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HEALTH

INTERACTIVE WEBINAR

How to include
colleagues impacted by
cancer in your health
and wellbeing strategy



Wednesday 21 June 2023, 10.30am - 11.30am



Lisa Jacques,
Lead Cancer Nurse
Specialists at
Perci Health



Louise Boston,
Strategic Health &
Wellbeing Manager,
E.ON



Elaine Cooney,
Wellbeing &
Diversity Manager,
Ann Summers



Claire Burgess,
Head of Health &
Wellbeing,
Unipart Group

Links & tips shared in the chat

21st June Perci Health Cancer Webinar

Links:

Perci Health's checklist can be downloaded from the website recording page.

Perci Health's "Hidden impact of caring responsibilities on your employees" report:

<https://makeadifference.media/reports/invisible-cancer-carers-the-hidden-impact-of-caring-responsibilities-on-your-employees/>

Macmillan Working Through Cancer Policy Template:

<https://www.macmillan.org.uk/dfsmedia/1a6f23537f7f4519bb0cf14c45b2a629/558-source/options/download/model-workplace-cancer-policy-template>

Macmillan's free toolkit and expert support for managers (as training was cited as essential):

https://www.macmillan.org.uk/cancer-information-and-support/get-help/financial-and-work/employers/macmillan-at-work?&infinity=ict2~net~gaw~ar~647344072046~kw~cancer%20work~mt~b~cmp~g_ps_maw_uk_g_en_work_b~ag~work&gad=1&gclid=cjwkcajwv8qkbhaneiwaky-ahvv0ebjtImbkaus1ykma-vujfh_zwlces0j8grqxea7mtzjthbanhxocwmcqavd_bwe&gclsrc=aw.ds

The explanation of the point raised about a cancer diagnosis meaning a person is then classified as disabled forever, which many audience members found surprising:

<https://www.cancerresearchuk.org/about-cancer/coping/practically/the-disability-discrimination-act-equality-act-and-cancer>

Poll:

We asked participants whether they had been impacted by cancer with 95% saying yes, only 5% saying no. However, while this is a huge majority with an audience of mainly HR/wellbeing professionals, a theme that came out strongly is that people don't feel they are doing enough.

In response to this audience request for advice on supporting carer-colleagues:

Question: We have an employee who has just lost her father-in-law and both her parents now have cancer. They are her usual childcare solution so she is struggling. We are allowing her to work from home much more often but any advice would be great.

Panellist replied:

It sounds intense for the employee; the worry of the illness and ongoing worry around juggling work and childcare. It sounds like you're doing a lot already, they are open in what they are experiencing which is the biggest thing. Let them lead you in what would work for them. Revisit the conversation and check in on how they are feeling. If you have an EAP or Charities such as Macmillan may be able to support them in making adjustments and thinking about her emotional health. No one size answer unfortunately.

Audience member replied:

Thank you - I have signposted the EAP. I guess we always feel a little inadequate as we would love to do more.

This answer was also relevant to another question from the audience:

Question: Within an employment setting, do people tend to prefer support on a one-to-one basis, as with mental health?

Another audience member shared his thoughts on this question, saying:

I think you need to take the lead from the colleague themselves. Some may prefer to talk on a one-to-one basis but others may gain more confidence from speaking within a group and knowing they are not alone in the situation.

One audience member asked about specific policies:

Question: Is it better to apply discretion beyond our standard sick pay policy or have a dedicated Cancer sick pay policy? What impact would this have on other causes of long-term sickness? Unsure what is the right thing to do here.

Another audience question asked a similar question:

Question: We have a life-long conditions safe space group here at Guide Dogs, but I wonder if Cancer is so niche, that we may need to set up one for this family of conditions.

These were answered specifically by panellist Louise Boston, Strategic Health & Wellbeing Manager, E.ON, in the webinar, who talked about the danger of focusing too much on one condition to the detriment/discrimination of others.

Another audience member asked about the importance of peer support to support employees with a cancer diagnosis

Question: How important do you think peer support is to support employees with a cancer diagnosis?

Perspectives on this were shared by all panellists throughout the webinar.

Responses to the personal stories of their cancer journey shared by panellists Lisa and Louise:

“What an inspiration and uplifting conversation”

“Louise - you are an inspiration. I’m laughing, crying, (feeling all the feels) & learning. Thank you so much!”

“That's the hardest part, make sure you look after you too.”

Supporting the carers of cancer sufferers

The invisibility of carers was mentioned – this report on the hidden impact of caring responsibilities on employees from Perci Health has been created as a guide for employees:

<https://makeadifference.media/reports/invisible-cancer-carers-the-hidden-impact-of-caring-responsibilities-on-your-employees/>

Big takeaway learning: there is no one-size-fits-all

Comment in chat summing this up: “So important to realise that everyone’s needs/ what works for them/ how they’d like to be supported will be different. As mentioned earlier - there is no one size fits all.”

Thank yous:

- It feels like there is lot more to say
- thank you!
- Thanks for a great session this morning
- Really excellent talk today - thank you all
- Very insightful
- thanks everyone
- Thank you
- Thank you all
- thank you
- Thank you so much
- Thank you so much, really interesting and useful.