

# A guide to mental health in the electronic music industry

For organisations



In partnership with

**NINJA TUNE**

PARADIGM



TALENT AGENCY

**PERCOLATE**

**POLY.**

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## Foreword from the partners

Since we first started collaborating with Mind to raise mental health awareness in electronic music five years ago the landscape has changed for the better. In general the stigma around mental health has decreased, awareness has risen and people are talking more. However, there is still a great need to empower people across the industry to support the mental health and wellbeing of all involved – whether that is helping themselves or each other. There are many specific challenges related to the music sector that need to be understood and navigated to improve mental health. So we decided to create tailored guides for anyone working in the industry, offering advice and information to build their knowledge and skills.

In March 2020, as the project was nearing completion, the global pandemic of COVID-19 started, and a few months later the Black

Lives Matter movement exploded on a global scale. It built greater awareness of the ongoing racism crisis which has been especially important in the music community.

It became more vital than ever to improve people's wellbeing and empower them to support others around them. In response to these additional concerns we revisited the guides in full in order to ensure that the advice was fully up to date.

We hope you will find this guide helpful and that it goes some way to helping your organisation gain the tools you need to look after yourselves, each other and your clients.

We thank all our amazing colleagues from every corner of the business who contributed their time and experiences, and Mind for their dedication in helping to make sure no one faces a mental health problem alone.

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# Introduction

We are Mind, the mental health charity. In partnership with Ninja Tune, Paradigm, Percolate and POLY, we have developed a range of tools to support the mental health of people working in the electronic music industry.

We all have mental health just as we all have physical health – it can move up and down from good to poor for any number of reasons. Experiencing poor mental health is not an issue specific to the electronic music industry. In fact one in four adults in the UK will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year.

We know that working in the electronic music industry can be very rewarding and offers many opportunities, however it can come with a set of unique pressures. These include long hours, high stress, a higher incidence of drugs and alcohol abuse, isolation and insecure work. Industry professionals are often passionate about what they do. This means they're vulnerable to exploitation and can feel guilty if what they see as a "dream job" affects their mental health.

There needs to be a greater focus on raising awareness of mental health across the electronic music industry. There's a lot of stigma around mental health, for example people may feel ashamed of their difficulties or worry about how others will judge them. Therefore, bringing together people with different perspectives and experiences is important to challenge this harmful culture.

**1 in 4**

**adults in the UK will experience a mental health problem of some kind each year**



It's important to see mental health at work as more than just supporting people with mental health problems. Consider how you can most effectively support the mental health of your people across all areas of the organisation. You'll need to use a mix of approaches and channels to engage people in non-office based roles, freelancers, and those often on the road. You might work for a multinational company with people all the way from interns up to senior managers, a small label or a micro-business employing freelance staff.

**Every employer depends on having a healthy and productive workforce. That's why we've created this guide to help you support your people, no matter what the size of your organisation. You might not have an HR department, or many organisational policies in place. But you probably have ways you normally do things. This guide will give you advice on building a formal approach to mental health – for a happier, healthier workplace.**

We have also included some advice for managers. Managers are responsible for managing people in an electronic music-related organisation. In a diverse industry this could be anything from a small PR agency to a multinational record label and your people might be freelancers as well as employees. You need to support your people to perform and thrive, while keeping them safe and well.

If you work in an organisation that is just beginning to take action, use this guide to help you take the first steps and make a long-term commitment to a better way of working. Organisations that are further along can use it to formalise and improve their current approach.

**Please note that we are not providing legal advice, but practical guidance – employers may also need to obtain their own legal advice on the approach to take in any particular case.**

## The cost of mental health problems

Poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion each year. People who are supported at work feel valued and accepted. This means they're free to be more productive and creative and will be more loyal as a result. It's good for both businesses and employees.

## Spotlight: coronavirus and racial inequalities

Coronavirus is having a significant impact on people and working life globally. During the pandemic, we have all had to adjust to large and very sudden changes in the way we work. The music industry has been particularly hard-hit by coronavirus and has effectively been put on pause.

Throughout this period, we have also witnessed the murder of George Floyd and the Black Lives Matter movement has brought to the forefront inequalities faced by many across our society. This has been very difficult for individuals. We understand that the mental health of many artists, DJs, organisers, promoters, as well as various other people across the industry, is being affected by what is going on.

Although lockdown restrictions are starting to ease, we are still unsure what this means for the industry. Many of us may be feeling anxious about the future and facing new challenges ahead.

Therefore we have developed this guide to support you both in these challenging times and in the long term.



## Equality and diversity in electronic music

We want to reach a point where all workplaces, including the electronic music industry, recognise the value of recruiting and nurturing a diverse workforce of talented employees, including those whose mental health may have prevented them working previously.

