

HR QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER



10 MENTAL HEALTH FACTS YOU SHOULD KNOW



Good mental health is related to an individual's emotional, psychological, and social well-being, which affects how he/she thinks, feels and acts. Mental health is important at every stage of life, as it helps to determine how a person handles stress, relates to others; and how decisions are made. An individual's mental health can change over time depending on many factors. When demands exceed resources (coping abilities), one's mental health may be impacted. Depression, anxiety, bipolar disorder and schizophrenia are conditions that may arise due to poor mental health. Below are some mental health facts you should know.

1	Mental illnesses can affect people of any age, race, religion, or income.
2	Common signs of mental health issues include: extreme mood swings, changes in eating habits, excessive worrying or fear, problems concentrating, and avoiding friends or social activities.
3	Many people do not seek treatment for mental illness due to the associated stigma. Only 44% of adults with diagnosable mental illnesses receive treatment.
4	70% - 90% of people who seek proper treatment for mental health disorders witness a significant reduction in symptoms.
5	Many factors can lead to mental illness, including genetics, physical illness or injury, and traumatic life experiences.
6	One (1) in four (4) adults living with serious mental illnesses also struggle with substance abuse.
7	Depression is a common mental disorder and is the leading cause of disability worldwide.
8	A person's mental illness diagnosis may change several times during their life, some complex conditions are measured by the mental health symptoms.
9	By addressing risk factors such as trauma, it is possible to prevent certain mental health disorders.
10	Most people living with mental illness lead productive lives despite their challenges.

If you or anyone you know requires mental health support, you are encouraged to call the Public Service Employee Assistance Programme (PSEAP) Ministry of Finance & the Public Service at 876-932-5000-1. It helps to have someone to listen to.

“

*Mental illness is not a personal failure.
Stay strong, your story isn't over yet.*

~ Unknown ~

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Sources:

15 Mental Health Facts You Should Know | News | USC Social Work
11 Facts About Mental Health | DoSomething.org
Public Service Employee Assistance Programme (mof.gov.jm)

DEALING WITH STRESS & ANXIETY



Stress and anxiety are normal responses to perceived or real threats, and when we are faced with uncertainty or the unknown, our anxiety and stress levels may increase. Many people are experiencing fear as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic; and the restrictive measures implemented as a tactic to slow the spread of the virus have undoubtedly affected the social and mental health of several individuals.

Stress vs. Anxiety: What's the Difference?

Stress

A feeling of emotional or physical tension. It can come from any event or thought that makes you feel frustrated, angry or nervous.

Anxiety

A feeling of worry, nervousness, or unease about something with an uncertain outcome.

Differences

- Stress is a reaction to external factors/recognized threat
- Stress is usually short term
- Stress has an identifiable trigger
- Stress leads to mild emotional distress
- Stress resolves after a stressful event or thought is completed

- Anxiety is in reaction to internal factors
- Anxiety is usually long-term
- Anxiety may not have an identifiable trigger
- Anxiety leads to severe emotional distress
- Anxiety hangs around long after a stressful event or thought is completed

Effects

- Muscle tension
- Sleep disorders
- Anger and resentment
- Difficulty breathing
- Headache
- Dizziness

- High heart rate
- Irritability
- Panic attacks which mimic heart attack symptoms
- Chest pain
- Feeling faint
- Nausea/chills

Ways to Cope

- Exercise daily
- Eat well balanced meals
- Take deep breaths/practice breathing exercises
- Get adequate sleep
- Maintain healthy relationships with friends and family members
- Take time to unwind

- Seek professional help, e.g. therapy/counselling
- Learn what triggers your anxiety
- Maintain a positive attitude
- Limit alcohol and caffeine
- Accept that you cannot control everything
- Take time-outs, e.g. practice yoga, listen to music, meditate, get a massage, or learn relaxation techniques

“The best view comes after the hardest climb.”
~Unknown~

Sources:
<https://www.helpguide.org/articles/anxiety/coronavirus-anxiety.htm>
<https://www.cardinalinnovations.org/Resources/Blog/Stress-vs-Anxiety-What-s-the-Differencehttps://focusedoutcomes.life/do-i-have-anxiety-or-stress/>



WHAT IS DEPRESSION?

Depression, otherwise known as major depressive disorder or clinical depression is a common and serious mood disorder. People who suffer from depression experience persistent feelings of sadness and hopelessness and loss of interest in activities they once enjoyed. Apart from the emotional problems caused by depression, individuals can also experience physical symptoms such as chronic pain or digestive issues. In order for an individual to be diagnosed with depression, the symptoms must be present for at least two (2) weeks.

