World Mental Health Day Video Transcript

Hi, I'm Shelley Southon, Head of Community Mental Health, Wellbeing and Work at Shaw Trust.
I want to talk to you about Mental Health in the Workplace. The theme for this year's World Mental Health Day.

According to the Office for National Statistics, in the UK, an unbelievable 15.8 million working days are lost every year to mental health problems. But sadly, this number is much, much higher.

Research carried out by Time to Change states that 95% of employees calling in sick with stress gave a different reason. Would you tell your line manager you weren't coming in to work because of your anxiety or depression. No you'd would probably say you had a cold for fear of the negative repercussions, the discrimination or stigma.

It seems astonishing that in 2017 people are still being made to feel so ashamed, and so isolated by a condition that currently affects 1 in 4 workers in the UK.

Look around your office. 1 in 4 is a lot people, a lot of people not able to be open and honest about their mental health for fear of judgement and prejudice.

At Shaw Trust we are committed to changing this, both as a national employer and as a charity delivering mental health and wellbeing services within local communities. We want to break the "taboo" of mental health in the workplace.

Crucially, the financial rewards for organisations are huge. Last year, British business lost more than £5billion as a result of employees off work with stress.

Just think what an extra £5billion could mean for the UK economy at a time when there is such uncertainty.

There is a wealth of fantastic resources available for employers looking to tackle mental health in the workplace but here are 5 of my top tips that I believe are easy to implement and can make a real difference.

Number 1. Get someone at Board level to champion tackling mental health. This highlights to staff that it is something that the organisation is taking seriously and sees as a strategic goal.

Number 2. It's about having clear signposting to Health and Wellbeing resources for staff and communicate about them regularly, clearly and consistently.

Number 3. Avoid a culture of people working long hours. If staff are always working overtime , find out why.

Number 4. Encourage proper lunch breaks led by senior management.

Number 5. Make sure your company has a mental health policy. To ensure a consistent and supportive management approach.

Tacking mental health in the workplace is a complex issue and will involve a lot more than these top tips but by committing to these you are setting yourself on the right path and sending out a very positive message of commitment to your employees.

As an organisation, be bold, don't be afraid.

As Mahatma Gandhi said "be the change you want to see happen".

Thank you for listening.