

Is men's mental health a silent crisis?

Male businessowners are feeling the pressure during lockdown and many are suffering in silence

In 2019 the ONS reported men accounted for just over three out of four suicides (75%) and suicide is the biggest cause of death for men under 35. Two in three men said they felt stressed and overwhelmed in the past year, with many men suffering in silence when they experience feelings of sadness, loneliness or anxiety.

The stats make for harrowing reading and in truth the number of mental health conditions is likely to be far higher as many go undiagnosed. According to Affinity HRM's Aleena Ahmad, the strain in 2020 is only getting greater. "I am seeing many male business leaders struggling with their mental health this year. They are trying their best to save their businesses and therefore the jobs of their employees and the strain has been evident at one point or another in the majority of clients I work with."

The HR expert is calling for male business leaders who may be struggling to balance their responsibility, the finances and the effects of the global pandemic to reach out for help and support now more than ever. "The policies, obligations, duty of care and the implications of hiring or

letting go of staff at this time are huge, bewildering and, without help, can just feel like too much to cope with alone," Aleena adds.

Less likely to request flexible working hours, shared paternal leave or feel like they can take any time away from the running of the business, juggling all of it can be too much. Men are still being perceived as the 'breadwinner', and the urge to take on too much responsibility, never seek help and to just 'get on' is perpetuated by outdated views on what it takes to be a man.

My advice to anyone at the moment is to talk and share your concerns. Our culture is getting slightly better around men talking openly about their mental health, but we still have a way to go. 'With more awareness and less stigma, we can get men to look after their mental health better.'

Contact Aleena for any HR worries you may have at this pressured time. Email aleena@affinityhrm.co.uk or call 0116 478 0025.

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