How to Run
Anti-Stigma Activity

Small groups of thoughtful, committed people can change the way we as a nation do things. In fact, it is the only thing that ever has. As Employee Champions, you have the power to help end stigma in your workplace.
“It’s a journey – you won’t always get it right. If you’re at the beginning of the journey and unsure how to proceed that’s ok. Making a commitment and getting the conversation started is the first step.” John Binns – Deloitte.

Whether you have got a minute, got an hour or have longer. There is something you can do to break down stigma. Here are some ideas to help you get the ball rolling in your work place. There’s lots to do. Let’s get started.

I pledge...
To register as a ‘Champion’
And promote the campaign
to end stigma.
Christopher.
• **Social media** - Tweet using #TimetoTalk, blog or post on Facebook or Linkedin. Sharing something on social media can be a great way to raise awareness. Before you do, it’s best to consult first and be mindful of your employer’s policy on social media – you may need to seek permission.

• **Information sharing** - Distribute [materials](#) developed by Time to Change, for example promote the Time to Change website and inform colleagues on what Time to Change is, why tackling mental health stigma in society is important what they can do to help.

• **Set an example** – Guard against ill-informed actions, however well-meaning, which can reinforce misconceptions and low expectations. For example, is your colleague regularly sending emails out of office hours? Remind them that regularly allowing your work-life balance to slip and contribute to stress in the long term. Colleague not taking a lunch break? Remind them about how important it is for wellbeing to take their allocated break.

• **Reach out to a colleague** – Give a colleague a compliment, we often underestimate the power of positive comments on our colleagues' moods. Bump into someone in the kitchen? Make a point of extending a conversation past the “hi, how are you?” “fine, you?” “fine too, thanks” stage and turn it into an interaction that is more meaningful. This will help to build relationships and lay the foundations for future conversations around mental health.

• **Promote useful wellbeing tools**– There is an app for everything, from helping with sleep to learning ‘Mindfulness’. Why not read some reviews and share your suggestions with your colleagues? There are also lots of books and online courses available – a little bit of digging can reveal all sorts of wellbeing-promoting resources. If a colleague recommends them, people are much more likely to try them out for themselves.
Got an hour?

- **Speaking out** – If you have direct or indirect experience of mental health problems, you may choose to share these with an audience of your colleagues. Keep an eye on our [E-learning page](#) for upcoming modules on how to speak out publically.

- **Speaking up** - If you don’t have lived experience, present to colleagues about the importance of tackling mental health stigma and promoting wellbeing.

- **Training days and inductions** - Speak to new recruits about the importance of wellbeing/mental health during staff inductions. Reaching the people who don’t normal come to mental health events – incorporate in department meetings and line manager training.

- **Family and friends** – Think about activities you could do to reach family and friends of your colleagues. For example, run outreach activities and provide information about support available to family and friends.

- **Desk drop** – Leaving literature on colleagues’ desks at the end of the day means it is the first thing they see in the morning and can encourage conversations.

- **Organise team socials** - Suggest that your team go for an extended lunch, have a group coffee break or ask a colleague if they would like to take a walk to catch up. Use this as an opportunity to ask questions about their wellbeing and their views around mental health. They may have some really great suggestions or contacts that could help with your anti-stigma activity.

- **Organisational Newsletters** - Write an article or blog for your organisation’s newsletter or intranet about how stigma and discrimination around mental health has affected you or a colleague, the importance of tackling this in the workplace or how to stay well.

- **Information stall** – Social contact is one of the best ways to break down stigma, and an information stall at lunch time is a great way to start the conversation and share up to date information around mental health among your colleagues.

- **Host a Networking Event** – Bring colleagues together and raise awareness around mental health & wellbeing in an interactive and engaging way by organising a Time to Change [speed dating](#) or [Myth Buster](#) event in your workplace.
• **Be a point of contact** – Step forward to act as a “go to” person for people seeking support or information on mental health. Let colleagues know that you are a Time to Change Employee Champion and that you are on hand to support if needed. Any new starters? Send them an email and introduce yourself or even meet them for a coffee.

• **Champion networks** – Share experiences, challenges and suggestions with other Employee Champions by contributing to the Time to Change Employer Network through our Linkedin group. If you have not yet been invited to our Linkedin Group, please contact your Employee Champion Officer – Mike Matania – at m.matania@time-to-change.org.uk

• **Get clued up** - Try and be aware of what help & support might be available internally and externally. Is your organisation running any wellbeing activities that you could raise awareness of? Perhaps you could spread a bit more knowledge around your Employee Assistance Programme and the importance of using it. This could be something as simple as sending an email detailing these support options or it could even be producing your own leaflets for colleagues providing this information.

• **Be the driving force** – Sustain momentum of actions taking place within the organisation as a result of your employer signing the pledge. Keep banging the metaphorical drum and make sure that employee wellbeing does not slip of the agenda of your workplace – keeping it as the forefront of colleagues’ minds will help ensure that changes happen.

• **Organise a Roadshow** – Feeling ambitious? The momentum that a roadshow can build can drum a great deal of attention across organisations spread across many different sites. Check out our [case study](#) on HeadShed - a very successful roadshow that E.ON ran across its various sites in the U.K
Take advantage of key dates in the mental health calendar

Take advantage of World Mental Health Day and Time to Talk Day to organise your own events to get colleagues thinking about mental health in the workplace. Events and meetings are great opportunities to speak to people face to face, challenge myths about mental health, have discussions and answer questions. Events can take a variety of forms. You can either organise an event yourself, ask for time to talk about wellbeing at a team meeting, or have an information stand with some of our Time to Change materials.