Organisations and managers have a responsibility to be aware of the intersectionality between wellbeing, mental health and equality issues. People from under-represented groups can be at a higher risk of experiencing a mental health problem than the wider population. The reasons for this are complex and not yet fully understood. However, mental health problems experienced by minority groups have been linked to discrimination, bullying and racism.

Some people have also experienced rejection, negative reactions or hostility from family, friends, strangers and their employers. This can have a big impact on an individual's self-esteem and may mean they feel unable to be their true self at work, home or in the wider world. People's experiences can be very different so it is important that there are forums and ways that people can share their experiences and concerns.

Mind offers a range of resources to help managers improve engagement with staff and to create an open and supportive workplace for employees.

**Find out more at:**  
[mind.org.uk/workplace](https://mind.org.uk/workplace)

## Understanding industry pressures

For many people working in electronic music, what they do isn't just a job – it's their passion. But like any other job, it has its own pressures to deal with. Below are some common pressures and how you can support your people to manage them.

### Working late

Dance culture revolves around late nights. Club nights, events and festivals tend to kick off late and finish late, while hectic schedules may mean you have to work long hours to meet tight deadlines. But working too many can leave people feeling completely exhausted and out of touch with friends, family and the wider world.

### How to support your people

Giving people some control over where, when and how they work can help everyone be more healthy and productive. For example, allowing a later start time if someone has had to work late the night before. You can achieve this by creating a flexible working policy.

Senior leaders, line managers and artist managers should be role models for healthier work habits and encourage people by leading by example. Share information on how people can take time out to relax – we've got plenty of [tips](#) online.

## Set boundaries

You can also encourage people to set boundaries to their work. In an industry where late nights are common, staff can feel pressured to always be available and can feel that their career will suffer if they aren't always 'on'. Organisations and managers can do a lot to change this culture by promoting a healthy work/life balance and making it clear that staff won't be judged if they set boundaries. Boundaries can be things like not using WhatsApp or a private phone number for work or having strict rules about not being available to speak to clients on certain evenings.

## Frequent travel

Before Covid-19 there were more electronic music gigs, festivals and conferences globally than ever before. This can be a perk of the job, however it does come with some unique challenges. Travelling a lot can be very stressful and lonely, taking your people away from their usual support networks.

### How to support your people

Frequent travellers often have their own tips, so encourage your people to share what works for them with the rest of your organisation. To help cope with loneliness, encourage them to arrange a time they could Skype, text, email or call friends and family while they're away. You should also check in with them regularly to see how they're getting on.

## Drug and alcohol abuse

Drug and alcohol abuse can be a problem for anyone in any kind of workplace, but dance culture often happens in party spaces where they're consumed, which makes them more available. Some people may not use drugs and alcohol to excess, or at all. However, others might feel they have to live up to the industry's 'hard-partying' stereotype or keep up with crowds or their industry peers. Over time, this can lead to reliance, addiction and other problems.

### How to support your people

Employers have a legal duty to protect employees' health, safety and welfare. People abusing alcohol or drugs might be putting themselves or others at risk. Your organisation has to manage this – while also letting people know that help is available.

Encourage them to get help from their GP, other specialist addiction organisations, as well as referring them to your organisation's occupational health service (if you have one). Also consider allowing people time off to get expert support.

If you suspect that a member of your workforce is abusing drugs or alcohol, it can be difficult to know when to say something. However, it is important that organisations take responsibility for their people and have a conversation if they are concerned. If you decide to talk to them about their alcohol or drug abuse it's important to do this somewhere private where they feel comfortable. Focus on your worries and concerns and avoid telling them what to do, signpost them to places they can get support and arrange to have another conversation with them to check-in on how they are doing. You can find some useful [information](#) to help you on our website.

**As a label, we try not to put pressure on artists. We want to work with them long term, so it's not about short-term aims. I know what it's like. When we started the label we were working 24/7 and it's easy to get burnt out. But we want to be working with people for their third, fourth and fifth album.** Label Co-owner

## Insecure work

Many people who work in the electronic music industry don't have stability or security in their careers, so they may struggle to plan for the future. Shifts in trends can happen fast meaning that club nights, musical genres and artists can sometimes be left behind.

### How to support your people

Despite this, employers, line managers and artist managers can and must take action to support the mental health of their people throughout their careers. During periods of change it's important to check in with people regularly and to signpost to support both inside and outside your organisation. Try to be honest about the future: both good and bad. If the worst looks like it will happen, tell them so they can start to look for other jobs. Give them references and support for finding something else, if necessary. Help them network and make contacts in the industry that could support them in the future. Offer in-work training to help them learn new skills.

Remember your freelancers and contractors too. Give as much notice as possible to freelancers if a project or their work is due to end with your organisation. Ensure you pay them on time for the work they have done. Some organisations have a fixed payment period, for example within 90 days of an invoice being received. If you have this in place at your organisation make it clear to your freelancers when they take on the role so they can plan for this accordingly.

