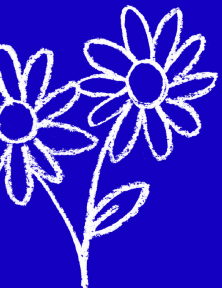
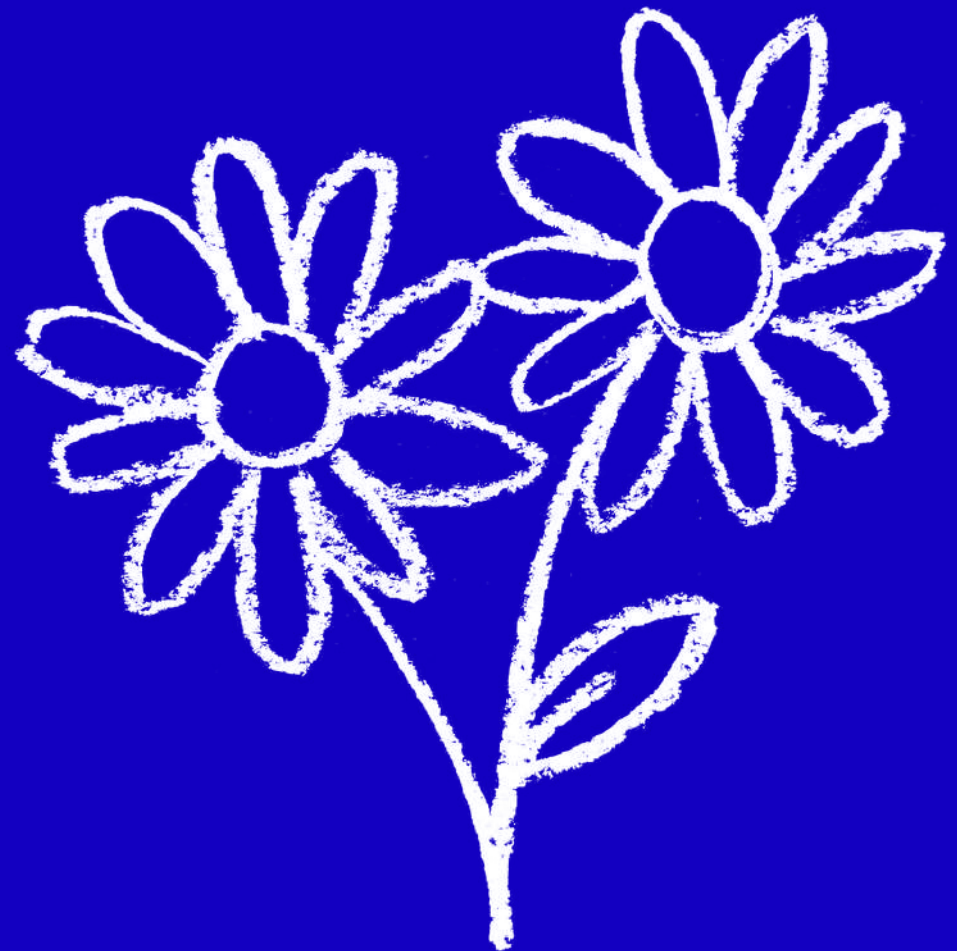


 Mind Solent



International Women's Day Toolkit



With International Women's Day coming up on the 8 March 2024 this guide was created for women who may be experiencing poor mental health in the workplace.

This toolkit was created with the help of our Portsmouth employment team.



This guide will explore some of the issues women face in today's society, the impact this can have on our mental health, and useful tips & and resources to support...

Women & the Pay Gap

The reasons for the pay gap between men and women are complex and interrelated, such as economic, cultural, societal, and educational factors:

- A lack of flexible working options
- Women being the main providers of unpaid caring responsibilities
- Occupational segregation
- The undervaluing of women's work
- Pay discrimination

It is reported that 50% of young women have experienced discrimination at work in 2023, up from 42% in 2022.

42% of women who applied for flexible working and were denied, were told it would affect the quality of the service provided.

66 The manager asked that women wore clothes which were lower cut, as well as asking women to take "time and pride" over their make-up and appearance. There were not the same requests or expectations for male colleagues. 99

Here's a snippet of Amy's (Primary Employment Team Leader at Solent Mind) experience of her fertility journey and the discrimination she previously faced in the workplace because of it.



I was worried about telling my manager that we were trying for a family as I had heard a few of the male managers making comments about not hiring, or promoting a female employee as "they'll probably disappear to have kids soon and we'll have to recruit again", so we felt initially it was best to keep our plans private...

When I received my surgery date I booked 2 weeks of leave and explained to my manager I needed to have an operation... The week before I went off, my manager asked "do you mind if I ask what your surgery is for?" at that point I felt it was best to be honest, I explained the situation and said that they (the hospital) needed to investigate what was preventing me from conceiving, he paused for a moment and replied, "so are they going to fix you?". That response surprised me, and I just said I hoped so.

I had the surgery and just as I came around in the ward, my husband and I were told that it was unlikely I would ever be able to carry children, and that even IVF would likely be unsuccessful - I don't remember anything else of that conversation.

