

The European Depression Association (EDA) is an alliance of organisations, patients, researchers and healthcare professionals from 19 countries across Europe.

Depression is already the most prevalent health problem in many EU Member States, and more than 50 million European citizens (11% of the population) experience mental disorders at some time in their lives. EDA raises awareness and promotes better understanding of the impact of depression on people's lives, to challenge stigma and discrimination, and to provide a voice for those who experience depression. By coming together in Europe, members of the EDA exchange research, information and best practices; coordinate pan-European actions, and extend the reach of their campaigns.

Each year EDA organises European Depression Day to raise awareness of depression across Europe.

www.europeandepressionday.com

Depression

A Guide for Employers and Employees



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people affected by depression and their family.

www.buendnis-depression.de/depression/arbeitsplatz.php

Research on health and safety at work

www.baua.de/en/Homepage.html

Spain

Associacio De Bipolars i Depressius del Valles

A non profit organisation made up of people affected by bipolar disorder and depression.

www.abdv.org/

National Institute of Occupational Safety and Hygiene

<http://tinyurl.com/4njh6x>

Italy

ARETE NPO

An association of and for people with mood disorders.

<http://www.depressionarete.it/>

Belgium

Ups and Downs

A Belgian association for patients, their partners and family members dealing with bipolar disorder or chronic depression

<http://www.upsendowns.be/>

Europe-wide

The European Network for Workplace Health Promotion

An informal network of national occupational health and safety institutes, public health, health promotion and statutory social insurance institutions. In a joint effort, all the members and partners aim to improve workplace health and well-being and to reduce the impact of work related ill health on the European workforce.

www.enwhp.org

European Trade Union Confederation

www.etuc.org

Resources and Links

UK

Realising ambitions: Better employment support for people with a mental health condition

Practical guidance from a leading UK Mental Health Charity and the company, British Telecoms (BT)

http://www.bu.edu/cpr/employment/files/Realising_Ambitions.pdf

RETAIN

UK job retention service which helps people with mental health conditions maintain their employment

<http://www.richmondfellowship.org.uk/>

Advice, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (ACAS)

UK legal advice around work, including for mental health

<http://www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=1361>

Depression Alliance

UK charity for people affected by depression. They run a national network of self-help groups.

www.depressionalliance.org

Centre for Mental Health

Centre for Mental Health aims to help to create a society in which people with mental health problems enjoy equal chances in life to those without

www.centreformentalhealth.org.uk

France

France-Dépression

French organisation for anyone affected by depression

www.france-depression.org

French National Agency for the Improvement of Working Conditions

www.anact.fr

Germany

Depression Alliances

German organisation of regionally acting Alliances against Depression for

The Problem and The Answer

More than 1 in 10 EU citizens suffer from depression at some point in their life and they commonly experience symptoms such as lack of attention, memory loss and difficulty planning and taking decisions. These cognitive symptoms can have a significant impact on quality of life and the ability to function professionally and socially.

On 1 October 2012 EDA launched the results of the IDEA survey (Impact of Depression in the Workplace in Europe Audit). The European-wide survey polled 7,000 workers and managers to reveal the impact of depression in the work place and the subsequent personal and economic burden and how this varies across Europe. We discovered that:

- One in ten working people have taken time off work because of depression
- On average, 36 days are lost per episode of depression, this equates to more than 21,000 days of lost working time in this group of people
- Despite the size of the problem, nearly one in three managers reported they had no formal support or resources to deal with employees who have depression
- 43% of people called for better policies and legislation to protect employees

The European Depression Association's response to the survey to date has been to address the need for better policies and legislation through lobbying . . . and this booklet. This booklet is a first step in providing support and resources to employers and employees to help them deal positively with a common and very treatable illness.

Staying Productive

Research shows that depression in the workplace is a leading cause of lost work productivity and costs employers billions every year. Research also shows that work is good for health and aids recovery from depression.

A mentally healthy workplace will keep workers productive, help them stay in work and/or return to work after a period of absence because of depression. It is in everyone's interests to create a supportive workplace.

Employers

"There is no mystery about creating a mentally healthy workplace, it is just about good people management, empathy and sensible policies"

As an employer, it is important that you have clear policies on mental health and disability and encourage the early disclosure of any stress or depression that colleagues may be facing. It is also important to address the working environment to ensure there is a positive culture that promotes well-being and that people are treated well.

