



Fellows Broadsheet

Welcome to the first Institute of Hospitality Fellows Broadsheet, a monthly thought-leadership article written by a member of our esteemed College of Fellows.

Celebrating the wealth of professionalism, knowledge and expertise within our diverse, worldwide hospitality family, the Fellows Broadsheet will be available to members on the first Sunday of every month.

Mental Health – Putting Your People First

Monica Or FIH has been a member of the Institute of Hospitality for over 30 years, since being a hospitality student. In the past she has been Chair for our London branch. As an active Fellow, she continues to support the Institute through her hospitality work with industry and educational establishments.

In this Fellows broadsheet Monica looks at **Mental Health – Putting Your People First**:

In the not-so-distant past businesses spoke of the 'work-life balance'. In those days it was seen as the fluffy side of Human Resources that was a 'nice to have'. We ensured our staff got their breaks, social events were put on, we even brought in masseurs to take away those stresses and strains.

These days looking after our staff and putting our people first is top of the agenda. The importance of mental health has been driven more by the times we now live in and is being recognised as a key influencer in how we run our businesses.

Mental Health Issues and How to Recognise them

Mental health is a complex personal, social and economic issue of concern for populations in every country. It is included in the United Nation's Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) agenda for Good Health and Well Being.

SDG target 3.4: by 2030, reduce by one third premature mortality from noncommunicable diseases through prevention and treatment and promote mental health and well-being. (The World Health Organisation (WHO), (2018))

The Mental Health Foundation (2016) reports that every week, one in six adults experiences a common mental health problem such as anxiety or

depression and one in five adults have considered taking their own life. A starting point is to be able to recognise how stress shows itself, as these early warning signs are often ignored.

How to recognise stress

Feelings	Irritable, aggressive, impatient, unable to switch off
Behaviour	Can't make decisions, constant worrying, unable to concentrate, eating too much or too little, smoking, drinking being tearful.
Physical Symptoms	Muscle tension, sore eyes, sleeplessness, tiredness, headaches, chest pains, high blood pressure, indigestion, breathing problems

(Or 2018, p119)

These days having to live with the uncertainty of Covid-19 brings additional challenges for our businesses and our people. Whether it be job security, changes in working conditions, restricted social contact or feelings of isolation, this anxiety can lead to more serious outcomes.

According to The Mental Health Foundation (2020), three-quarters of mental health problems arise before the mid-twenties. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) usually peaks in young adulthood -16-24-year-olds. The WHO (2022a) reports that approximately 280 million people in the world have depression and over 700,000 people commit suicide every year. Suicide is the second leading cause of death among 15-29-year-olds. People with severe mental health conditions die prematurely, as much as two decades early, due to preventable physical conditions.





How this affects the Hospitality Industry

Due to the diverse nature of our industry we need to recognise that within our workforce there will be team members that suffer from depression which can lead to a disability, according to the Office for Disability Issues (2011). The Royal Society for Public Health (2019) report that 1 in 5 hospitality workers suffer from work related severe mental health issues and around one quarter of hospitality staff have sought psychological support or medication.

According to WHO (2022b), although there are known and effective treatments for mental disorders, more than 75% of people in low- and middle-income countries receive no treatment. Barriers to effective care include a lack of resources, lack of trained health-care providers and social stigma associated with mental disorders. In countries of all income levels, people who experience depression are often not correctly diagnosed, and others who do not have the disorder are too often misdiagnosed and prescribed antidepressants.

Analysis by Deloitte (2020) finds that poor mental health costs UK employers up to £45 billion each year. This is a rise of 16% since 2016 - an extra £6 billion a year. Operationally this leads to a vicious cycle of staff taking sick days, calling in at short notice, other staff having to cover, morale depleting, mistakes being made, and service standards dropping, which inevitably leads to customer complaints. This needs to be addressed in a way that will give our staff the support they actually need.

The research from Deloitte (2020) reveals that it pays to support employees' mental health. On average, for every £1 spent on supporting their people's mental health, employers get £5 back on their investment in reduced presenteeism, absenteeism and staff turnover. A higher return on investment can be achieved by early interventions, such as organisation-wide culture change and education.

Support available and best practice

The Royal Society of Public Health (2019) recommends that employers put in place systems and processes that protect mental health and well-being. This should include the way we roster our staff, sick leave, regular one-to-ones between managers and employees, having mental health first aiders, and carrying out awareness training on mental wellbeing.

According to Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) International (2022), MHFA certified courses have an international profile in 24 countries. The courses are a suite of internationally acclaimed and evidence-based, accredited training programs that empower and equip individuals with the knowledge, skills and confidence needed to support a friend, family member or co-worker experiencing a mental health problem, or experiencing a crisis such as being suicidal.

Global Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) can be set up to help employees in multiple locations around the world to deal with both work, and personal related issues, which may have a negative effect on their health, well-being, mental health or performance at work. In the UK, Hospitality Action (n.d) set up their EAP in 2014 which provides a range of specialist, independent and confidential support services to hospitality employees.

Our industry thrives from its people, the diversity, the talent, the characters we have within our businesses. We need to look after this, as our people are our most precious asset. So, it is down to us to act now and create work environments with a healthy work culture, where our people can look after both their physical and mental health.

The ten most common repercussions experienced by hospitality workers, that they believed are directly related to their job, were:

Increased stress	84%	Fatigue	68%	Depression	50%
Less time for other activities	63%	Low mood or tearfulness	65%	Ate less	48%
Disrupted sleep	71%	Increased irritability or anger	58%	Diminished friend or family relationships	46%
Anxiety	69%	(Royal Society for Public Health 2019, p3)			





About the author

As the founder of Star Quality Hospitality Consultancy, Monica is a consultant, trainer, Amazon best selling author for her Star Quality Hospitality Books which are available in the IoH Book Shop, and international speaker for the hospitality industry.

<https://www.instituteofhospitality.org/knowledge/ioh-library/book-shop/>



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