

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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North West Regional College
Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

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North West Regional College

Mental Health and Wellbeing Policy

1 Introduction

- 1.1 As an organisation the College has a primary commitment to preserve the positive mental health of all its employees.
- 1.2 Mental ill health and stress are associated with many of the leading causes of disease and disability in our society. Promoting and protecting the mental wellbeing of the workforce is important for individuals' physical health, social wellbeing and productivity. Mental wellbeing in the workplace is relevant to all employees and everyone can contribute to improved mental wellbeing at work.
- 1.3 Addressing workplace mental wellbeing can help strengthen the positive, protective factors of employment, reduce risk factors for mental ill health and improve general health. It can also help promote the employment of people who have experienced mental health problems and support them once they are at work.
- 1.4 Important aspects of mental health and wellbeing includes providing information and raising awareness, management skills to deal with issues around mental health and stress effectively, providing a supportive work environment, offering assistance, advice and support to anyone experiencing a mental health problem or returning to work after a period of absence due to mental health problems.
- 1.5 The College is committed to promoting equality of opportunity and good relations in accordance with Section 75 of the Northern Ireland Act 1998. This policy should be interpreted in a manner consistent with the aforementioned legislation.
- 1.6 The College will provide this policy in alternative formats on request where reasonably practicable, e.g., Braille, Large Print, Computer Disk, Audio Formats, etc, and/or alternative language.

This policy applies to all employees and workers in the College.

2 Aim of the Policy

2.1 The aim of this policy is to:

- support and promote positive mental health and wellbeing for all employees;
- strive to identify and reduce/prevent potential risk to mental health of College employees;
- create an open and inclusive workplace which displays respect for mental ill health.

3 Definition

Mental health can be defined as a positive state of mind and body, feeling safe and able to cope, with a sense of connection with people, communities and the wider environment. A mental illness is a diagnosable, and treatable, health condition which can be severe enough to disrupt everyday life. People with mental health problems can get better and many go on to recover completely.

4 Objectives of the Policy

4.1 The College will:

- promote awareness of good mental health to reduce the stigma and self-stigma associated with mental illness;
- support staff to develop resilience and improve coping skills;
- try to proactively identify and address any aspects of the working environment that may adversely affect mental wellbeing;
- promote mental health literacy among colleagues;
- ensure appropriate systems of support;
- create a supportive environment that enables employees to be proactive in supporting their own health and wellbeing;
- through an ongoing programme of training and the promotion of positive mental health, reduce the impact of poor mental health & mental illness;
- specific training will be made available to all managers about managing mental health in the workplace i.e. Mental Health First Aid Training;
- ensure that this policy is linked to other College policies, e.g. Sickness Absence Policy;
- provide advice from HR on the consistent application of the policy;

- develop a support system for those who may have suffered from mental health difficulties;
- work with other relevant agencies to support staff who had, or have, mental illness and avail of resources offered by relevant support organisations.

5 Roles

- 5.1 The Leadership and Management Team will be responsible for the implementation of the policy.
- 5.2 Human Resources will oversee and monitor all aspects of the implementation of the policy.
- 5.3 Steps will be taken to raise awareness of mental health issues in the College. Steps will also be taken to raise awareness of the effects of stress in mental health.
- 5.4 A key feature in the development and delivery of this policy will be the involvement of those who have lived experienced mental health.

6 Assistance and Support

- 6.1 Sources of assistance and support will be identified to assist staff when dealing with mental health issues.
- 6.2 Staff can access support directly from their Head of Department/Section or Human Resources. Human Resources will be able to access further support from sources such as occupational health or external agencies. Staff suffering from mental health issues will be treated fairly and consistently.
- 6.3 Inspire provides an independent confidential counselling service for the North West Regional College. All staff can access the service of qualified counsellors via the Inspire helpline on 0800 389 5362 and are available 24 hours per day, 365 days a year.

Inspire Wellbeing Hub is available for all staff and provides instant access to a range of information, guidance and intervention tools, specifically to help care for individual welling needs. The Inspire Support Hub can be accessed: @ (user NWRCSSTAF)

All matters relating to the mental health of staff will be treated with the strictest confidence. Information will only be shared with the consent of the staff member.

7 Monitoring Arrangements

- 7.1 Human Resources will monitor the policy on an annual basis to assess effectiveness and consider the equality implications.
- 7.2 Positively engage with mental health representatives and organisations in developing and reviewing all relevant employment policies

Legal Obligations: All employers have a legal responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work (Northern Ireland) Order 1978 and Management of Health and Safety at Work Regulations (Northern Ireland) 2000 to ensure the Health and Safety at Work of their employees. This includes the minimising of the risk of stress-related illness or injury to employees.