

See Me in Work: Exploring complex mental illness stigma and discrimination at work

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Project Officer (Workplace)
See Me



Agenda

Time	Speaker/Presentation
10:00-10:15am	Bryony from See Me
10:15-10:35am	Maja and Richard from Bipolar Scotland
10:35-10:50am	Steve and Scott from Johnston's of Elgin
10:50-10:55am	Screen Break
10:55-11:10am	Natalie and Chris from VOX Scotland
11:10-11:25am	Patty from See Me
11:25-11:30am	End of Session



About See Me

- See Me is Scotland's national programme to end mental health stigma and discrimination
- Our vision is for a fairer and more inclusive Scotland, free from mental health stigma and discrimination



Stigma and Discrimination



Stigma is a social process that involves the labelling, stereotyping, and exclusion of individuals or groups based on perceived differences that deviate from dominant social norms.

Discrimination is “enacted” stigma.

Discrimination is the inequitable or prejudicial treatment of individuals or groups based on their stigmatised identities.



Long-term and complex mental illness definition

The Scottish Mental Illness Stigma Study has been conducted with people who have experienced severe, enduring, and complex mental illnesses to understand the areas of life most affected by mental health stigma and discrimination and what these experiences were.

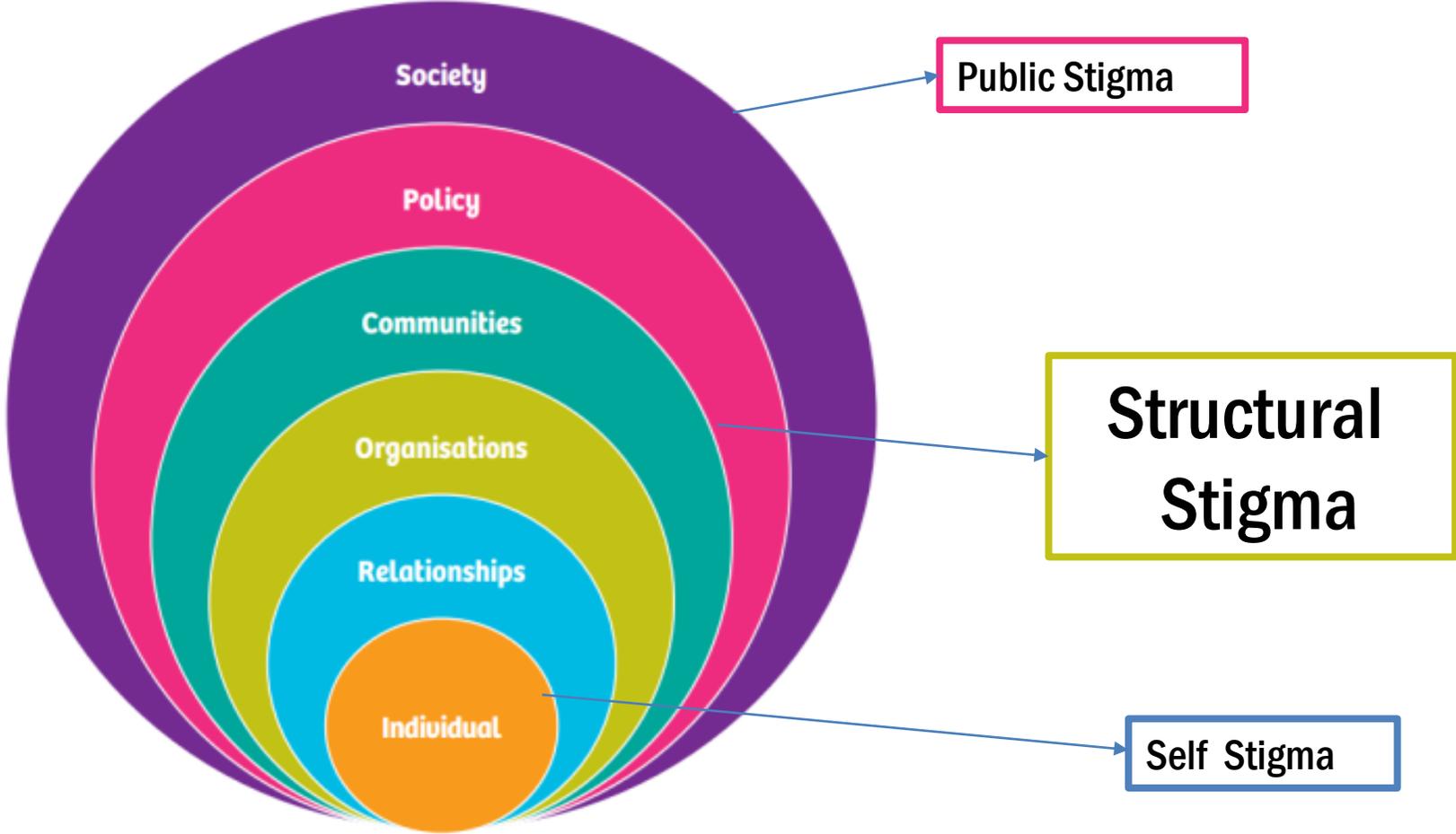
Complex mental health issues are impactful, severe, enduring, or episodic. They can involve high levels of psychological distress, involve a history of traumatic events or complex trauma, and or include symptoms and experiences that are generally not well understood.

