



Mental Health Champions



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Richard Brailsford

Head of Credit and Risk, BSBF (GC Business Finance)



Having been through mental health challenges myself, I'm very passionate about encouraging colleagues to that it's ok to not be ok sometimes and to feel confident in opening up to a support network to discuss their feelings. As a Mental Health Champion I lead on promoting wellbeing within GCBF, the tools and the resources available. During lockdown I created a club on Strava to encourage GCBF staff to get active and create a strong social network.

Nicki Burke

Supply Chain Manager, BSBF (BGH)



I wanted to become a Mental Health Champion to offer support to colleagues and help to reduce the stigma associated with mental health conditions both in the workplace and beyond.

Liam Connors

Account Manager, BSBF (BGH)



Hi, I'm Liam and I became a Mental Health Champion as I feel it is important to encourage a conversation around mental health to help reduce stigma.

Simon Dickinson

Business Coach (Enterprising You), BSBF (BGH)



I'm passionate about people and believe everyone has the right to good health - mental and physical. The more conversations we can have around this, the more likely we are to accept each other and understand each other's struggles. As mental health champions, we have an opportunity to share stories and experiences that help de-stigmatise the challenges we all face from time to time - which is why I wanted to get involved.

Peter Craen

Business Change and Innovation Specialist, BSBF (BGH)



Hi there, I'm Peter and I became a Mental Health Champion because I grew up in a family where a close family member struggled daily with their mental health. I too reached burn out point in a previous career and know what it is like to require support - MHC's did not exist where I previously worked. I want to give something back and be someone to turn to if someone wants support.

Sue Ingham

Health and Life Sciences Advisor - MATMED Advisor, BSBF (BGH)



I have always been interested in health and wellbeing and particularly mental health, having suffered depression in the past and supported some of my family through mental health illness. I wanted to get involved to help to eliminate the stigma associated with mental illness, which can be as damaging as the illness itself. I believe that talking is one of the best ways of addressing these issues and that's why I volunteered to speak out as a Champion.

Maria Mander

Health and Wellbeing Advisor, BSBF (BGH)



As a Health & Wellbeing Specialist, I am passionate about support the wellbeing of employees. I became a champion to share my expertise to make a difference in peoples lives. I have a holistic approach to supporting mental health and have implemented Mindfulness & Meditation into the workplace as well as a treatment called Reiki to manage stress and anxiety.

Zelakah Murphy

National Coordinator, GC Business



Mental Health and Wellbeing has always been a personal passion of mine so I jumped at the chance to make this a professional one too. Having had my own share of Mental Health challenges I am very passionate about creating a culture of open conversation and breaking down stigmas. Recently I have been appointed co-chair of the Health and Wellbeing EDI group and have been busy organising the comms/activities for MH Awareness week 2021! Moving forward I want to utilise my dual role as Champion and Co-Chair to plan future internal activities and campaigns.

Yvonne Sampson

Programme Manager (SEP), BSBF (BGH)



I started with GC just over a year ago and thought the champions group was an area I could support.

Molly Sandford-Ward

Account Management Coordinator, BSBF (BGH)



I'm Molly and I became a Mental Health Champion fairly recently. I wanted to get involved because I think discussing mental health challenges and opening up about our experiences can help everyone! Having had OCD growing up, I know how confusing mental health issues can be when you don't feel like you can talk about them. So far, I have been involved in organising Mental Health Awareness Week it's been really exciting to get involved with a new project and getting to meet lots of people from across the group!

Shaun Schofield

Business Advisor, BSBF (BGH)



Hello all, I became a Mental health Champion to assist others in areas of mental health that I have personally been involved/ around in my whole life and careers to date. Being Ex military and a fully qualified teacher has given me a unique look at life for all walks of life. With my multitude of physical training qualifications I am able to assist others in improving their own wellbeing and physical health which contributes massively. I have just recently passed my Mental Health First Aid Course which will only assist us further as a team. Helping others has been the one thing that has got myself through tough times and if we all did a little more the world would be a far better place. I wish to help drive this and be there for others who need it.

Sophie Hobson

HR Coordinator, Corporate Services (HR)



Hello, I'm Sophie. I recently became a Mental Health Champion as I think it's a fantastic initiative to support our colleagues who may be struggling with their mental health. It's a really friendly network of people and so I would encourage anyone to get involved. I've found the tools and ongoing sessions really useful and informative and it has helped me in my role to support my colleagues.

Cheryl Madden

OD Advisor, Corporate Services (HR)



Hi, I'm Cheryl I lead the Mental Health Champion network and co-lead the Health and Wellbeing EDI network. I created the Mental Health Champion network once GC committed to the Time to Change Pledge in June 2020. I don't think we can underestimate the benefits of just being able to talk openly with others about how we feel to help us stay connected and to know that we are not alone even when we are going through a difficult time. We all have mental health just as we have physical health so I think that taking an active interest in our own self-care and understanding what we can do to support others is so important. We now have over 30 active Champions who are involved in a whole range of local as well as group wide activities/campaigns to help encourage others to feel more comfortable with talking about mental health and to promote good health and wellbeing.

