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, said, “We are proud to be hosting this Masterclass on suicide, which is still insufficiently understood and subject to stigma in society. Our panel of experts and our community of stress practitioners, psychologists, counsellors and HR professionals can all help. By debating key issues such as, ‘What to say to someone feeling suicidal’; ‘What role we can all play to help those experiencing a suicidal crisis’; ‘How can an employer help vulnerable employees?’; and ‘Which agencies are there to help support those in crisis’, we can advance our understanding of suicide and the warning signs we need to look out for, to find ways in which those contemplating suicide or bereaved by it may be helped and supported”.

Notes for Editors

How to Book This Masterclass

The ISMA^{UK} Masterclass on Suicide Prevention is on Thursday 24th February and starts at 7.30 pm. The panel discussion will last for 45 minutes, followed by a Q & A and networking opportunities. Places can be booked by following this [link](#) and must be reserved in advance. Tickets are free to ISMA^{UK} members and just £10 to non-members.

Future ISMA^{UK} Masterclasses

ISMA^{UK} run monthly online Masterclasses on subjects relevant to anyone with an interest in stress management and related subjects or in supporting ISMA^{UK}. The next Masterclass will be held on Thursday 31st March and will consist of a presentation by Marcus J. Fila on *Designing Your New Normal: Enhancing Motivation and Performance Post-Covid*, moderated by Sally Sheen. For further information, go to <https://isma.org.uk/monthly-masterclass-events>.

About ISMA^{UK}

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, including flexible training courses and coaching to individuals and businesses in both the private and public sectors, 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