



EVERYBODY BENEFITS: EMPLOYEE GUIDE

It's good to talk

Improving wellbeing through meaningful conversation



However you say it, say it with meaning.



Improving wellbeing and relationships through meaningful conversation

Talking more - but more meaningfully - can lead to greater mental resilience, better health and deeper relationships with friends, family and colleagues.

Good communication can build trust, reduce stress and help everyone feel more connected.

Better conversations - both in and outside of work - can support your wellbeing and the wellbeing of those around you.





Do you have a talking phobia?

If your fear of talking in public causes problems in work or in social settings, then it is possible that you suffer from **glossophobia** which affects around 75% of the UK population.¹

Glossophobia is linked to social phobia but it doesn't mean that sufferers avoid meeting new people or performing tasks in front of others. In fact, many people with glossophobia are able to dance or sing on stage – **as long as they do not have to talk!**

Glossophobia doesn't have to be associated with big events like public speaking or hosting a team meeting. It can even occur in front of just a few people – and in 'small', ordinary situations from a child desperately hoping they won't get asked a question in class to an adult struggling to order a coffee in a cafe.

Glossophobia makes people avoid everyday situations, even the mundane and the minutiae, where they are the focus of attention. This can have a dramatic and debilitating effect on everyday life.

The good news is that glossophobia can be treated with CBT, relaxation techniques and medication.

¹ <https://www.independent.co.uk/life-style/health-and-families/public-speaking-glossophobia-fear-experts-b1903223.html>

Why words don't always come easy

Even if you aren't diagnosed as having glossophobia, many people still find talking uncomfortable, and the reasons are often complex and deeply rooted.

Isolation, loneliness, fear of judgement or rejection can lead individuals to stay silent rather than risk criticism or embarrassment.

In environments lacking psychological safety where openness is discouraged or mistakes are penalised, people may feel it's safer to keep their thoughts to themselves.

Past experiences also play a role; if someone has previously spoken up and been ignored or dismissed, they may lose faith that their voice will make a difference. Low self-confidence, cultural norms or simply not knowing how to articulate thoughts can all contribute to silence.

Some people stay quiet to protect others or avoid conflict, while others may be held back by speech impediments, their neurodiversity, mental health challenges about their appearance, depression or shyness.

Remember we are all different - it's fine if you prefer to let others take the limelight while you quietly shine in the sidelines.

Louder doesn't mean better. And sometimes less is more!



Support speaks volumes

Speak to HR, a trusted colleague or your manager to find out what help is available from your employer. Increasingly, digital tools such as wellbeing platforms or Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs) are helping people access confidential help in ways that feel comfortable.

Friends, family, GPs, charities or professional counselling services can also offer a safe space to work through challenges.

In the meantime, here are ways to help you have more to say for yourself – or help others who may be suffering from silence.

Actions speak louder than words

From casual conversations to deeper dialogues, learn how to talk the talk.

If you're looking to improve your mental wellbeing and enhance personal relationships through the power of talking, here are some tips to build confidence to open up meaningful conversations.



1

Bring conversations into daily life

Talking doesn't always have to be serious. Even small, light-hearted interactions with loved ones or acquaintances can improve mood and build connection. Start with phoning a friend on a dog walk or have a no-screens dinner with your household.

Build self-confidence quietly by setting small goals such as chatting to your friendly barista. Don't just order a coffee and croissant – ask how their day is going and see where it leads.



2

Check-in with yourself

Conversations aren't just with others – they're also with yourself. Pay attention to your internal dialogue. Be kind, challenge negative thoughts and allow yourself the space to feel and process. If your inner voice is overly critical, ask yourself:

Would I speak to a friend this way?

3

Write it up first

Ironically if you find talking difficult, try writing instead! Journaling is a powerful outlet for emotions. Try stream-of-consciousness writing, mood tracking or gratitude lists. Use apps like Daylio or pen-and-paper to express yourself privately.

If you find talking hard, try emailing or texting first. Build up slowly to conversations on Teams, face-to-face or on the phone on your terms and in your own time.



4

Practice mindfulness

If talking is stressful for you, use guided meditations, breathing exercises or yoga to help manage stress and stay present. Apps like Headspace can be helpful when you don't feel up to dealing with social interactions.



5

Know when to ask for help - and where to get it

You don't need to go it alone. At work, speak to HR, a mental health first aider or find out about your company's EAP. NHS Talking Therapies and charities like Mind and the Samaritans have a wealth of useful information and free helplines for people who find talking or social interaction overwhelming.

Try reading self-help books and blogs, or listen to podcasts that resonate with how you feel. Chat-based therapy apps like Woebot or journaling tools like Reflectly help you deal with negative thoughts and let you explore your feelings at your own pace.

A way with words

5 ways to help colleagues open up

Meaningful conversation is one of the most powerful tools we have to support others with their mental wellbeing. If you sense that a colleague is withdrawn or quieter than usual, try some of these tips to engage them and encourage a two-way conversation.

1

Start with a simple check-in

Take time to check-in with colleagues, friends or family members regularly – not just when something seems wrong.

Do: A genuine “How are you?” can be more powerful than you think. Don’t be afraid to ask twice, “no really, how are you?”





2

Be an active listener

It's easy to fall into the trap of half-listening while mentally preparing a response or getting distracted by a screen. But being truly present shows you care.

Do: Maintain eye contact, put your phone down and use body language to show you're listening.

Don't: Interrupt or try to 'fix' things too quickly – sometimes people just need to be heard.

3

Share your own experiences

Opening up about your own thoughts or challenges can help others feel less alone. Whether with a colleague or loved one, vulnerability builds trust – but only when it's genuine and respectful.

Do: Avoid turning the conversation back to yourself too quickly. Share to connect – not to compete.



4

Stay curious, not critical

Healthy conversations – especially outside work – mean allowing space for disagreement or difference, without judgement. Listening without jumping to conclusions fosters more honest dialogue.

Replace “Why did you do that?” with “Help me understand what made you feel that way.”



5

Respect boundaries

Sometimes people aren't ready to talk – and that's OK. Don't push. Let others know you're available without applying pressure – whether it's a partner who's had a tough day or a colleague juggling deadlines.

Try texting: “I'm here if you want to talk.”

Every conversation counts

Better wellbeing isn't built in big moments – it's built in everyday ones. A conversation at the coffee machine. A chat on the school run. A catch-up on the sofa.

Over time, you can create small but stronger connections – at work, at home and in your community.



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