

An Employers Guide to Social, Emotional and Mental Health

What is Social, Emotional and Mental Health?

Social, Emotional and Mental Health (SEMH) are a type of special educational needs in which people have difficulties in managing their emotions and behaviour. SEMH can also affect colleagues without recognised special educational needs as a person's SEMH can fluctuate as circumstances through life change. This guide is to help employers effectively support employees who may be facing challenges with their SEMH. SEMH affects 1 in 4 people worldwide. As the majority of adult life is spent in the workplace, it is good practice and an ideal setting in which to promote good social, emotional, mental health and wellbeing.

How will it affect my colleague?

For people with SEMH, particularly where there is a diagnosis or ongoing need, a safe and healthy work environment can contribute to recovery, inclusion, improve confidence and social functioning. The level of support required will be individually needs based.

Signs to look out for:

- Lack of motivation/More tired than usual.
- Becoming chaotic
- Impulsivity.
- Not managing workload.
- Changes in appearance, e.g., poor self-care.
- High absence/Work avoidance.
- Changes in behaviour
- Outbursts of anger or emotion.
- Social isolation
- Often seeming distracted.
- Poor timekeeping.

How will it affect the rest of the team and organisation?

A safe and healthy work environment is a fundamental right, and employers have a duty to provide this. People with SEMH needs have the right to participate in work fully and fairly. Employers who support a cognitively and emotionally healthy workforce will help drive productivity, improve attendance, and staff retention.

What can I do to support them?

- Get to know the individual and their need (particularly where there is a known diagnosis).
- Provide a safe and comfortable place to talk, give them time, and demonstrate active listening.
- Provide regular confidential supervisions.
- Offer coaching and mentoring for support.
- Allocate work based on strengths.
- Undergo management training for SEMH in the workplace.
- Make reasonable adjustments where necessary.

As an employer you have the ability to lead the way in making the world a more inclusive place. By making adaptations to practice and through effective communication, you can support employee SEMH and therefore productivity. This in turn will promote business growth, create a healthy environment, and help employees through SEMH challenges effectively.

Further Information:

<https://www.mentalhealth.org.uk/sites/default/files/2022-07/How-to-support-mental-health-at-work.pdf>

<https://www.mind.org.uk/workplace/mental-health-at-work/>

<https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/mental-health-at-work>

<https://www.mentalhealthatwork.org.uk/>