

Press release: 3rd October 2017

National Mental Health Event Looks for Real Change in Workplace Culture

Event takes a hard look at efforts to achieve workplace mental health and how they can transform the workplace.

Are the places we work more attuned to mental health and responsive to mental illness in 2017? That's the focus of a Society of Occupational Medicine and British Psychological Society event on workplace mental health, to be held in London on 3rd October, hosted by Aviva.

Mental health is not a person issue, but one on which all societies must focus and support. This event is about the transformation of workplace culture. It will focus on the trials and triumphs of individuals and organisations seeking to achieve health in the workplace. It supports the remit that mental health is not 'an issue' for organisations, but a health condition that if addressed in an appropriate manner will allow individuals with mental health issues to function more effectively at their jobs and within a supportive work environment.

The fully-booked event will see 300 delegates gather to hear workplace leaders of change discuss their successes, failures, challenges they see ahead, and what keeps them inspired. These workplace leaders of change are:

- Dr. Sally Coomber - *Mental ill health: the challenges for the employer*
- Professor Neil Greenberg - *Mental Health and how to 'Sustain Resilience at Work'*
- Professor Ivan Robertson - *Psychological well-being, physical health and work behaviour*

The event follows the Prime Minister's recent announcement to support mental well-being in the workplace.

Further information:

The Society of Occupational Medicine Email: admin@som.org.uk Tel: 0203 478 1041

The British Psychological Society Email: Press.Centre@bps.org.uk Tel: 0116 254 9568

Notes to Editors

1. The Society of Occupational Medicine is the UK organisation for all healthcare professionals working in or with an interest in occupational health. It is concerned with the protection of the health of people in the workplace, the prevention of occupational injuries and disease and related environmental issues.
2. Press places are available. Please contact admin@som.org.uk
3. Overview of speakers and abstracts:

Dr. Sally Coomber, Public Health England, Past President Society of Occupational Medicine, FFOM, FRCP, Consultant Occupational Physician Clinical Lead for SEQOHS



Sally Coomber trained at Newcastle Medical School, completed her GP training then went on to specialise in occupational medicine at Addenbrooke's Cambridge. She has more than 25 years occupational health experience; 17 years as Consultant Occupational Physician in the NHS during which she developed a specialist interest in the mental health of doctors. In 2011 she was appointed Clinical Lead to the Faculty of Occupational Medicine's accreditation scheme – an opportunity to improve the quality of occupational health provision in the UK. In January 2015 she was appointed Deputy Director Occupational Health and Staff Wellbeing for Public Health England. In 2016 Sally became President of the Society of Occupational Medicine. She is a Fellow of both the Faculty of Occupational Medicine and of the Royal College of Physicians.

Abstract

Mental ill health: the challenges for the employer

The introductory session will review the UK statistics on mental ill health in working age populations; discuss primary secondary and tertiary approaches to managing MH in the workplace and Public Health England's evaluation of training line managers in MH awareness.

Professor Neil Greenberg, Consultant Occupational and Forensic Psychiatrist and Professor of Defence Mental Health BM, BSc, MMedSc, FHEA, MFMLM, DOccMed, MEWI, MInstLM, MFFLM, MD, FRCPSych



Professor Neil Greenberg is an academic psychiatrist based at King's College London United Kingdom (UK) and is a consultant occupational and forensic psychiatrist. Neil served in the UK Armed Forces for more than 23 years and has deployed, as a psychiatrist and researcher, to a number of hostile environments including Afghanistan and Iraq.

Neil has published more than 200 scientific papers and book chapters, many of which are on occupational and traumatic stress management within organisations. He is a past President of the UK Psychological Trauma Society, the Royal College of Psychiatrists Presidential Lead for Military and Veterans' Health and a trustee for two military charities in the UK. Neil is also the clinical and managing director of March on Stress (www.marchonstress.com), a psychological health consultancy which aims to promote better mental health within organisations.

Abstract

Mental Health and how to 'Sustain Resilience at Work'

Mental health in the workplace is a much discussed topic and evidence shows that the mental health impact on performance and productivity is substantial. This talk will provide an overview of the common mental health disorders encountered in the workplace and highlight the evidence about the barriers that prevent and facilitate seeking support or other positive behaviours. Within organisations, there is also very good evidence that workers' mental health is a product of their own resources but also the social networks they operate in at work and indeed at home. Utilising social networks to act as an early identification system and to promote resilience at work is supported by the available evidence, and examples of how this has been done in the military and other organisations will be provided.

Professor Ivan Robertson, Robertson Cooper Ltd, Emeritus Professor of Work & Organisational Psychology at the University of Manchester BSc, PhD, CPsychol, FBPsS, FBAM



Ivan is co-founder (with Sir Cary Cooper) of Robertson Cooper Ltd – the company provides psychological well-being and engagement solutions to organisations and its goal is to help as many people as possible to have a good day at work. Ivan was at the University of Manchester (UMIST) for over 20 years, where he was Professor of Work & Organisational Psychology, Head of Manchester School of Management and Pro-Vice Chancellor. He is now Emeritus Professor at the university. He has worked on consulting assignments across all sectors of the economy and across the world. He has published over 40 books on Work & Organisational Psychology and over 200 scholarly articles/conference papers. He has held visiting posts in the USA, Singapore and Australia. His latest (co-authored) books are: *Well-Being: Happiness and Productivity at Work* (2011), *Management and Happiness* (2013) and *Work Psychology* (2016).

Abstract

Psychological well-being, physical health and work behaviour

Research evidence shows that psychological factors can play a key role in well-being at work. Recent research has helped to clarify the relationship between psychological well-being and physical health, revealing that cardiovascular health, immune system functioning and metabolism are all related to psychological well-being. In addition to this, psychological well-being itself is a significant factor in individual behaviour, organisational performance and attendance at work. This session will provide a review of the research evidence linking psychological well-being to physical health, illness and performance at work. The presentation will identify the main consequences of poor psychological well-being for health, illness and performance – and the protective benefit of enhanced well-being. This presentation also explores the key workplace factors that influence psychological well-being and reviews interventions that can be used to protect and improve psychological well-being in the workplace.

4. The statement from the Prime Minister is at <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/prime-minister-unveils-plans-to-transform-mental-health-support>. Comment from MIND is at <http://www.mind.org.uk/news-campaigns/news/prime-minister-unveils-plans-to-transform-mental-health-support/#.WHZMo6wnwdU>