I was signed off work for 2 weeks to recover, and when I went back to work it was as if I had taken annual leave. There was no return to work interview despite that I had been signed off sick, no discussion about how I was, or how the surgery went, and to be honest I didn't want to talk about it at that time.

A short time later the organisation underwent a restructure which meant that certain roles were being made redundant. Mine was one of them. There were two of us in the same position but in different departments. I was asked to attend a consultation meeting where I was informed my role was at risk and my options were to either accept voluntary redundancy, or apply for the job which combined both roles into one.

I had never experienced redundancy consultation before, nor did I really understand what my rights were, but I knew I wasn't being treated fairly, and could predict what the outcome was going to be!



Know Your Rights!

Here are a few new key employment laws being introduced in 2024:

The Protection from Redundancy (Pregnancy and Family Leave) Act 2023

Coming into force on 6 April 2024, this Act expands the current laws protecting pregnant employees or those on, or returning from, maternity/adoption/shared parental leave facing redundancy.

Carer's Leave Act 2023

Also coming into force on 6 April, this Act will grant a new entitlement of one week of unpaid leave annually for employees who care for dependants with long term needs.



Employment Relations (Flexible Working) Act 2023

Under the Act, employees will have the right to request flexible working from day one of employment (rather than after 26 weeks which is the position currently).

Employees will also be able to make two requests in any 12-month period, up from one.

The Worker Protection (Amendment of Equality Act 2010) Act 2023

Coming into force in October 2024, this piece of employment law will amend the Equality Act 2010 to introduce a duty on employers to take “reasonable steps” to prevent sexual harassment of their employees.

Visit [gov.uk](https://www.gov.uk) for more info on new childcare entitlements

**The pressures of being
a woman can have a
huge impact on our
mental health!**



Here are some

Grounding Techniques

to try...



Muscle relaxation

- Sit in a chair, scrunch your face up, then relax it
- Tense your arms in front of you, then relax
- Tense your shoulders and chest, then relax
- Tense your legs out in front of you, then relax
- Take one deep breathe



Relieving Tension from your body

Neck - Nod yes sand no and make slow circles in both directions

Shoulders - Drop your shoulders and roll them away from your ears

Chest - breath deeply with your hands on you chest

Jaw - Open and close your mouth, then move it left to right

Hands - Make a fist and then release it



54321 game

5

things you can
SEE

4

things you can
HEAR

3

things you can
TOUCH

2

things you can
SMELL

1

thing you can
TASTE

Wellbeing Action Plans & Reasonable Adjustments

Wellness Actions Plans are an easy, practical way of helping you support your own mental health at work. And if you're a manager, allowing you to support the mental health of your team members.

Reasonable adjustments are changes that organisations, people providing services, or people providing public functions have to make for you. Any changes you ask for have to be reasonable. And you have to show that you're at a substantial disadvantage compared with other people because of your mental health problem.

Learn more >

Speak to us

If you need employment support and advice on the above, talk to us.

Visit www.solentmind.org.uk to find your local service.



Mind Solent **Support Groups**

Female Hormone Therapy Group

This 7-week group is designed for people with the following symptoms in mind:

- Perimenopause and menopause
- Polycystic Ovaries (PCOS)
- Endometriosis
- Premenstrual Syndrome (PMS)
- Premenstrual Dysphoric Disorder (PMDD)

The course will discover the physical health symptoms directly and/or indirectly that have an impact on daily life and mental wellbeing. To find out more, phone NHS Talking Therapies at 0330 1234 3934 or email nhs.talkingtherapiesportsmouth@solent.nhs.uk



Embracing the Change: Emotional Wellbeing with Menopause

Our online workshop explores how Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) can help you to cope with the unpleasant physical and emotional symptoms of menopause. This 1-hr webinar helps you to learn effective strategies, tools and techniques to take back control of your body and mind. Book your place [HERE](#).

Workplace Wellbeing Training

Are you a workplace manager reading this? Our specialist training team runs two bite-sized training courses, [Menopause and Mental Health](#) and [Menopause and Mental Health at Work - Managers toolkit](#). More details [HERE](#).

Support Available

Portsmouth Employment Support Service

Open to patients accessing NHS Talking Therapies Portsmouth
E: portsmouthemployment@solentmind.org.uk

[Learn more >](#)

NHS Talking Therapies Hampshire

For those in Winchester, Eastleigh, the New Forest, Fareham and Gosport.
Call 0300 123 3934

[Learn more >](#)

Pregnant Then Screwed

A national charity that educates people about their rights in pregnancy and as a working parent.
Advice Line: 0161 2229879

ACAS

Free and impartial advice to employers, employees, and their representatives on; employment rights, best practices and policies, and resolving workplace conflict.
Helpline 0300 123 1100

References

- CIPD - <https://bit.ly/3IbUTZb>
- People Management - <https://bit.ly/49nXfjD>
- Pregnant Then Screwed - <https://bit.ly/3OUDgRj>
- Personnel Today - <https://bit.ly/3UOMrXp>
- Unison - <https://rb.gy/qb2oxk>
- GOV.UK - <https://rb.gy/1pfvm9>