

YMCA Small Talks Campaign

Employer: YMCA North Tyneside

Area: Mental Health Awareness

Theme: Stress and Mental Health



Mental Health is a huge element of everyone's lives and although in some workplaces the approach is 'leave it at the door' YMCA North Tyneside understands that this is not always possible and wants to ensure our staff feel supported and safe in their working environment.

We currently offer a wide range of wellbeing benefits which include;

EAP helpline

Quote from staff member 'I think it's a great benefit because you can get access to counselling really quickly in comparison to your GP, this access is vital for staff mental health. Legal advice is also really costly so having access to this is a fantastic benefit.'

24/7 GP Helpline

Quote from a member of staff 'The 24/7 GP helpline has supported my wellbeing by providing me with advice when my GP was unavailable. They were able to give me different options that assisted me in getting an appointment with my GP the next day. As someone who is quite anxious about doctors this really relieved the stress I was feeling and supported me to get the answers I needed.'

Reward Gateway

Quote from staff member 'Reward Gateway is a great platform that allows me to save on everyday purchases, such as my weekly shop. This has helped me in many ways, keeping my routine costs low (subscriptions, etc.) and shopping discounts. It helps me control my costs and create



opportunities to save - for example, for every saving I make, I try to pop the equivalent into a savings account so I can save for a rainy day!

Mental Health First Aiders

Quote from a Mental Health First Aider 'I enjoy being a mental health first aider because I am naturally caring and supportive (well I think so) so being the first person to step in and support someone in a crisis, I feel I am able to provide reassurance and advice & support to that person and point them in the direction of professional services.'

Regular all staff coffee mornings - our lives can be really busy so this initiative is to remind staff to take a break from their work and that small talks with peers can make a big difference and reduce isolation.

We regularly celebrate awareness days/weeks. In May 2023 we celebrated Mental Health Awareness Week, supporting the YMCA Small Talks Campaign which highlights the importance of creating time to talk with others. We put on a variety of activities for our staff teams to get involved in that raised awareness of this message and the support available. .

We began the week with emails sent to all staff and communications in our All Staff Notice Board google chat including a reminder of the resources we have available on our staff portal, as listed above, and about what events were going to be happening across the week.

Our teams did a great job engaging with our 'Small Talks' themed selfie competition, encouraging staff to have fun and get creative. We saw staff from all departments and geographical areas for the organisations getting involved in hope of winning our small talks mug, badge and tea bags.

Following this we had an in person coffee catch up in HQ which included activities such as word searches and conversation starters. Many new team members had joined us at this time and so the conversation starters were great for both new and current staff to get to know a little bit more about each other.

Including everyone can be challenging due to having employees that work remotely and across a wider geographical area however we aimed to include everyone through having a virtual quiz. It was great to get to speak to team members who were in other areas, find out about what they have been up to and complete an 80s song quiz!

We finished the week with a wellness session provided by one of our Gyms Yoga instructors. Staff got the opportunity to engage in an hour-long yoga session, encouraging mindfulness and deep relaxation to end the busy week.

Across the week we engaged with a variety of people across age groups including staff and our local community;

0-17 years old - 29



18-25 years old - 10

26+ years old - 67

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