Some people with complex mental illness may experience one or more diagnoses such as:

- Schizophrenia and psychosis
- Bipolar disorder
- Borderline personality disorder (BPD)
- Obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD)
- Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- Eating disorders
- Dissociative disorders
- Severe depression and anxiety disorders.

Definitions from SMISS and SANE Australia

Tackling stigma and discrimination requires an intersectional /system wide approach



What is the intention of the stigmatisation and discrimination?

Stigmatising Terms

- Ignorant, Unintelligent
- Lazy

- Incapable
- Attention seeking

- Dangerous, Deranged, Chaotic, Illogical, Unstable, Unpredictability, Hysterical
- Hostile, Non-compliant

Judgements and Perceptions

Dehumanising, deserving of low status, being unworthy, personal failure

- Undermined intelligence, worthiness, and agency
- Expectations to 'help yourself' and 'be productive'

- Infantilising
- Questions our ability to participate in decision-making'
- Not being believed/Invalidates our experiences

- Instilling social fear and threat
- Out of (social) control

Position		Frequency (based on proportion of respondents reporting occasional, frequent or very frequent stigma and discrimination)		Impact (based on proportion of respondents selecting in their three most impactful)
1		Relationships		Relationships
2		Social media		Employment
3		Healthcare		Mental healthcare
4		Mental healthcare		Healthcare
5		Mass media		Social media
6		Employment		Education & training

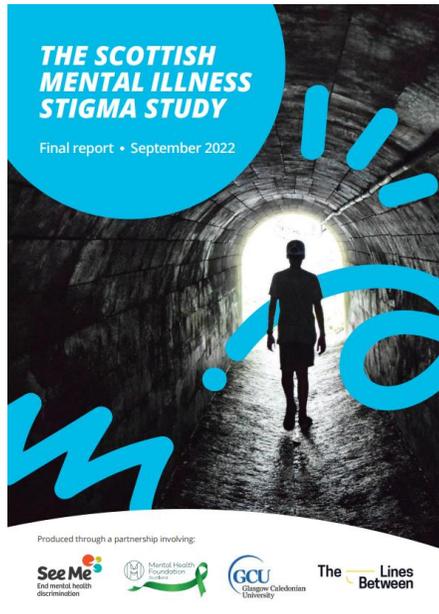
Experience

Anticipation

Withdrawal



Stigma: A Barrier For Conversations



Experience

77% of respondents stated they had been treated unfairly at their place of work

71% stated they had been treated unfairly by supervisors or managers

52% stated they had been pressured to avoid discussing mental illness needs and experiences at work