People experience depression in different ways. It may interfere with their daily work, resulting in lost time and lower productivity. It can also affect relationships and exacerbate some chronic health conditions.

Common Causes of Depression

1. **Family history** - individuals are at a higher risk of developing depression if they have a family history of depression or another mood disorder;
2. **Early childhood trauma** - these are events that affect the way your body reacts to fear and stressful situations;
3. **Brain structure** - there is a greater risk for depression if the frontal lobe of your brain is less active;
4. **Medical conditions** - certain conditions may put you at higher risk, such as chronic illness, insomnia, chronic pain, or attention-deficit hyperactivity disorder (ADHD);
5. **Drug use** - A history of drug or alcohol misuse can increase your risk.

Treatment for Depression

Individuals may successfully manage symptoms of depression with one form of treatment or a combination of treatments. It is common to combine medical treatments and lifestyle therapies. These treatments include:

- Antidepressants, antianxiety and antipsychotic medications;
- Individual psychotherapy/group therapy sessions;
- Physical activities;
- Avoiding misuse of alcohol and drugs;
- Getting sufficient sleep;
- Building and maintaining strong relationships.

HR has a vital role to play in supporting employees with mental health problems. Creating an open dialogue leads to a system of support and understanding between employers and employees. **Four (4)** general approaches to how HR can assist employees to deal with depression are:

1. **Encourage people to talk** - create an open environment where people feel free to speak about their wellbeing, and even disclose a diagnosed mental health problem should they wish.
2. **Avoid making assumptions** - do not try to guess what symptoms an employee might have and how these might affect their ability to do their job, especially since many people are able to manage their condition.
3. **Respect confidentiality** - remember mental health information is highly confidential and sensitive. Do not pass on information unnecessarily as this can constitute to a breach of trust and could negatively impact an individual's mental health.
4. **Respond flexibly** - since mental health problems affect individuals in different ways and at different times in their lives, tailor your support to suit the individual's needs and develop a personalised action plan.



The emotion that can break your heart,
is sometimes the very one that heals it...



Nicholas Sparks

Sources:

<https://www.healthline.com/health/depression#treatment>
<https://www.hrzone.com/lead/culture/hr-guide-to-depression-in-the-workplace>

GRIEF COUNSELLING

WHAT IS GRIEF?

Grief is a natural reaction to any form of loss, especially someone's death. Grief often evokes feelings of confusion, doubt, guilt, anger, and other complex emotions. The consequences of grief can be physically, psychologically, and spiritually demanding. There is no "right way" to grieve and individual grieving patterns are shaped by the individual's personalities, coping styles, and the perceived severity of loss they have sustained.

Even though everyone grieves in slightly different ways, there are five (5) stages of grief that people usually experience, namely:

1. Denial
2. Anger
3. Bargaining
4. Depression
5. Acceptance

WHAT IS GRIEF COUNSELLING?

Grief Counselling is a specific form of therapy that provides avenues for individuals to express their thoughts, feelings and emotions and help them to discover ways to manage the grieving process.

