

Kindness at Work: Supporting Each Other's Wellbeing

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The journey begins with noticing. Pay attention to subtle changes in your colleagues—perhaps they seem quieter, more stressed, or overwhelmed with their tasks. Sometimes, a gentle “How are you today?” can make all the difference. Even if they are not ready to share, knowing someone cares can be a comforting reminder that they are not alone.

If a colleague chooses to open up, listening with patience and compassion is the most valuable support you can offer. You do not need to fix everything; simply being present, giving your full attention, and offering a non-judgmental ear can help them feel seen and heard. Respect their boundaries—some may prefer not to share details—and reassure them that you are available whenever they need support.

Small, practical gestures also speak volumes. Regularly checking in, being flexible with

workloads, or lending a hand with tasks can lighten their load and foster a caring environment. These simple acts show colleagues that their wellbeing matters and that they are part of a team that genuinely cares.

Beyond individual kindness, it is the culture we create together that makes the biggest difference. A supportive workplace is one where mental health receives the same respect as physical health—where colleagues feel safe to be honest, and open conversations are encouraged. Leaders set the tone, but everyone has a part to play by demonstrating empathy, patience, and understanding.

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By normalising conversations about mental health—sharing coping strategies or openly acknowledging when we are having a tough day—we help break down stigma and foster a culture of openness. Signposting colleagues to available wellbeing services, peer networks, or managers reinforces that seeking support is a sign of strength, not weakness.

When kindness and compassion are woven into our daily interactions, we do not just help individuals—we build stronger, healthier teams and cultivate a work environment rooted in trust, care, and connection. Together, we can make our workplace a space where everyone feels valued and supported.

Support is always within reach

FACING DIFFICULT TIMES IS PART OF LIFE, AND KNOWING WHERE TO SEEK HELP CAN MAKE ALL THE DIFFERENCE. A VARIETY OF SERVICES ARE AVAILABLE TO ASSIST WITH EMOTIONAL OR MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS—WHETHER YOU NEED IMMEDIATE SUPPORT OR ONGOING CARE.

Immediate Support

- **1579 National Mental Health Helpline:** Available 24/7, staffed by trained professionals offering confidential advice and resource information.
- **Supportline 179 (Aġenzija Appoġġ):** A 24/7 service providing emotional support and referrals.
- **Richmond Foundation Helpline (1770):** Open daily from 8am to 8pm, with shorter hours offers psychological support and is open on Saturdays.
- **Crisis Situations:** Dial 112 or visit the A&E at Mater Dei Hospital. You can also contact the Crisis Resolution Mobile Team at 9933 9966 for urgent in-person assistance.

Community-Based Support

- **Kellimni.com:** Offers 24/7 anonymous chat, email, and messaging support.
- **Richmond's OLLI Chat:** Available weekdays and on Saturdays.
- **Community Clinics:** Located in Qormi, Paola, Floriana, Mosta, Cospicua, and Zejtun, offering assessments, treatment, and follow-up care.



- **Inpatient Care:** Mount Carmel Hospital provides intensive services, rehabilitation, and youth-focused programs.

Professional Confidential Support for Public Employees

The Employee Support Programme (ESP) is a free, confidential service available to all public employees. Whether you are dealing with workrelated stress, personal or family issues, grief, or other concerns, ESP offers support through phone, email, or individual sessions either face-to-face or online—scheduled during or outside working hours.

Contact ESP at 2200 1210 or via email at esp.opm@gov.mt. More information can be found at esp.gov.mt.

Remember: Asking for help is a sign of strength. Whether by phone, chat, clinic, or employee support, help is always available. Taking that first step can significantly improve your wellbeing.

Myths about Antidepressants

Antidepressants are often surrounded by shame and fear and we often hear the same worries again and again. These myths can stop people from getting the help they need. The below facts can clarify some of the most common misconceptions about antidepressants.

✗ **Myth 1:** "They'll change my personality."

✓ **Fact:** They don't change who you are. They ease symptoms like sadness, anxiety, or poor sleep - helping you feel more like yourself again.

✗ **Myth 2:** "They're addictive."

✓ **Fact:** SSRIs are not addictive. They're different from drugs like tranquilizers or sleeping pills, which can cause dependence.

✗ **Myth 3:** "If I feel worse at first, they're bad for me."

✓ **Fact:** Some side effects show up in the first week or two, but usually pass. It doesn't mean the medicine is harmful.

✗ **Myth 4:** "They don't work if I don't feel better immediately."

✓ **Fact:** They take time - usually 2 - 4 weeks - to show results. Patience is key.

✗ **Myth 5:** "Once I start, I'll never stop."

✓ **Fact:** Many people use them for 6-12 months, then taper off gradually as recommended by their doctor.

✗ **Myth 6:** "Benzos are better because they work fast."

✓ **Fact:** They act quickly, but can be addictive and don't solve the root problem. Antidepressants treat long-term recovery.

✗ **Myth 7:** "Therapy is enough."

✓ **Fact:** Therapy is powerful, but sometimes the best results come from combining therapy with medication.

✗ **Myth 8:** "Only 'crazy' people take them."

✓ **Fact:** Mental health conditions can affect everyone - parents, students, doctors, teachers.

✗ **Myth 9:** "They'll make me too drowsy to work."

✓ **Fact:** Some feel sleepy at first, but this usually passes. In the long run, people function better once symptoms

🌿 **Final thought:** Taking care of your mental health is not weakness - it's wisdom. Myths create fear, but the facts bring hope.

Contact Us

We value your feedback!
If you have any suggestions
or comments, please feel
free to contact us.

For more information on how the Employee Support Programme can help you, or to make an appointment, please call on 22001210 or email us on esp.opm@gov.mt or visit www.esp.gov.mt. The service is confidential and free to use. Employees do not need permission from their supervisors to access and use the service.

For queries relating to employment conditions or further assistance, you can contact the One-Stop-Shop for public employees by phone 22001225, email (one-stop-shop.psd@gov.mt), or by visiting the People & Standards Division at 3, Castille Place, Valletta.

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The aim of this newsletter is to raise awareness and provide information for educational purposes.