Anticipation

74% of respondents expect to be treated unfairly at their place of work

48% expect to be unfairly asked to leave employment

60% expect to be unfairly denied flexible work arrangements or other reasonable adjustments

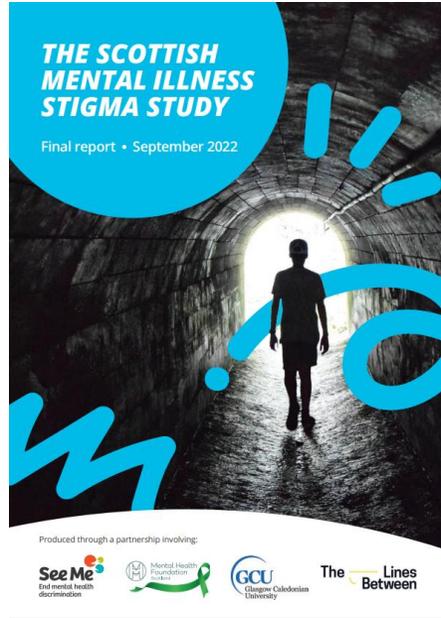
Withdrawal

82% of respondents had stopped themselves from applying for job opportunities

64% stopped themselves asking for flexible work arrangements or reasonable adjustments

75% had stopped themselves from discussing their mental illness needs and experience at work

Stigma: A Barrier For Conversations



Years of stigma and discrimination have left people:

- Feeling **ashamed** and
- Assuming that the public (69%), and people in positions of power **think the worst of them (78%)**

... including that they are **dangerous** and **to blame** for their conditions (87%).

The impact of discrimination, is that more than 50% people with mental illness **respect themselves less** because they think they will never get better.

“I put extra pressure on myself and work much longer hours than anyone else to prove that I am worthy/able to be employed. I fully expect to go in most days to be fired or pulled up for issues with what I’m doing in my job.”

“I don’t really even know how to have a conversation about whether there are any adjustments that could help, because I don’t know how to talk about the situation in the first place.”



Long-term and complex mental health stigma

“Due to my bipolar disorder diagnosis, I failed a workplace medical for a teaching role, despite never having an issue related to my mental health throughout my teaching career.... They subsequently quoted the Glasgow bin lorry tragedy as their rationale, implying that my condition made me dangerous. I was certain that they felt I was unfit for work, so withdrew. I was without pay for four months as a result of this experience”

“I have had people talk about the condition that I have in front of me without them realising that I have that condition and what they say is not meant to be cruel but it is not sympathetic either and it doesn't make it feel like there is a place to talk about it at my workplace.”



Long-term and complex mental health stigma

“There is very little understanding of some conditions. Often employers have no idea that these conditions are chronic and can vary in their severity over time. I have lost two jobs, one of which I loved, due to a flare up of mental illness and a lack of understanding from my employer.”

“It might be more socially acceptable to say you’re feeling depressed, but it is not more socially acceptable to say you have bipolar disorder.”



How can workplaces create the conditions for workplaces that are inclusive of all mental health experiences?

1. Senior leadership commitment and engagement
2. Conditions for safe, effective and pertinent disclosure
3. Mental health awareness and literacy
4. Effective mental health training approaches
5. Confident and informed line management
6. Effective implementation of reasonable adjustments
7. Stigma-free organisational culture and ethos.



Spotlight on...

Safe, effective and pertinent disclosure of mental health problems at work



Welcome to the See Me in Work e-Learning Portal

An easy to use programme to help you understand more about mental health stigma and discrimination in work.

[Log in to your account >](#)

What are examples of reasonable adjustments relating to mental health conditions?