## Competition

The industry can feel very competitive. This can make people feel like they have to excel at everything they do, or risk losing out to someone else.

### How to support your people

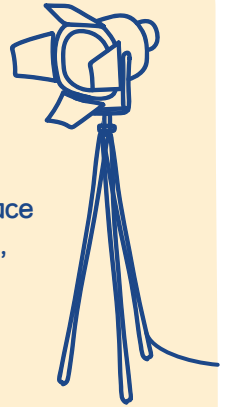
Don't exploit the industry's competitive side. Pay people appropriately for their jobs, and encourage other employers to do the same. Don't treat people looking for a chance to enter the industry poorly.

## Spotlight: Coronavirus

The coronavirus outbreak is putting huge financial pressures on the music industry and many organisations are facing very difficult decisions related to staffing. Even with support measures in place from the Government, like the Job Retention Scheme, some smaller businesses have ceased operations altogether while others cannot retain staff on a long-term basis due to financial issues.

Whether expected or sudden, redundancy can cause huge uncertainty, stress and anxiety for your staff. It is therefore important that organisations support their employees' mental health throughout any organisational change and redundancy procedures.

Read our advice [here](#) on redundancy.



## Toxic criticism

Feedback is part of any creative career. But today anyone can say what they think about a performance, a poster, a record – or any other element of dance culture – on social media. This can feel great when people are supportive. But toxic online abuse can seriously affect people's mental health. It can leave them feeling exposed and under incredible scrutiny over what they do and say both online and off.

### How to support your people

If possible, create an official social media policy explaining how you expect your people to act on social media. This could include tips on dealing with trolls, and other people's opinions. Not checking social media can give your employees a welcome break from other people's opinions. Encourage a 'digital detox' for an hour, an afternoon, a day or even longer. Lead by example and put your phone away too.

## Pressure to be positive

People come to clubs and festivals ready to dance and to have a good time. That can mean people working in the industry feel they're expected to have a can-do positive attitude 24/7 – especially if they're performers. But it's just not possible to be positive all the time. That's why it's valuable for your people to check in with how they really feel – and not always say 'yes' to other people's demands.

### How to support your people

Consider setting up a formal or informal internal buddying system for individuals to have the opportunity to talk to someone outside of their line management structure and be signposted to support. Give people chances to remove themselves from the action (to an empty meeting room or a quiet coffee shop, for example) where they can say how they feel. If that's not possible encourage them to write down how they feel – or even use their emotions creatively. Encouraging people to talk about how they feel with trusted friends or colleagues (including you) can help.

## Imposter syndrome

Ever felt you don't deserve your success? That you're an unqualified fraud and everyone else is set to call you out on it? This is what imposter syndrome feels like. It can knock your confidence, leaving you doubting your professional abilities. It can often strike in moments that other people associate with success.

### How to support your people

When people do something well, praise them. If you have to give negative feedback, offer it between two bits of praise. Be specific, if you praise everything people won't trust your opinion. Be there for people to talk to. If they talk about imposter syndrome remind them of the things they've done well. Also let them know it's a common experience for many people.

## Loneliness and isolation

People who work remotely, or are often travelling for work, can sometimes find the industry isolating. Often the lack of social contact may lead to poor mental health.

### How to support your people

Remember to connect with remote workers regularly, by phone or Skype. Make them feel part of the team by including them in team events or catch-ups. For staff who are travelling help them cope with loneliness by encouraging them to arrange a time they could Skype, text, email or call friends and family while they're away. Keeping a journal can also be helpful. Listening to podcasts, computer games or reading a book can provide some company.



## Spotlight: Coronavirus

Coming out of lockdown will not be a simple reversal – it is going to be different for individuals, as people's experiences of the outbreak will be varied.

For example, some of your people may have suffered financially; some may have contracted the virus, or lost a friend or family member to it. As such, those who usually have to travel for work may have significant concerns.

It is vital that organisations and managers are aware of specific travel concerns and support any feelings of anxiety and potential reluctance to travel.

Many people experience social anxiety, this diagnosis means you experience extreme fear or anxiety triggered by social situations (such as parties, workplaces, or any situation in which you have to talk to another person).

Many of your people may have experienced social anxiety before coronavirus, however the current situation may be causing these feelings to be exacerbated, equally people who have never experienced it before may now be due to the current situation. This may mean that they don't want to go to events or be around lots of people.

Ensure to engage individuals in meaningful two-way dialogue and explore different forms of support and adapt to their individual way of preferred working.



# Creating a mentally healthy workplace

## Writing a mental health at work plan

A mental health at work plan is a document that explains what you're doing to support your people to have good mental health at work. You might be doing a lot of it informally but it's good to make this official and embed support across your organisation's culture. Sharing it with your people shows what they can expect from you, whether they're an intern, artist, freelancer or senior manager. Remember, it doesn't have to be long or complex.

