

# Mental Health First Aiders

Opening up the  
conversation around  
mental health in the  
workplace



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## A note from the editors

At Simplyhealth, supporting our colleagues with their health and wellbeing aligns to the very heart of our Purpose; building on the belief that prevention is better than cure, and helping our customers and colleagues to stay healthy now and in the future.

We also recognise that during these unsettling times, when many of us are working from home, having somewhere to turn to is vital. Although we have many support tools for our employees, sometimes having a friendly and familiar face to turn to in the workplace can help to provide a comforting and encouraging first step in reaching out for support.

That's why we have fifty volunteers who are trained Mental Health First Aiders at Simplyhealth. Our Mental Health First Aiders are there to listen and not judge, give support and information, as well as signpost colleagues to where they can receive appropriate professional help.

In this leaflet, you can read about our Simplyhealth Mental Health First Aiders and what being a Mental Health First Aider means to them, as well as tips and ideas for Mental Health First Aiders on how you can help to raise your profile as a Mental Health First Aider in your organisation.

## Further support

This leaflet also provides information on various support services that are available. If you're going through a difficult time and need someone to talk to, know that you're not on your own and that there's always support available and somewhere to turn to.





## Hear from our Mental Health First Aiders

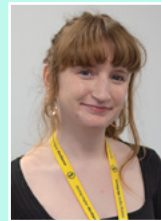
Here's what a few of our employees had to say about what being a Mental Health First Aider means to them:



I've always been really keen to help others and being an MHFA is a great opportunity to understand more around the challenges we all face, no matter the job title or status, and how to overcome them.

It's been great to see Simplyhealth take the topic of mental health seriously. From webinars to virtual coffee mornings, I think we're already doing a great job. We just need to continue building upon this with a culture and understanding that it's ok to talk.

**Andy O'Neill**  
Talent Acquisition Specialist



I really wanted to train to be a Mental Health First Aider to further my understanding and ultimately help people. I've personally suffered from anxiety since I was a teenager and found ways over the years to cope on my own like giving up caffeine and really getting into exercise.

Taking the course was an amazing experience for me as it gave real insight of my own and loved ones behaviour, as well as learning ways to help. In these current crazy times, mental health is more important than ever, and taking the time to really get to know yourself is so important.

**Georgie Hall**  
Assistant Financial Accountant



I really wanted to become a Mental Health First Aider as I wanted to be able to help and support my colleagues who may be struggling. It has meant a great deal to me to be able to put some of the principles into practice to better support my colleagues, especially in these current uncertain times.

**Kym Page, Clinical Product Manager**



So I've had various experiences with Mental Health through friends, family and personal experience and have seen some of the things that people go through if there isn't anyone they feel they can talk to or are not given the help they need. Mental Health First Aiders encourage relaxed conversation that allows people to open up about mental health without any pressure. I'd love to see Simplyhealth's Mental Health Aiders continuing to create these open conversations and break down the stigma around mental health.

**Sam Candy, Finance BACS & Operations Team Leader**



Having experienced my own challenges in the past, I was surprised how many people reached out to me when I returned to work to offer their support. These were people who I would never have suspected had suffered with their mental health, which goes to show that such feelings are often hidden and much less likely to be talked about – especially amongst men.

Becoming a Mental Health First Aider for me is about trying to pass on to others the support I received when I needed help; I'm not afraid to speak up, to talk about the difficulties I had and to encourage others to do the same. I hope that any guys that hear me speaking about my difficulties would take strength from that to open up if they have challenges themselves.

**Jason Townsend  
Head of Internal Audit**



## Support services

If you're going through a difficult time and need someone to talk to, know that you're not on your own and that there's always support available and somewhere to turn to:

### Your GP

### Your workplace Mental Health First Aider or Employee Assistance Programme

(if these are available through your employer).

### Samaritans

Samaritans provide a listening ear when you need it.  
Call 116 123 anytime.

You can also email [jo@samaritans.org](mailto:jo@samaritans.org)

[www.samaritans.org](http://www.samaritans.org)

### Hub of Hope

The Hub of Hope is an online directory where you can search for support services in your local area, as well as providing access to in the moment support through Samaritans and Crisis Text Line.

The Hub of Hope is available at:

[www.hubofhope.co.uk](http://www.hubofhope.co.uk)

and is also a downloadable app on iOS and Android devices.





## How to raise your profile as a Mental Health First Aider in your organisation

If you've recently trained as a Mental Health First Aider, or perhaps you and your colleagues may be working in a more remote way due to the coronavirus outbreak, which could make communication more of a challenge, there are a number of ways that you can help to communicate your role as Mental Health First Aider to colleagues across your organisation, both online and offline:

**1** Display posters around your organisation to help inform your colleagues who their Mental Health First Aider is and how you can be contacted.

**2** Include a Mental Health First Aider message block in your email signature to help make your role more visible to colleagues across the business.

**3** If your company has an employee intranet, suggest creating a dedicated section to put the spotlight on yourself as a Mental Health First Aider, to help provide a space where employees can find out more information about you and your role.

**4** If your company has an internal newsletter, see if you can include a feature to introduce yourself as your colleagues' Mental Health First Aider. Why not use mental health awareness campaigns such as Mental Health Awareness Week and World Mental Health Day as opportunities to circulate information on a regular basis?

**5** The impact of the coronavirus outbreak will be affecting all employees differently. If you have colleagues who have had to adjust to remote working and being more distant from their team, why not suggest organising and hosting a virtual coffee morning for employees to drop in for a coffee and catch up?

## Interested in becoming a Mental Health First Aider?

Mental Health First Aid England provide online and classroom based Mental Health First Aider training courses, as well as on-site courses at your workplace. They are the only provider of licensed Mental Health First Aid Instructor Training in England, accredited by the Royal Society for Public Health.\*

To find out more, visit:  
**[www.mhfaengland.org](http://www.mhfaengland.org)**

Why not speak to your HR team to explore training opportunities for your workplace together?

\*Source: [www.mhfaengland.org/organisations/workplace/](http://www.mhfaengland.org/organisations/workplace/)



## Supporting your everyday health and wellbeing

Our **Healthy Living Hub** is packed full of useful articles, top tips and expert views to help you look after your health and wellbeing.

From home-working sets ups and how to sleep better, to dealing with change and coping with anxiety, we've got something for everyone.

Visit [simplyhealth.co.uk/healthy-living](https://www.simplyhealth.co.uk/healthy-living) to find out more

