

10 May 2018

LOCAL CHARITY WIMBLEDON GUILD SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS WEEK

Wimbledon Guild, the local charity that provides people in Merton with help and support in times of need, is supporting Mental Health Awareness Week (MHAW) that takes place 14 to 20 May 2018.

MHAW is a national campaign and this year the focus is on 'stress'. Research by the Mental Health Foundation has shown that two thirds of the UK population experience a mental health problem in their lifetime and stress is a key factor in this.

WHAT IS STRESS?

According to the Stress Management Society, stress is not necessarily bad for us. It goes back to the 'fight or flight' manner in the way humans deal with certain scenarios. We use the adrenaline created to focus our attention so we can quickly respond to the situation. For example: reacting to someone running in front of your car by slamming on the brakes.

Stress can also be in the form of 'deer in headlights' where the released energy gets 'locked' into the nervous system and we 'freeze' and we hold our breath or breathe shallowly.

Stress becomes an issue when it appears in inappropriate situations. To deal with the 'fight or flight' situation, blood is only flowing to the most important muscles, and you may not be able to 'think straight'; and this can affect your personal and professional life, particularly if the stressful state continues for long periods of time.

Head of Talking Therapies at Wimbledon Guild, Georgina Hoare, who is a psychodynamic counsellor - psychotherapist, supervisor and consultant -has seen a significant increase in clients affected by stress and in particular work related stress over the last twenty years of her work in a wide variety of sectors.

She explains: "We live in an ever changing world, with more pressures put on ourselves in terms of how we use our time, demands on our personal life and performance at work. Put into the mix the speed that society moves with the advancement of technology, this all accumulates and takes a toll on our senses."

STRESS AT WORK

There are certain behaviours at work that can indicate to an organisation that someone is suffering the effects of stress. The Stress Management Society highlights key indicators can be:

- increase in sick leave
- arguments and disputes with colleagues
- tendency to work late and take no break
- indecisiveness; a problem with drinking or drugs
- suffering from headaches, nausea, tiredness and poor sleeping patterns.

HELPING LOCAL SCHOOLS AND BUSINESSES

Wimbledon Guild Counselling Services also offers consultation to local community organisations, as Ms Hoare highlights: "Different industries and sectors have different stresses, but the way we can

respond to our stress is similar. In conjunction with a number of local schools and businesses, Wimbledon Guild Counselling Services facilitated stress workshops. Working with organisations to focus on the different types of stress, triggers, symptoms, how to deal with it, how to work with someone who is showing signs of stress and outline strategies to cope with stress.”

Ms Hoare continues: “Work related stress is becoming more and more prevalent in the cases that we see at Wimbledon Guild Counselling alongside a high incidence of people experiencing depression, anxiety and bereavement. And, as a busy charity responding to often complex cases within the organisation, we have to ensure that we reflect and learn from the work we do to be aware of and manage our own stress too.”

Chief executive of Wimbledon Guild, Wendy Pridmore, is very aware of the strain that can be put on staff and explains what measures are put in place to keep staff healthy:

“Increasingly we are seeing more complicated cases being referred to us. As an organisation we need to ensure that our staff can deal with the situations as well as cope emotionally. We invest in regular, relevant training for all staff and volunteers and also make sure they have forums to voice, confidentially, any issues they have. Regular one-to-one meetings, team meetings and access to external networks also play an important part in ensuring that everyone feels supported.”

TOP TIPS TO ALLEVIATE STRESS AT WORK

There are small changes you can make to your life that can help to alleviate the symptoms of stress:

- get enough sleep
- take time to yourself and listen to music, read a book in peaceful environment
- rest if you are ill, giving the body time to recover
- take time to do exercise, even a walk round the block can help
- break up your week with activities outside of work, take up a new hobby , join a book club, art class or play football. Whatever takes your fancy.
- take breaks
- reduce or avoid caffeine, alcohol, drugs, refined sugar
- breathe!
- talk to someone

TALK TO SOMEONE

Talking to someone is very important. Wimbledon Guild offers low-cost counselling services, including individual counselling, group psychotherapy and family therapy.

<https://wimbledonguild.co.uk/counselling.html>

TWITTER CHAT

Head of Talking Therapies at Wimbledon Guild, Georgina Hoare, will be hosting a Twitter chat on Thursday 17th May from 12-1pm to answer questions on stress. Use the hashtag #LetsTalkStress to pose your question.

MERTON LIBRARIES

As part of Mental Health Awareness Week, Wimbledon Guild will be at libraries across Merton to talk about the wellbeing services, including counselling services:

Wimbledon Library: Monday 14 to Thursday 17 May from 2:00 to 4:00pm

West Barnes Library: Tuesday 15 May from 1:00 to 4:00pm / Thursday 17 May from 1:30 to 3:30pm

Morden Library: Wednesday 16 May from 11:00am to 1:00pm

/ends

Note to editors:

ABOUT WIMBLEDON GUILD

Wimbledon Guild is a local charity that provides people in Merton with help and support in times of need.

From its base at Guild House on Worple Road, Wimbledon, aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness, help people who are experiencing difficulties and enable older people to be active and healthy.

The services Wimbledon Guild offer includes:

- Transport, benefits and housing support
- Counselling services
- Bereavement support
- Small grants
- Clubs, classes, talks and trips
- HomeFood Café
- Befriending and volunteering

Wimbledon Guild's work in the local community can only continue through the generosity of the general public and rely heavily on donations and support from local people and businesses.

www.wimbledonguild.co.uk

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