## What does it need to include?

You need to list what you're doing to:

- promote wellbeing for all of your people. This could include sharing information on mental health or inviting people to talk about their own experiences
- tackle the work-related causes of mental health problems. This might mean launching a flexible working policy or encouraging people to take rest periods after busy times.

## Get your people involved

Writing your plan can help bring people together around a common goal (even if there's just two of you!). So ask them what they want to see in it.

continued...

- regularly monitor mental health across the organisation. This could include people surveys and one-to-ones (see page 25 for help).
- support everyone experiencing poor mental health in your organisation. Make sure you understand how to have a conversation with someone about their mental health, how to support someone experiencing a mental health problem including implementing reasonable adjustments (see page 30), how to manage an employee's time off sick and their return to work including signposting to both internal and external support.
- equip and support your managers. Ensure your managers know how to support someone's mental health needs.
- signpost to relevant sources of information and support – both inside and outside your organisation. This could include counselling services (if you offer them) or outside addiction specialists.
- establish clear objectives or targets shaped around your organisation's vision. Try and set targets to make things happen, like launching a wellbeing initiative by a certain date.

When you've got the plan in place, keep communicating with your team on what works, and tweak your approach in response.

## Support from the start

There are opportunities to have open conversations about mental health at every stage of an employee's time with you. This helps reduce stigma and gives you the chance to offer support. You should also offer or encourage people to access online peer support communities as well as get involved with other outside networks.

### Recruitment

Triggers of work-related stress and poor mental health can include a mismatch between the person and the role, their needs and values versus the work environment, or their skills and abilities and the organisation's demands on them. Under the Equality Act 2010, candidates are not required to disclose their mental health condition to their potential employer.

It's unlawful for employers to ask candidates questions about health during recruitment, except in certain circumstances. However, there are ways to let people disclose lawfully. This ensures that people with a mental health condition have equal access to job opportunities, and are offered any support they need to take.

### Induction

When a new person starts, explain how you support them during their induction. Remember that starting a new role can feel unsettling. If people aren't given the right support and guidance it can affect their mental health. Managers could ask a new starter what they need to stay well. [Wellness Action Plans](#) are a brilliant way to do this.

## Smart ways to offer support

Below are some practical ways to support your people. Some of them are more suitable for large organisations, but many you can do for free, or for a very low cost.

1

Start a wellbeing network, or peer support group, where people can share experiences and tips on mental health at work.

2

Invite an outside speaker on mental health to your workplace. This could be part of broader diversity, disability or mental health awareness activities and happen on significant calendar dates like World Mental Health Day.

3

Share your experience. If you have a story to share you can help improve people's understanding and change their attitudes. People follow their leaders' behaviour, so lead by example. Create opportunities for others to do the same.

4

Make the most of internal communications. Raise awareness through blogs, factsheets, tips for line managers and coaches, useful web links and FAQs. You can use posters, noticeboards, staff newsletters, magazines and intranet and internet pages to get the message out. Update content regularly and make sure you represent diverse perspectives and experiences.

5

Provide your people with reliable information. [Mind's website](#) is a great place to start. We have a wide range of general workplace resources.

6

Offer formal or informal buddy systems to give people the opportunity to talk to someone other than their line manager or direct colleagues.

7

Embed mental health in your induction and training. Give people information on how best to manage their own mental health and how to support colleagues. Set out what support is available.

8

Recruit [Mental Health Champions](#). Champions may have their own personal experience of mental ill health or may have supported other people.

9

Provide information on local voluntary organisations, such as local peer support groups and online peer support.

10

Larger organisations could offer free or subsidised private medical insurance, access to counselling and therapy, an occupational health scheme, an employee assistance programme and other tailored mental health and wellbeing support.

# Improving work/life balance

## Spotlight: coronavirus

For many people across the industry this has been a very busy time. So it's important that organisations encourage their staff to take some time off to reflect on what has been going on globally both with coronavirus and the Black Lives Matter movement. Organisations need to take extra consideration of people who may find this period more challenging. It's important to be flexible and consider relaxing rules around sick pay and extending other leave entitlements such as sick leave and carers' leave.



Coronavirus has changed the way we work. Many people now work from home – and this might be a permanent move. Working from home can have some advantages, but there are potential downsides for mental health.

Swapping positive social connections for staring at a screen all day (and taking constant Zoom calls) can be hard. So it's important to make sure everyone stays well. Below is some useful guidance on how you can make working from home more positive for everyone.