- Providing assistive technology for an employee that struggles with fatigue.
- In relation to concentration or distraction issues, offering:
 - Frequent check-ins with reminders of tasks and deadlines
 - A standing desk where the employee struggles to stay seated
 - Moving to a quieter work environment
 - Frequent short breaks
 - Shorter and more regular meetings.
- In relation to management of treatment and medication, offering:
 - Flexible schedules to allow for appointments and possible side effects, and until medication plan stabilises (e.g. part-time, later and finish start times, etc.)
 - Frequent short breaks for taking medication privately
 - Access to water during work-times (e.g. personal bottle).
- In relation to coping with anxiety at work, offering:
 - Use of white noise ear phones or head phones
 - Ability to have assistance dogs at work
 - Short breaks to go for a walk or take time out
 - A fixed desk rather than hot-desking
 - Remote/virtual meeting attendance
 - Working from home part or full time
 - Sharing some non-essential job tasks with another employee (if appropriate.)
 - Flexibility in management style of supervisor.



Building block 6 Case study: Effective implementation of reasonable adjustments A case study from Burgess Paul LLP



Spotlight on...

Understanding and implementing reasonable adjustments



Working with Bipolar

-) • Bipolar | Scotland's Charity for People
-) • Scotland | Living with Bipolar



Employer Input: Steve and Scotty from Johnstons of Elgin



SINCE 1797
Johnstons
of Elgin



5 minute screen break

**Workplace stigma for people with enduring mental illness by
Natalie and Chris from VOX Scotland**





What support for people with long-term mental health conditions looks like in practice: **Learning from See Me**

Dr Patty Lozano-Casal
Programme Manager, See Me
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The role of the line manager

A poll* of 1,000 Scottish workers, commissioned by See Me, found that only 68% of people thought that someone in their workplace with a mental health problem would be supported by management.

- First point of contact in an organisation for performance and support.
- Deliver on employer duty of care.
- Implement organisational policies and practices incl. health and safety; equality, diversity and inclusion, and absence management.
- Create mental health inclusive working environments free from stigma and discrimination, where direct reports can flourish and develop a sense of belonging.
- Actively monitor the wellbeing of their team and offering appropriate support if needed. Key role in identifying early signs of poor MH.



Line manager's legal duties

- Legal duty of care to prevent physical and psychological harm (that can result from extended exposure to work related pressure and stress) to employees under the **Health and Safety at Work Act (1974)**.
- Legal duty of care to protect employees with a physical or mental disability from discrimination under the **Equality Act (2010)**. This includes making reasonable adjustments after a disclosure is made.
- **Reasonable adjustments** are any change to an employee's workplace or way of working that will remove any barriers preventing them from doing their job to the best of their ability, whilst living with a disability.

“I don't really even know how to have a conversation about whether there are any adjustments that could help, because I don't know how to talk about the situation in the first place.”



Line management at See Me

- **Responsibilities are clearly described in employment contracts:**
 - **Lead and manage direct reports through setting direction, tracking performance, providing support and challenge, and celebrating impactful delivery.**
 - **Essential experience: Line management, support orientation, growth and success for individuals, within the work stream team and as part of wider programme (assessed in application and interview).**
- **See Me is a values-based programme: everyone has the right to be treated with dignity, respect and equality; is entitled to hope and choice and to achieve personal fulfilment (SAMH). Also 'The See Me Way: Respect, Collaboration, Integrity and Excellence'**
- **Induction (incl. buddy): Relationships, policies, processes & practices.**
- **Robust S&S processes and personalised approach (incl. PDP).**
- **Director sets up clear expectations around support and role models these.**

