The Mind Matters Initiative – what’s going on, and how to get involved!

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MMI Director

Webinar for VPMA members, 25 April 2017

In the next 30 minutes…

• What is Mind Matters?
• What are we doing?
• How can you get involved?
• But first…
  – Vetlife Helpline 0303 040 2551
What is mental health?

According to the World Health Organisation: “Mental health is defined as a state of well-being in which every individual realises his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his community.”

Why is this important?

VETS are 3-4 more likely than the general population to die by suicide.
But... we won’t reach zero

4 in 1 people in the UK have experienced a mental health problem in the last year.

75.5% of vet students wouldn’t want anyone to know if they were suffering from a mental health problem, compared to 41% of the general population.

38.7% of vet students have experienced suicidal thoughts.
Who is behind Mind Matters?

Instigator, funder and manager of the programme

Who is behind Mind Matters?

Supported by a Taskforce, comprising...
Our goals... helping to...

- Reduce the incidence of stress and mental ill-health
- Reduce the stigma associated with mental illness
- Develop a culture of help-seeking
- Improve access to sources of appropriate help
- Equip the vet team to spot signs of mental ill-health in colleagues and signpost to sources of help
- Facilitate sharing of research and best practice in terms of interventions and support
- Address sources of stress & mental ill-health

Five streams of activity

1. Research and best practice
2. Changing the culture
3. Direct intervention
4. Supporting the supporters
5. Leadership
Learning from other professions

Learning from research

www.vetmindmatters.org/past-events/

Five streams of activity

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3. Direct intervention
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5. Leadership
“A big step forward for a profession coming to terms with mental health issues and their impact”

Alastair Campbell
“I feel there's a power in theatre, but it's an indirect power. It's like the relationship of the sleeper to the unconscious. You discover things you can't afford to countenance in waking life”

Tony Kushner
We all react differently
The same boiling water that softens the potato
hardens the egg
The same water that hardens the egg…
...softens the potato
It’s about context
“The same water that softens the potato…”

“What British playwright Ross Howard, resident playwright for New Light Theater Project, has done is quite different, capturing the world of a mental institution with a degree of empathy and sharpness rarely seen in plays about mental illness.” - Natalie Sacks, Charged FM (Latvia, 2014)

...softens the potato
Day off?
Off day?

Take a step back

Here is Edward Bear, coming downstairs now, bump, bump, bump, on the back of his head, behind Christopher Robin. It is, as far as he knows, the only way of coming downstairs, but sometimes he feels that there really is another way, if only he could stop bumping a moment and think of it.
Five streams of activity

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2. Changing the culture
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4. Supporting the supporters
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Funding, accessibility, noise
Peer support

“Weave your parachute every day, rather than leaving it to the time you jump from the plane”

John Kabat-Zinn
Online mindfulness-based stress-reduction

www.thewebinarvet.com/sleep-series-2017
In his 1628 *Anatomy of Melancholy*, Robert Burton recommends everything from drugs and bloodletting to meditation, music, prayer, diet, exercise, keeping occupied and cultivating friendships.
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Put on your own oxygen mask first
Before helping those around you
Mental health awareness training
With huge support from BSAVA

“I thought this would be good, I was surprised by just how good it was.”

“I wish all bosses and managers would come on this course on mental health awareness.”

“You can’t believe how much I’m enjoying these workshops – I wish all bosses and managers would come on this course.”

“This was less navel-gazing than I expected. Quite practical.”

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“I wish all bosses and managers could be made to go on this course.”

(Trevor Bell)

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(Trevor Bell)
Resilience isn’t what’s within you, but what’s between you and other people”

MH for management course

• Full day course, developed based on research with you
  – Basic MH awareness
  – HR employment regulations
  – Reasonable adjustments
  – Wellbeing action plans
  - Legal position
  - Role of line manager
  - Return to work

• First session completed; 10 more open for registration
• £120 (£80 for VPMA members)
• Sign up at: http://rcvsmindmatters.Eventbrite.com
Feedback so far…

• Following the first course, 100% of delegates said they had:
  – A better understanding of workplace mental well-being issues
  – More confidence about supporting a colleague who is experiencing mental wellbeing problems
  – An understanding of early warning signs of poor mental wellbeing
  – An understanding of some of the services that can support colleagues experiencing poor mental wellbeing
  – An understanding of the contributing factors that influence emotional resourcefulness

• 60% said they now had a plan to develop their personal resourcefulness
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SPVS Wellbeing Awards 2016
in partnership with the
RCVS Mind Matters Initiative

Benchmarking, raising standards
Celebrating, sharing

www.spvs.org.uk/wellbeing
Mind Matters - RCVS
@vtrimindmatters
The official Twitter account for the @RCVS UK Mind Matters initiative which seeks to address mental health and wellbeing issues in the veterinary professions.

London, England
vetmindmatters.org
Joined September 2015

16 Photos and videos

 Tweets 164
 Following 69
 Followers 423
 Lists 43

Mind Matters - RCVS
@vtrimindmatters
30m
What's your #wellbeingtip? Apply for the SPVS/MMi Wellbeing Award
spvs.org.uk/wellbeing/ @HargreavesRobin @SPVSvets

Run an employee of the month competition? It can be for anything, making a difficult call, or getting you a critical brew. Any positive message from a client gets an automatic nomination. It makes you take notice of small things.

Robin Hargreaves, past BVA President

Who to follow

Waggability
Follow

AHT Vets
Follow

SPVS-UK
Follow

Find tweets

Trends

Change
David Davies
9,570 Tweets

#vets
13k Tweets

#veterinaryCare
10k Tweets

#vets
10k Tweets
@vetmindmatters

#wellbeingtip

Give
Connect
Be mindful
Keep learning
Be active
The power of ‘lived experience’

Stories speak volumes

www.vetmindmatters.org/&me

#andme
In Japan, broken objects are often repaired with gold. The flaw is seen as a unique piece of the object’s history, which adds to its beauty.

Consider this when you feel broken.

Audit the impact of our concerns system.
To do today…

1. Share the Vetlife Helpline number as widely as you can – ask for stickers, pens
2. Commit to improving workplace wellbeing – complete the audit, enter the awards, ask for coasters
3. Improve your knowledge and confidence – join one of our courses; organise one for your team
4. Suggest &me case studies – talk to them first!
5. Think about the language you use, the time you take, the support you can give, show you are willing to talk – ask for badges
6. Look after yourself! – mindfulness, sleep series, wellbeing five-a-day
In the last 30 minutes…

• What is Mind Matters?
• What are we doing?
• How can you get involved?
• But also…

45 people took their own lives somewhere on the planet [World Health Organisation data]
To find out more

• To join our mailing list: www.vetmindmatters.org/mailing-list/
• Email me: lizzie@vetmindmatters.org
• Visit our website: vetmindmatters.org
• Follow us on twitter @vetmindmatters
• For help today: www.vetlife.org.uk or 0303 040 2551