- [Top tips for working from home](#)
- [Working from home Wellness Action Plan](#)
- [Tips for supporting yourself and your team](#)

Temporary contracts and lots of time away from home can be core features of many roles: especially in electronic music. That's why it's especially important

for organisations to support their people to have a healthy work/life balance. This means spending time on interests outside of music, and having regular time off.

Organisations should encourage and help their people to:

- work sensible hours
- take full lunch breaks
- rest and recuperate after busy periods, for example after festival season
- avoid working outside agreed hours on a regular basis
- schedule regular time off
- see their career as part of their life, not their whole life.

## Tackling stigma and discrimination at work

In many workplaces mental health is still a taboo subject. Too often, employees are scared to talk to their manager or colleagues and problems can spiral. By raising awareness of mental health, and encouraging discussion, you can challenge this harmful culture.

And the good news is that stigma is slowly fading as more people feel able to talk about their problems and share what they've been through. But there's still work to be done. Here's how you can start to break down the stigma in your organisation:

### Share reliable mental health information

Social media and the internet can be full of myths and stereotypes around mental health. [Mind's website](#) is a reliable place to get facts you can pass on to others.

### Raise awareness in your internal communications

You could share tips and useful resources through posters, noticeboards, staff newsletters, your magazine, intranet and blogs.

## Start at the top

Senior leaders should be leading the way on ending mental health stigma and discrimination in their workplace. They can have a powerful impact by speaking out about mental health, sharing their own experiences where they feel able to do so, and leading by example.

### Invite an outside speaker in to talk to your team about mental health

You could do this as part of a wider awareness campaign – like [World Mental Health Day](#).

### Recruit mental health champions

Champions may have personal experience of mental health problems or have supported someone else. The role is open to everyone.

## Routinely monitor wellbeing

### Check-in with your employees to give them the right support

Checking-in with people about how they're feeling is vital. It gives you a chance to understand what affects them, and how effectively you're providing support. Here's some ideas on how to do this well.

### Asking face-to-face

Regular one-to-one meetings and catch-ups are a great place to ask people how they're getting on. Doing this regularly will build trust and give people a chance to share any problems. It also helps beat stigma and make mental health a normal part of how you work.

### Team mental health audits

It's important that team managers regularly take stock of the mental health of their teams to find out what helps people to stay well, the types of pressures they're under and how to alleviate them. You could carry out a regular mental health review which allows people to share what is working well and what their challenges are – then work together to identify solutions.

## People surveys

You might already run a survey to find out what people think about their job. If you do, this can be a great tool to capture information about wellbeing. It will probably already ask staff about things like their workload, leadership and management, opportunities for personal development and internal communication.

However, it may not make the links between these issues and the impact they have on employees' mental wellbeing. Think about how you can integrate mental health into the existing survey to generate this information.

You could ask employees about their stress levels at work, or how comfortable they would feel talking to their manager about their mental health. A question included in a staff survey can be a good way of capturing this data, reinforced by the message your organisation will respond proactively and reassurance that their personal information will be kept confidential.

## HR and performance data

You might not have much data about your people. But if you have, it can give you an insight into their wellbeing at work – think performance data, absenteeism data, staff turnover and exit interviews. How often people take sickness absence, and the reasons they give for it, can give you useful insights about the mental health of your workforce.

However, this data needs to be treated with caution and you shouldn't make any assumptions. Be particularly careful if you're still in the process of building a more positive and open culture around mental health. Just because people don't give mental health problems as the reason for their absence doesn't mean they don't exist. Perhaps people don't feel comfortable sharing problems because they're afraid of the reaction they might get.

## Supporting freelancers

Today, freelancers make up an increasing percentage of the industry. If you employ freelancers, make sure you're supporting and protecting their mental health too, by following these top tips:

### 1. Pay on time.

Freelancers finances can be insecure – and made worse when clients don't pay on time.

### 2. Make them feel included.

Freelancing can be lonely, so ask freelancers if they want to work in your office (if you have one) or take part in after-work get-togethers.

### 3. Assure them that their mental health matters.

Share your organisation's approach to mental health when you're briefing them.

### 4. Offer reasonable adjustments.

Ask them if they need any reasonable adjustments to support their mental health.

### 5. Be flexible, where possible.

Where you can let freelancers know about any upcoming work as early as possible so they can plan accordingly.

### 6. Extend mental health support.

Offer counselling, flexible working or other ways to support their mental health.

# Supporting staff who are unwell

From illness and injury outside work to disciplinary action and redundancy, stressful times affect people's mental health. Remember to tell people about the support available from both inside and outside your organisation during difficult periods.

## Talking to people about their mental health

If an employee is facing a mental health problem, talking about it is important. It's natural that some people feel awkward doing this but it's a chance to give them any support they might need. Here are some tips on talking about mental health.

### 1. Choose the right setting

Ideally somewhere private and quiet where they feel comfortable. Somewhere outside your usual workplace could be good.

