

Press Release

Stigma Around Men's Mental Health and Financial Wellbeing Are Key Topics at ISMA^{UK} Summit

Thursday 26th October 2023

It's been shown that men are less inclined to seek support for mental health concerns than women, and the statistics for men's health don't make uplifting reading either: 39% of male employees don't address health issues before they become severe, and men of working age visit their GP 50% less than women. Mortality rates are higher for men too, with one in five men in the UK dying before they reach 65.

Amongst the factors that have led to this situation are the enduring stigma surrounding mental health issues and the persistence of the 'strong male' stereotype, which holds that displaying emotions or seeking help are signs of weakness. This means men are discouraged from addressing their mental health needs.

The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) will shine a light on these issues in a panel discussion, *Why Do Men Find It Hard to Talk About Their Mental Health? Overcoming Male Stereotypes and Focusing on Early Intervention* during their Online Global Stress Summit on Wednesday 1st November.

Amongst the panellists will be Dan Somers, CEO and Founder of MANUP?, a charity which raises awareness about mental health among men and chips away at stigma. MANUP? are also the sponsors of this year's International Stress Awareness Week, 30th October – 3rd November. Dan said, *"We are pleased to support ISMA^{UK} and the fantastic work they do, helping to promote awareness, challenge stereotypes, and joining with MANUP? to normalise the act of asking for help, reducing men's reluctance to seek mental health support."*

Another panel discussion at ISMA^{UK}'s Online Summit will talk about *Breaking down the social taboos around money, finance, and wellbeing*. In a world where cost-of-living pressures abound, many endure their financial burden silently, fearing judgement from others. Stigma isolates those in need and hampers open conversations about finances. Financial stress also has an impact on mental wellbeing, which can affect how we earn and manage our money. Five panellists will ask questions such as: Why are conversations about money so difficult? How can we break down the social taboos, empowering people to talk about financial wellbeing and create healthier relationships with money? What can be done to help people find assistance and resources?

The panellists include Ian Dempsey, a financial educator and IFA; Charlie Goodman, a board member at the Institute for Financial Wellbeing; Ryan Briggs, founder of FinWELL Training, which helps employee and leadership teams understand, measure and improve financial wellbeing; and Professor Sir Cary Cooper, CBE, Chair of the National Forum for Health & Wellbeing at Work.

Ian Dempsey said, *"Mental health and finances are closely linked, and as someone who has seen at first hand the impact finances can have on mental wellbeing, I welcome ISMA^{UK}'s initiative in staging a discussion about the stigma that isolates people and hampers them from discussing finance openly. Initiatives like this can only help to foster greater empathy and understanding of these issues."*

Professor Cooper, one of the world's leading authorities on health and wellbeing in the workplace, quoting from a report by the National Forum for Health and Wellbeing at Work and Alliance Manchester Business School, said, "Financial wellbeing is the most neglected area of an organisation's health and wellbeing activities. 68% of UK employees say they wouldn't tell their employer about personal money worries or feel able to talk about money. By breaking down the stigma surrounding financial issues, we can foster a more empathetic and understanding society".

ISMA^{UK}'s Global Online Summit will be attended by an international audience of stress management professionals, HR managers, psychologists, therapists, business leaders, specialists in organisational change and others concerned about reducing stress. Carole Spiers, Chair of ISMA^{UK}, said, *"Our aim with this Summit is to find solutions aimed at improving mental health and increasing wellbeing, across the world. Over 20 expert panellists will be giving much-needed voice to important issues for our times, including men's mental health and financial wellbeing. Please join us online on Wednesday 1st November"*.

The ISMA^{UK} Global Online Stress Summit runs all day from 9 am until 7.45 pm on Wednesday 1st November and is also available to ticketholders on catch-up until Sunday 31st December. For more information go to <https://isma.org.uk/isma-international-stress-awareness-week>.

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Notes for Editors

- ISMA^{UK}'s Online Global Summit on Stress Awareness Day 1st November is the centrepiece of International Stress Awareness Week **#StressAwarenessWeek**, 30th October – 3rd November. The theme is *Beyond Stress Management: From Stigma to Solutions*. This year is the 25th anniversary of Stress Awareness Day **#StressAwarenessDay**.
- Entry to the Summit is by ticket only. For more information visit <https://isma.org.uk/isma-international-stress-awareness-week> and to buy tickets, visit <https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/isma-global-online-stress-summit-2023-tickets-716815443287>. Ticket holders can view all sessions until Sunday 31st December.
- The Summit is sponsored by [MANUP?](https://www.manup.how/), a charity that seeks to change people's thoughts, opinions and minds about men's mental health. Founded in 2019, they work with businesses, schools, universities, the NHS and other charities to break down the stigma associated with male mental health. For more information visit <https://www.manup.how/>.
- For interviews about any aspect of the Summit or the work of ISMA^{UK}, please contact Carole Spiers FISMA, FPSA, MIHPE, Chair, ISMA^{UK} on 07768 878910 or email her at chair@isma.org.uk.
- The International Stress Management Association (ISMA^{UK}) is the leading professional body for workplace and personal stress management, wellbeing and performance. As a registered charity and membership-based organisation for 50 years in 2024, ISMA^{UK} exists to promote sound knowledge and best practice in stress management, both nationally and internationally.