Here’s some key dates you may want to get involved with:

**October 2015 – World Mental Health Day** - World Mental Health Day is observed on 10 October every year. The overall objective is to raise awareness of mental health issues around the world and mobilise efforts in support of mental health. It is promoted by the World Health Organisation. [http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/world-mental-health-day/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/world-mental-health-day/)

**January 2016 – Beat Blue Monday** - ‘Blue Monday’ is a chance for people to overcome the more immediate side of life’s downs, to reflect on what makes them depressed, and consider what can be done to help and overcome the issues surrounding depression. [http://www.beatbluemonday.org.uk/](http://www.beatbluemonday.org.uk/)

**February 2016 – Time to Talk Day** – The Time to Change campaign challenging mental health stigma and discrimination by getting people talking about mental health. This event has a key ‘ask’ every year which you can plan activity around. Time to Talk Day is normally the first Thursday in February. [http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/timetotalkday](http://www.time-to-change.org.uk/timetotalkday)

**March 2016 – World Bi-Polar Day** - The purpose of the day is to raising awareness of bipolar disorders and to improve sensitivity towards the illness. It is promoted by the International Bipolar Foundation and partners. [http://ibpf.org/blog/world-bipolar-day](http://ibpf.org/blog/world-bipolar-day)

**April 2016 – Depression Awareness Week** - Promoted by the Depression Alliance, the day works to raise awareness about depression and what it means to live with depression. [http://www.depressionalliance.org/](http://www.depressionalliance.org/)

**May 2016 – Mental Health Awareness Week** - Raising awareness of mental health and wellbeing every year, promoted by the Mental Health Foundation. For more information and future dates, go to: [http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/mentalhealthawarenessweek/](http://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/our-work/mentalhealthawarenessweek/)

**June 2016 – Mens Health Week** – A focus on healthy living for men normally held in June. [https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/mhw](https://www.menshealthforum.org.uk/mhw)

**September 2016 – World Suicide Prevention Day** - Organised by the International Association For Suicide Prevention and the World Health Organisation, the purpose of the day is to promote worldwide commitment and action to prevent suicides. [https://www.iasp.info/wspd/index.php](https://www.iasp.info/wspd/index.php)


**November 2016 – National Stress Awareness Day** - Normally held on the first Wednesday of November each year, this day is promoted by the International Stress Management Association (ISMAUK). The purpose of the day is to raise awareness of the effects of psychological distress in the workplace and of the many coping strategies and sources of help available to address it. For more information go to: [http://www.isma.org.uk/about-national-stress-awareness-day-nsad/](http://www.isma.org.uk/about-national-stress-awareness-day-nsad/)
However you choose to get mental health on to the agenda, you can use an event as an opportunity to:

- Get people talking about mental health and thinking about any stereotypes they hold about mental health problems and people who experience them.
- Bring people with different experiences of mental health together in an environment of mutual respect.
- Provide information about looking after your wellbeing and how to access support. Get people to talk about what has helped them.
- Inspire people to work together to end the stigma and discrimination surrounding mental health.

What are you going to do? Here are some ideas:

- Run an information stand for World Mental Health Day or Time to Talk Day.
- Invite a speaker from a local Mind, Rethink Mental Illness service or another local mental health related organisation to talk to colleagues about the impact of stigma and how to look after your own wellbeing. You can also talk to the Employers Team about sourcing Time to Change ‘Champions’ from the community to come and talk to your colleagues.
- Have a drop-in session to start conversations about mental health;
- You will get more people to attend if you have a hook that appeals to who you are trying to reach, this could be a game of football, some music, a chance to socialise or refreshments such as tea and cake… the possibilities are endless.

Promoting your event:

There are lots of ways to tell people about your event and what you are up to. Here are just a few ideas:

- Staff intranet
- Flyers and posters – putting them up on staff notice boards or in communal areas
- Word of mouth – simply tell people and ask them to tell others
- Ask for it to be advertised in any staff magazines or newsletters
- Social media (e.g. ask for it to be promoted through your organisation’s twitter account)
It is important to remember:

- Recognising that some colleagues may have mental health problems, even if they do not recognise it themselves.
- Sensitive topics can cause colleagues to become upset, it is important to take this into account during your events and talks.
- Our October campaign is important, but remember that there are other times in the year to launch a bigger event.
- Incorporate your planning to include other aspects that can cause stress in the workplace such as debt and change.

Tips:

- Try to find a venue that has a quiet place in case anyone wants to speak to you privately or becomes overwhelmed on the day.
- It might be hard for everyone who is interested to attend your event, so think about whether you could film parts of it, for example, the main speaker. Or write a summary of how the event went and ask for it to be featured on your staff intranet or in a newsletter.

Employee Champions Linkedin Group

If you have not done so already, join our Employee Champions Linkedin Group! This group is a platform for Employee Champions across the UK to share interesting ideas for anti-stigma work, offer best practise advice to their peers, and help each other in their task of ending stigma in the workplace. For instructions on how to do so, email m.matania@time-to-change.org.uk
All that is necessary for stigma to remain in the workplace is that good people do nothing.