### 2. Get people talking (if they want to)

Ask simple, open and non-judgmental questions and let people explain in their own words about their mental health.

### 3. Don't assume

Many people know how to look after their mental health and might just need support during busy times.

### 4. Listen to people and be flexible

Ask them what support would help them. Are there reasonable adjustments you could offer?

### 5. Be honest and clear

If you have specific concerns, like high absence levels or reduced performance, it's important to talk about them.

### 6. Respect confidentiality

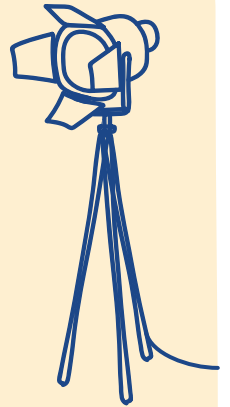
Sensitive information should be shared with as few people as possible. Discuss what information they would like shared and with whom.

## Spotlight: coronavirus

Coming out of lockdown will not be a simple adjustment. It's going to be different for every organisation and their staff. After all, people's experiences during lockdown will have varied.

Some people might have had extra caring responsibilities or been furloughed, while others may have sadly lost loved ones to the virus, or had it themselves.

This means some staff might have significant concerns about returning to work. So it's important that employers manage employees' anxiety and potential reluctance to return through meaningful two-way conversations and explore ways of working that are best for them.



# Support measures for people experiencing a mental health problem

## On-the-job support

From time to time we all need extra practical support or reassurance from managers. This on-the-job support is often key to supporting people's mental health by helping them cope with challenges they're experiencing at work. It's vital that support measures are decided by managers and their people together as people usually know their own mental health and needs best.

## Wellness Action Plans

[Wellness Actions Plans](#) are an easy, practical way of helping you to support your people's mental health at work. Everyone can complete them, you don't need to have a mental health problem in order to feel the benefits. It just means that you already have practical steps in place to ensure you are supported when you aren't feeling great.

A Wellness Action Plan should cover:

- symptoms, early warning signs and triggers
- potential impact of people's mental health problem on their performance
- what support they need from their line manager
- positive steps for the individual to take.

## Reasonable adjustments

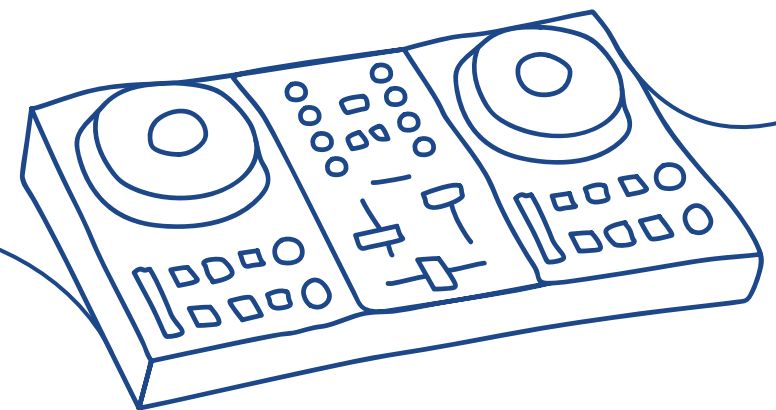
Remember, once aware of health or disability information, employers have [legal duties](#) to consider making reasonable adjustments. They also have a general duty of care and responsibility for employee health and preventing personal injury. However, adjustments should be made to help all staff cope and recover, whether or not they have a formal diagnosis of a mental health problem.

The Equality Act defines a disability as a physical or mental impairment that has a substantial, adverse, and long-term effect on someone's ability to carry out normal day-to-day activities. Reasonable adjustments don't have to be expensive or complicated. They can be as simple as offering someone flexible working, or time off to go to counselling.

Reasonable adjustments could include:

- flexible working or changes to start and finish times
- changes to a role (temporary or permanent)
- an equal amount of break time to other people, but in shorter, more frequent chunks

- extra training or coaching (during work hours)
- more supervision or support with managing workload
- mediation if people have difficulties with colleagues
- mentor or buddy systems (formal or informal)
- quiet rooms
- relaxing absence rules for those with disability-related sickness absence
- temporary reallocation of some tasks
- time off for appointments, at short notice if needed
- working from home.





## Supporting people off sick

People may need time off to recover from a mental health problem. Treat them the same as someone taking time off for a physical injury. Remember, sometimes physical and mental health problems are connected. Below are some top tips to help people when they are off sick:

- Send a get well soon card as you would with a physical health problem.
- Ensure managers feel comfortable supporting them with any concerns they may have.
- Ask how they are doing and focus conversations on their wellbeing.
- Maintain regular, open and meaningful communication with the person. Agree how often this should take place and confirm in writing. Ask who they'd like to talk to (if possible) – it might not be their line manager.
- Agree what information they would like shared with colleagues.
- Keep them in the loop about important work developments, so they feel connected.
- Make it clear they should not rush back to work or push themselves too much.

