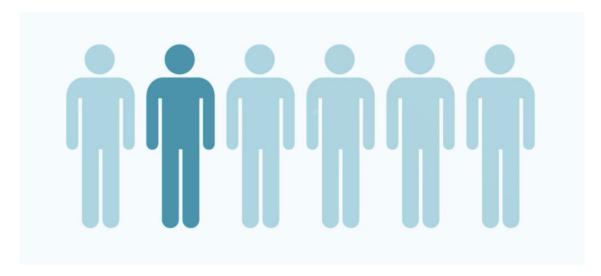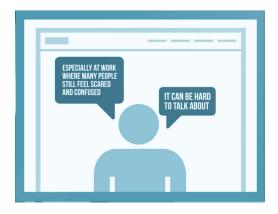# MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

You might not think it – but mental health problems at work are common.

Right now 1 in 6 of us is dealing with a mental health problem like anxiety, depression or stress.

THE EFFECTS ARE AS REAL AS A BROKEN LEG, BUT THERE'S NO PLASTER CAST TO SHOW FOR IT.

ESPECIALLY AT WORK WHERE MANY PEOPLE STILL FEEL SCARED AND CONFUSED
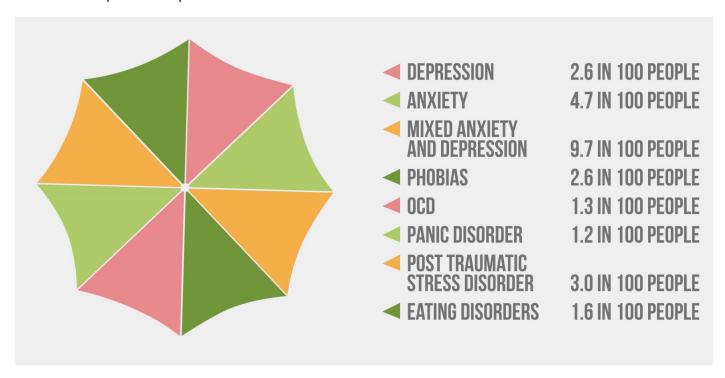
IT CAN BE HARD TO TALK ABOUT

SO IT CAN BE REALLY DIFFICULT TO SPOT THE SIGNS, AND EVEN HARDER TO TALK ABOUT, ESPECIALLY AT WORK WHERE MANY PEOPLE STILL FEEL SCARED AND CONFUSED ABOUT THE ISSUE.
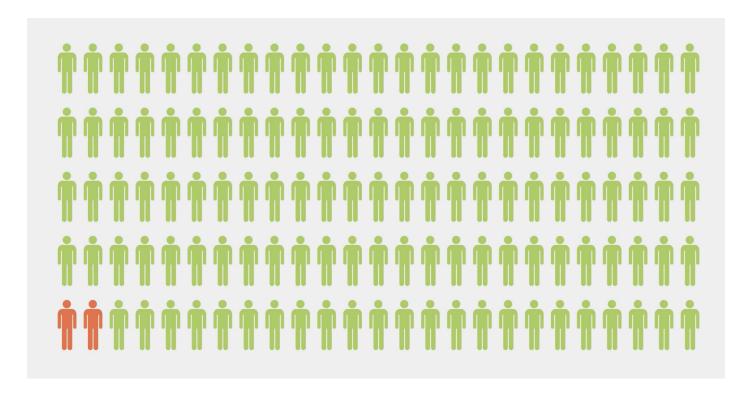
We all have times when we feel down or stressed.

Most of the time those feelings pass. But sometimes they develop into more serious problems.
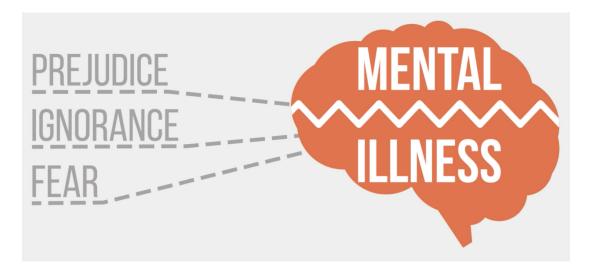
About a quarter of the population experience some kind of mental health problem, with anxiety and depression the most common problems reported.

DEPRESSION	2.6 IN 100 PEOPLE
ANXIETY	4.7 IN 100 PEOPLE
MIXED ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION	9.7 IN 100 PEOPLE
PHOBIAS	2.6 IN 100 PEOPLE
OCD	1.3 IN 100 PEOPLE
PANIC DISORDER	1.2 IN 100 PEOPLE
POST TRAUMATIC STRESS DISORDER	3.0 IN 100 PEOPLE
EATING DISORDERS	1.6 IN 100 PEOPLE

Between one and two in every 100 people experience a severe mental illness, such as bi-polar disorder or schizophrenia, and have periods when they lose touch with reality.

Sadly, mental illness is still surrounded by prejudice, ignorance and fear.

We can all help by creating a society where mental health problems are not hidden.

There are no rules for talking about your own mental health, and you should never feel under pressure to tell managers or colleagues that you have a mental health problem.

Most people don't want to talk about it because they think people will react negatively. But sometimes being honest about your mental health can make you feel better in yourself and more accepted by others.

If you do decide to discuss your mental health with your employer, the campaign against mental health discrimination 'Time to Change' offer 6 tips and ideas to help you.

1 Remember you are not alone – one in six in work experience mental health problems each year. With the right help people can – and do – stay in work.

2 It's your choice – it's really important to remember that disclosure of mental health issues at work is a personal choice. If you need more support, being open can help you get it. To start, keep the conversation light, it will help you stay relaxed.

3 Request a one-to-one meeting – Get some private time with your manager or a colleague where you can discuss your mental health. Chose a time and place when you feel comfortable and ready to talk. The person might have loads of questions or they might feel uncomfortable and try and change the subject – if this happens it's still helpful that the first step has been taken.

4 You know you best – remember you're the expert on your needs. So agree a plan of changes with your manager and review them regularly to check if they're helping.

5 You have rights – if your boss is unhelpful or dismissive they have legal duties under the Equality Act. Mental health problems are a disability under the Act so you are likely to be protected, but always seek legal advice.

6 Courage is contagious – often once mental health is out in the open people want to talk about it. Don't be surprised if your honesty encourages other people to talk about their own experiences.

If you or someone you know is struggling with a mental health problem, you don't have to suffer alone. There's loads of help and support available.

The charity **Mind**, offer fantastic support services that can change your life.

Visit the website:

www.mind.org.uk/information-support

To get the right kind of support you need to understand your condition and the choices available to you.