Checklist for a mentally healthy workplace . . .

- ✓ A good induction will help alleviate the common stresses of starting a new job that can leave people feeling unsettled and uncertain. It will introduce the new employee to their line-manager, introduce them to the facilities and explain to them how they fit into the company. It will explore policies like health and safety (which is where information about the mental health policy of the company can be explained) and provide clear guidance on the role and workload.
- ✓ A good line-manager will meet regularly with an employee, provide and listen to feedback and will be able to pick up on any early signs of stress or depression. Managers need training and support to ensure they have a consistent approach to people management that is positive and in-line with company policies—good communication skills are key, as is the ability to manage challenging situations and emotions. Dealing with problems that arise, sensitively, fairly and quickly and having an 'open door' policy are key.

A strong team spirit will help employees support each other in times of stress. It is important that employees have time to get to know their

Sometimes things go wrong and if an employer or employee is not following best practice then it is wise to seek legal advice and, perhaps, use the services of a mediator.

With a significant proportion of working-age adults affected by depression, it is important to underline that it is impossible (not to mention illegal) to avoid recruiting people with depression. People who have experienced depression often have a number of excellent characteristics they can bring to the job such as:

- Compassion
- The ability to solve problems
- Inter-personal skills with a wide variety of people
- Tenacity and diplomacy
- A good understanding of healthy working which they can share
- Insight

Finally . . .

Understanding and managing depression in the workplace will lead to increased productivity and healthier citizens. The following pages provide links to resources from companies that have shared their best practice to legal advice and NGO's which can support people affected by depression. We hope you have found this booklet useful and would like to encourage you to share your experiences and best practise with us via our Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/EuropeanDepressionAssociation>

arrangement.

- Get more support—having someone to help you set priorities, manage your time or equip you with new skills may all help you balance your workload and mental health.
- Reduce your stress—ask for a colleague to take on some tasks to lighten the workload or temporarily hand over high stress tasks
- Make the working environment nice—having a designated room for breaks or good lighting can make a big difference. If the office is noisy, ask for a quieter place to work so that you can focus or if you feel isolated, ask to work nearer colleagues.

You may also want to work with your manager to create a wellness and recovery action plan (WRAP). This should include:

- how to keep well at work
- signs that you are getting unwell again
- triggers that make you unwell
- what to do if you get unwell
- how to get back on track after you have been unwell

Returning to Work

A bout of depression can lead to time off work. It is vital that employees and employers stay in contact with each other to facilitate the return to work. Agree a regular time and method of contact and create a brief agenda e.g.

- Update on treatment and progress with recovery
- Update on colleagues
- What will be said to colleagues/clients to explain the person's absence
- Reassurance that the work is being managed but the person off sick is missed
- Payment/leave arrangements
- If appropriate begin discussing the return to work and suggest a phased approach

- ✓ colleagues and engage in team-building exercises (which can be as simple as arranging a Christmas party).
- ✓ Health promotion with a focus on work-life balance is an important element of a healthy workplace. This can range from having an information board to conducting stress risk assessments on staff
- ✓ Ensure staff have manageable workloads and take regular breaks and holidays. Make reasonable adjustments to people's work and working conditions to ensure they stay productive e.g. by giving them time off for appointments or childcare.

For more information visit

www.mind.org.uk/assets/0001/6314Managing_and_supporting_MH_at_work.pdf

Employees

It may be difficult but it is important to talk to your employer if you are unwell as they may not otherwise understand if your ill-health begins to affect your work. Your employer may be able to make changes to the way you work which help you to stay in work. Before you speak to your employer be clear about their policies on mental ill-health and disability and consider involving others e.g. occupational health staff or your trade union representative.

It is important that your healthcare professionals support you to stay in work. They can do this in many ways e.g. by discussing work strategies with you or scheduling appointments outside of working hours. They should also discuss the impact of taking or stopping medication on your ability to work.

Making contact with people who have been through a similar experience to you can be very helpful. Get in touch with a local self-help group or join a reputable on-line group (details at the back of this booklet).

If you do need to talk to your employer about making adjustments, the following may help:

- Work 'Flexi-time' - being able to avoid early starts, work from home, make up hours if attending doctors' appointments or become part-time are all examples of 'flexi-time'. You may need to demonstrate to your employer that you are able to get the work done within the new working