### Spotlight: Coronavirus

It is important to ensure that you are regularly encouraging your staff to ask for support when they need it. Take time to regularly review the challenges that your staff are facing, any difficulties, pressure points and sources of stress and anxiety. Truly listening to how people are feeling and the concerns they are raising and then escalating these to the correct levels will help employees feel like their concerns are being addressed and will ease their worry.



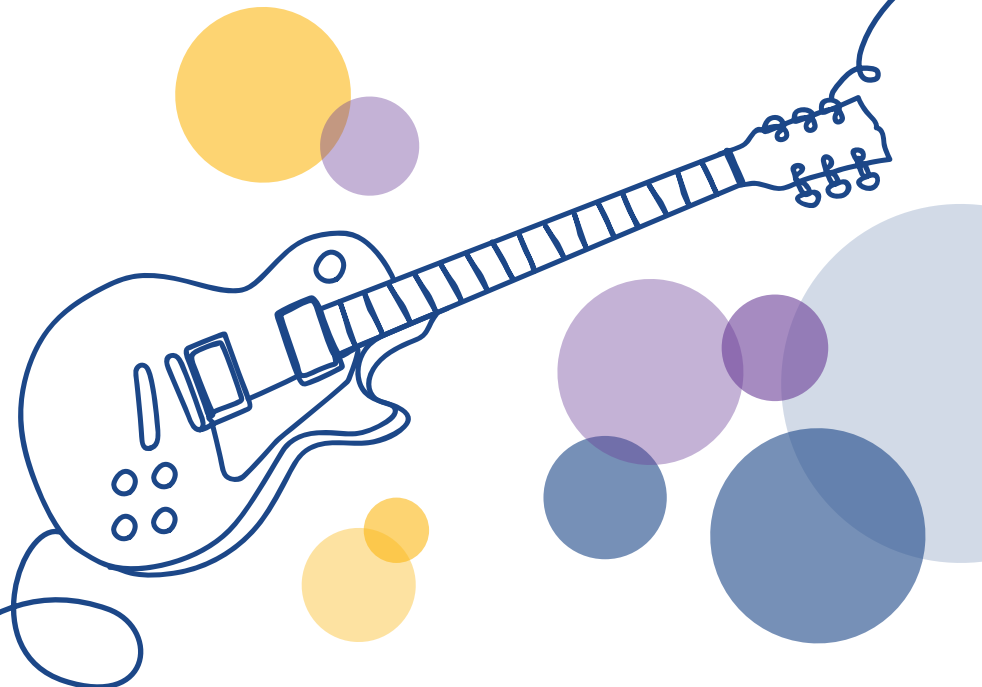
## Top tips for people managers

### Why good management matters

Research shows that good line management is linked with good health, wellbeing and improved performance. Meanwhile, poor quality leadership has been linked with stress, burnout and depression. Good management is often about managers taking simple steps to support staff. Developing a management style that is open, approachable and self-aware goes a long way.

Managers can do this by:

- having regular catch-ups
- setting clear priorities
- celebrating individual and team successes
- involving people in decision making
- flexing management style to suit individual needs.



# Checklist for managers

1

**Lead by example.** Actively encourage your team to adopt healthier working habits by working sensible hours, taking full lunch breaks and/or taking annual leave after busy periods.

3

**Normalise mental health.** Touch base regularly with your employees to check how they're getting on. Create space for them to ask questions and raise issues, and give them permission to talk about home as well as work problems if they wish.

5

**Be available for your staff.** Regular catch-ups can help maintain good relationships.

2

**Build your confidence on mental health.** Familiarise yourself with your organisation's mental health policies and practices and the ways staff can seek advice and support.

4

**Take stock.** Include an agenda item at team meetings to discuss everyone's wellbeing together, and what factors are affecting this. A planning session can look at the issues in detail and develop a team action plan to address these.

6

**Treat people as individuals.** Treat employees with respect, praise good work, offer support if there are skills gaps, and try to use a coaching style of management. Ask for feedback about the support you provide and what support people need to help them achieve their goals.

8

**Create opportunities for coaching, learning and development.** Make sure employees are confident, well-equipped and supported to enable them to do their job to a high standard. You can help them gain confidence and skills by developing and rewarding their capabilities and by being available for regular work-related conversations as well as providing formal training.

7

**Embed employee engagement.** Promote a culture of open dialogue and involve employees in decisions about how the team is run and how they do their job. Make sure employees understand their role in the bigger picture and make clear their contribution to the organisation's vision and aims.

9

**Promote positive work relationships.** Support a culture of teamwork, collaboration and information-sharing both within the team and across the organisation, and model these positive behaviours to staff.

