

# *Promoting your role as a MHFA or Champion*

How to communicate your role  
effectively and engage with  
colleagues

# Promoting your role

As a MHFA or Champion, you know that there are likely to be people struggling with their mental health. This means it can be frustrating to know that there might be colleagues who simply don't know you're there to support them.

Communicating your role effectively is key to ensuring a culture of support is promoted across the business and that those who are struggling can reach out and be signposted to the right support.

1

**Email Signatures.** Where possible, ensure that you make reference to the fact that you are a MHFA somewhere in your email signature with clear indication of the best time to contact you.

2

**Meetings.** You might sound like a broken record, but there is no harm in making use of team meetings to remind people that you are there to support them in your role of a MHFA. There is no such thing as "too many" reminders.

3

**Everyday Conversations.** Most people will come to understand that you are a MHFA via word of mouth or recommendation. With that being said, it's super important to remind your colleagues as much as you can that you are trained in this area and you're always happy to support your colleagues. You might not know who will need to hear this at any given time.

# Knowing how to engage

Having the right skills and knowledge to be able to support a colleague who's opened up is key however it's just as important to know how to starting mental health conversations. So... how can you help your colleagues open up about the things that are bothering them? Below are some ideas.

1

The "Open Door" policy is quite scary. Sometimes having an "open door" policy isn't quite enough. It takes a lot for people to go ahead and knock on that door if they haven't received invitation to. Sometimes, you will have to leave the door and go to the colleague yourself if you sense that they might be struggling. Don't always wait for people to start the mental health conversations on their own.

2

Be specific in setting times to talk about mental health. It can be helpful to create a space that's designed for talking about how you're feeling. This could be as simple as chatting every morning over a coffee, or something a bit more elaborate like a monthly "Tea and Talk" session.

3

Remind people that you are a Champion. Though it might feel like you are repeating yourself, there is no harm in reminding people what support is available to them - even when everyone seems to be doing ok!

4

Make it easier for someone to share how they're feeling. Sometimes asking someone how they're feeling on a scale of 1-10 can be a less intimidating way to see how they're doing. You could also ask how someone is feeling physically.

5

Practise honesty and vulnerability as much as possible. Answering the question "Are you ok?" with as much honesty as possible allows others the permission to also share how they're really doing.