Our approach to conversations & support

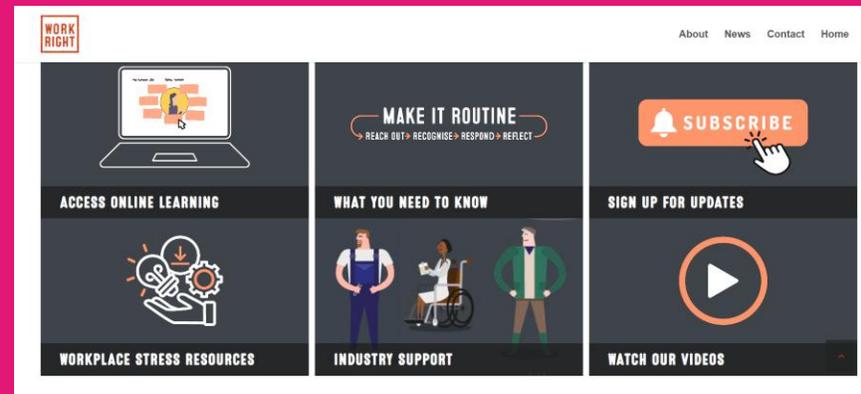
- **Autonomous leadership: we empower our direct reports to succeed by providing them with the authority to make relevant decisions to their positions and giving them the tools and resources they need**
- **Be up to date on policies and procedures**
- **Get to know direct reports – trust is key to safe disclosure**
- **Conversations: time, space, compassion, confidentiality**
- **Be present, don't judge, take disclosure seriously and act**
- **Invest in training, learning and development**
- **Explore reasonable adjustments with direct report, implement & review**
- **Consider the individual as a whole, not just one aspect**
- **Offer flexibility and trust - no micromanagement (unless requested)**
- **Tap into HR, occupational health, employee assistance programme, etc.**



Helpful tools and resources

- Performance and development (S&S): Looking back, looking forward, wellbeing, personal & professional development
- See Me in Work e-Learning & Let's Chat tool
- Wellness action plan (WAP)
- The Manual of Me: <https://www.manualof.me/>
- Working Minds campaign resources & e-Learning
- HSE stress risk assessment
- Access to Work

29	I can talk to my line manager about something that has upset or annoyed me about work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
30	My working time can be flexible	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
31	My colleagues are willing to listen to my work-related problems	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
32	When changes are made at work, I am clear how they will work out in practice	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
33	I am supported through emotionally demanding work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
34	Relationships at work are strained	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>
35	My line manager encourages me at work	Strongly disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Disagree <input type="checkbox"/>	Neutral <input type="checkbox"/>	Agree <input type="checkbox"/>	Strongly agree <input type="checkbox"/>



Access to work is a government grant scheme which helps people with a disability to start or remain in employment. It can provide financial and practical support to help disabled people overcome the barriers they face in the workplace. This support could pay for equipment in, support from a job coach or other work related costs. This guide will provide an overview of who is eligible for Access to Work, what help Access to Work will provide and how to make a claim.

Staying mentally healthy at work

What helps you stay mentally healthy at work?

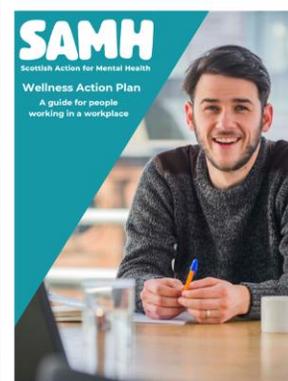
For example: taking an adequate lunch break away from your workspace, getting some exercise before or after work or in your lunch break, natural light in your workspace, or opportunities to get to know colleagues.

Are there any situations or behaviours that can trigger poor mental health for you while working?

For example: conflict at work, organisational change, tight deadlines, something not going to plan or difficulties in contacting colleagues while working remotely.

What can you, your manager or colleagues put in place to proactively support you to stay mentally healthy at work and minimise these triggers?

For example: regular feedback and catch-ups, flexible working patterns or explaining wider organisational dev



Support and Information



Support Services

Breathing Space: www.breathingspace.scot

lines open from
6pm-2am Mon-Thu
6pm-6am Fri-Mon

NHS 24: www.nhs24.scot

Samaritans: Phone 116 123
or self help app selfhelp.samaritans.org/

More information

See Me www.seemescotland.org

SAMH www.samh.org.uk (training available)

Supporting a Mentally Healthy Workplace
www.healthyworkinglives.scot/workplace-guidance/supporting-a-mentally-healthy-workplace/

See Me Contact
bryony.mole@seemescotland.org