10

**Raise awareness.** Managers are in a great position to challenge stigma and prejudice throughout the organisation and to get mental health on the agenda with senior leaders.

# Looking after your own mental health

## Understand your triggers

Everyone finds different things stressful. By understanding what has a negative impact on your mental health, you can start to manage these triggers better.

## Balance your time

Occasionally you may need to work longer hours to get something done, but try to claim this time back later if you can.

## Reward yourself for achievements

It is easy to focus on what needs to be done next and forget to reward yourself for what you have already accomplished.

## Be realistic

Remember you don't have to be 'perfect' all the time – nobody is!

## Learn to say no

It can be tempting to take on more work than you can manage. Over time this can lead to stress and burnout. Try to protect your mental health by politely saying no to extra demands when you've got your plate full.

## Budget for self-care

Self-care is vital for protecting your mental health – so make it part of your schedule. Often the times when you feel you don't 'deserve' it are when you need it most. It doesn't have to be expensive, plan something simple like an early night after a long day or a swim after work. Whatever it is, try to put time and money aside for things that make you feel good outside work

## Take time off

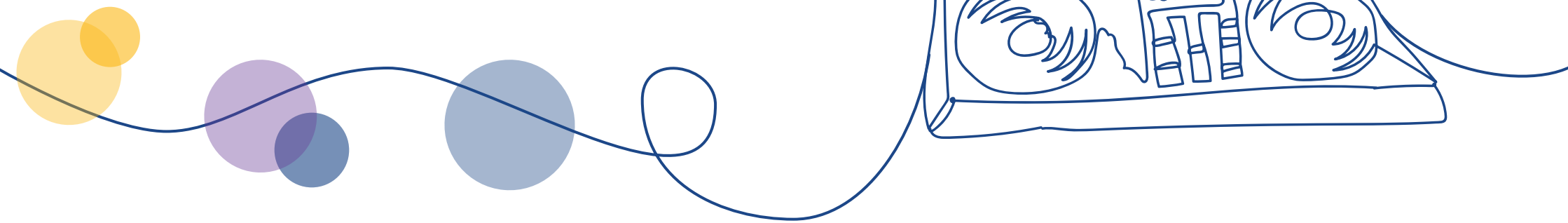
You might be tempted to work 24/7. This can lead to stress and burnout. Working in electronic music may mean that you don't get weekends off. But having time off (from week-long holidays to brief downtime) will help you stay resilient and perform at your best.

## Build a network

Connecting with other people in the industry doing the same job as you, either online or in person, can be a great way to share your big wins and work frustrations. The chances are they'll be going through some of the same stuff as you.

## Get exercise

If your job involves working at a computer, it can be tempting to sit down at it until your work is done. Try and get out for short walks outside (or book in a gym or swim session if that's more your thing). It can boost your mood and help you feel connected with the outside world.



# Useful organisations

Details to share with your people

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## Mind Infoline

The Mind Infoline can help you to find out what services are available in your area.

You can call us on **0300 123 3393**, email [info@mind.org.uk](mailto:info@mind.org.uk) or text **86463**. We're open 9am to 6pm, Monday to Friday. Or find out if there is a local Mind near you here: [mind.org.uk/information-support/local-minds](http://mind.org.uk/information-support/local-minds)

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## Side by Side

Side by Side is a supportive online community where you can be yourself. We all know what it's like to struggle sometimes, but now there's a safe place to listen, share and be heard. Whether you're feeling good right now, or really low, it's a safe place to share experiences and listen to others.

Sign up at: [sidebyside.org.uk](http://sidebyside.org.uk)

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## Samaritans

Samaritans offer a safe place for you to talk any time you like, in your own way – about whatever's getting to you. You don't have to be suicidal. Call Samaritans free any time, from any phone on **116 123**. They are open 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

Find out more at: [samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you](http://samaritans.org/how-we-can-help-you)

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## Rethink Mental Illness

Founded 40 years ago through voluntary groups for people affected by mental illness, Rethink Mental Illness have over 100 groups in England. Call them on 0300 5000 927. They are open 9.30am to 4pm, Monday to Friday.

Find out more at: [rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice](http://rethink.org/about-us/our-mental-health-advice)

Be proud of  
your approach

Help change minds about mental health

Thanks for reading. You should now have some good ideas on supporting and protecting your people's mental health.

Need more help or advice?

You can find us here at [mind.org.uk/workplace](http://mind.org.uk/workplace)

But it doesn't stop there. You can help spark a culture shift in wider society to remove the stigma around mental health.

Encourage your suppliers to make changes too. You could share your resources and knowledge – and ask them to do the same.

We're Mind, the mental health charity. We want to support a million people each year to stay well and have good mental health at work.

Be part of our movement for change in workplace mental health.

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