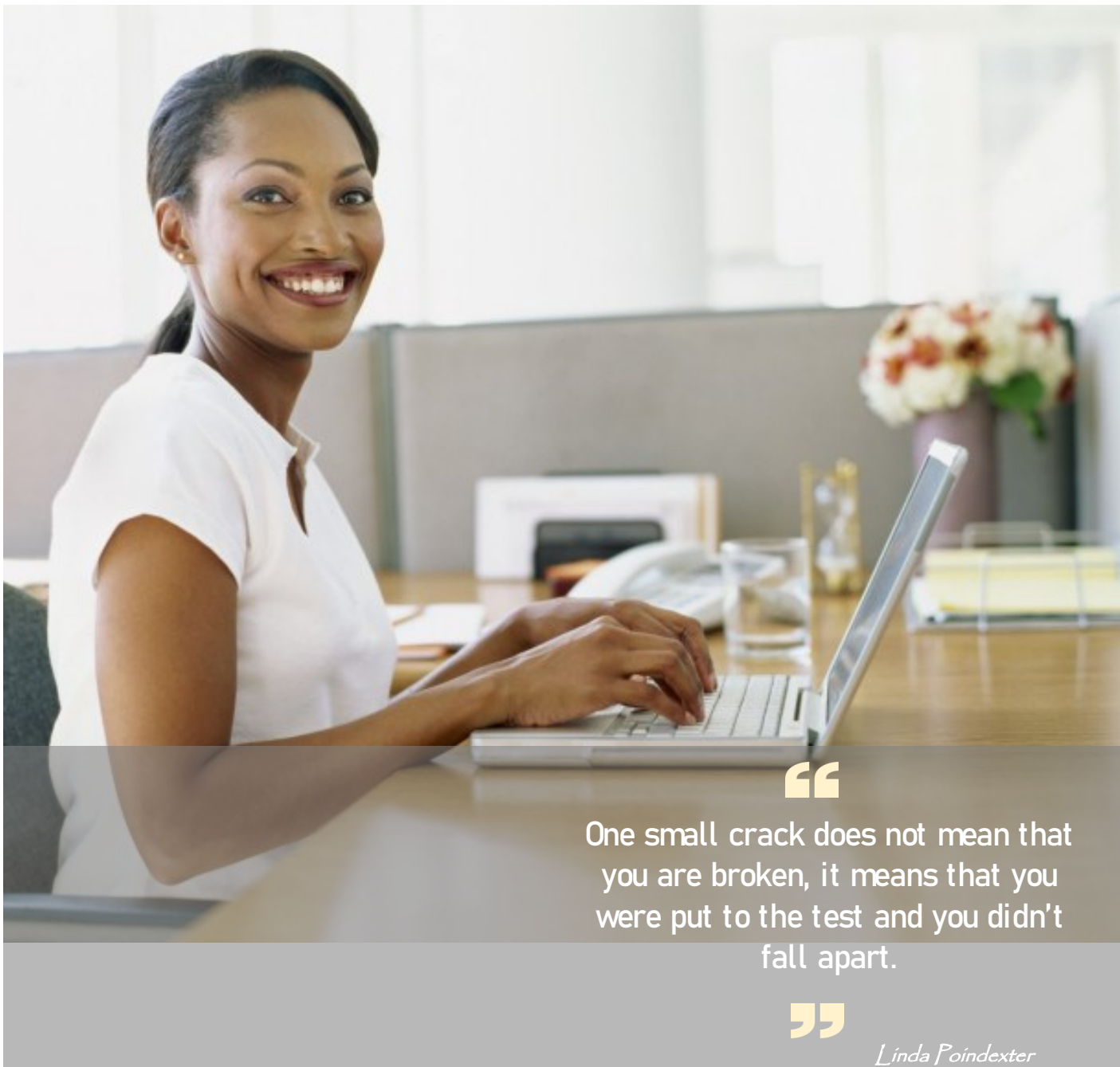
SUPPORT HR MAY OFFER TO GRIEVING EMPLOYEES

Human Resources (HR) can help their employees cope with the challenging emotions and thoughts that accompany the experience of grief. HR may employ the following techniques to help employees navigate the complicated effects of grief:

1. **Acknowledge the Incident**
Helping employees acknowledge the facts of what happened allows them to explore and process distressing and confusing feelings.
2. **Focus on Feeling or Talking or Sharing**
Allow employees to gather and discuss what happened (the loss or tragedy). Give employees a chance to work through their feelings and connect with their co-workers after a loss.
3. **Provide Opportunities for Remembrance**
If the loss being experienced is death, HR should plan creative and meaningful events that would provide opportunities for remembrance.
4. **Provide or Recommend External Counselling**
HR may invite external counsellors that specialise in grief support to meet with employees.
5. **Lighten Workload of Employees**
Temporarily easing workloads and expectations can assist in giving employees the space they may need to heal.
6. **Communicate Next Steps**
If an employee dies, it is important to communicate sensitively to employees what the transition will be. HR should inform employees about how the person's position will be replaced and what the transitional process will be.

Sources:

<https://www.shrm.org/hr-today/news/hr-magazine/0917/pages/how-to-support-employees-through-grief-and-loss.aspx>
<https://hbr.org/2019/07/when-a-colleague-is-grieving>



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One small crack does not mean that you are broken, it means that you were put to the test and you didn't fall apart.

”

Linda Poindexter

Save the Date!

1. **Civil Servant of the Year Awards 2021**
Nominations open until October 29, 2021.
For more information visit the following websites:
www.fhccu.com or www.mof.gov.jm
2. **National Heritage Week**
October 17 to 23, 2021

See you in December!!

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