I've been inspired by how open and supportive our Champions are and I've loved having the opportunity to collaborate with so many different people from across the Group. We want as many people as possible to get involved as Champions to make a real positive impact across vGC, so if you want to find out more then please get in touch!

Claire Nixon

Project Co-ordinator - Health and Safety and Facilities, Corporate Services (Facilities/H&S)



I became a Mental Health and Wellbeing Champion because I knew lots of people who were struggling with mental health and I wanted to be able to help in some way. It is great being part of a proactive group of colleagues who are passionate about making positive changes. The group share resources and information and take on the role to normalise conversation about mental health and actively promote wellbeing. I send regular emails to my team and speak at team meetings to raise awareness of issues and events as well as organise team activities. I have also contributed to Mental Health Awareness Week campaign; it has been great getting to work with different people across the company and see everything come together.

Kelly Bailey

Business Development Director, Skills



Hi, I'm Kelly and I am fairly new to the Growth Company. In previous roles I have been a Well Being Champion and I have a real passion to support people. I enjoy being part of the group and listening to all the great work from the team, which I can then share with my colleagues in Skills. Our mental and physical health is so important in the busy world we all live in. I hope I can support my peers and colleagues by creating a supportive working environment for all.

Sam Hutchinson

Customer Services Administrator, Skills



I have worked for the Growth Company for over 2 years and have recently become a mental health champion. Through my own personal experiences around Mental Health I hope to share and learn new ideas so that I can make a difference to colleague's wellbeing. Together we can create a supportive environment so that staff feel comfortable and able to talk openly about how they are feeling each day.

Cheryl Collins

Director of Employment Central Support Functions, Employment



Hi, I'm Cheryl and I wanted to show my support to colleagues, friends and family who need someone to talk to in relation to their mental health. It's important that we break down stigma with mental health struggles and that the workplace is somewhere where people feel supported and not afraid to raise their concerns. Many of us are struggling with the impact of a huge period of change and isolation as a result of the pandemic. We need to safeguard our colleagues, those who access our services and each other. I have tried to learn a lot more recently about different mental health concerns, coping mechanisms and recognising

when others may just need a chat to work through things. The Mental Health First Aid course has been fundamental for this development and I am keen to champion talking about health, including mental health openly with my own staff and colleagues.

Kath Doodson

Skills Development Coach, Employment



Having worked with people of all ages, from a range of different backgrounds for over 30 years, I have always been interested in the labels that have been attached to them by professionals far more qualified than I, far too many labels to mention! This is what has led me to follow 'trends' related to mental health and to support people who have been 'labelled' in this way. I truly believe that before real change can be made, we have to look at people not labels, everyone is unique and what is 'normal' today, may not necessarily be 'normal' tomorrow. By becoming a Mental Health Champion I hope that I can reach colleagues who have a need to share whatever may be impacting on their life without feeling judged – no-one knows what is around their corner and as a champion, I know I am not expected to put things 'right', but am someone who is here to listen, empathise and if needed/requested signpost to more support. No one should be made to feel that no one cares.

Bryoni Parkinson

Quality and Training Lead Officer, Employment



Hi I'm Bryoni, I wanted to become a Mental Health Champion to help make a positive change within the group and encourage staff to start talking more openly about mental health. I've seen the stigma people can face when dealing with mental health and the impact this can have on someone who is already struggling. At the end of the day we all have mental health whether it's positive or negative, we may not all become part of the 1 in 4 who suffer from a mental health issue but we can all benefit from being more open and aware so that we can be mindful of our own mental health as well as others.

Rebecca Pollitt

Employment Coach, Employment



I've worked within the recruitment and employment sector for the last 4 years, with a background in Education and tutoring. As well as this I am interested in Health and wellbeing, working as a wellbeing champion and Mental Health first aider within my role at the Growth Company.

Darren Seigenberg

National Careers Service Advisor, Employment



The human mindset has always been an interest of mine. So having completed NLP training in 2012-2014, helping people overcome all kinds of barriers and internal conflicts has only increased my knowledge and passion to help those with mental health issues. Now I have my own set up helping men and veterans with MH problems and keen to get my own retreat and training centre to help them further.

Jill Taylor

Employment and Training Consultant, Employment



Hi, I'm Jill and I became a mental health champion as I wanted to raise awareness of mental health, remove the stigma around it and promote good mental health. From my work experience of being a ETC for Recovery Works seeing how good mental health helps sustain recovery from addiction to supporting family and friends when they have experienced poor mental health, I am passionate about helping people improve their own well being for a happy life.

Jenn Wright

Learning Mentor, Employment



I have worked for the Growth Company for over 3 years now and am a Mental Health First Aider. I have first-hand experience when it comes to Mental Health issues and feel that it is not something that is talked about enough within the workplace so I feel proud to be part of the MH Champions Support Group, as we are able to spread knowledge and remove stigma with the offer of support to colleagues who may feel they need further support. Our Mental Health is just as important as our physical health and if we deal with it together it can make a positive difference to a person's life.

Donna Whelan

Customer Services Manager, BSBF (International Trade)



I am passionate about mental health since a family member has been diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. It's easy to be sympathetic when somebody has a visible injury, you can see their struggles. When somebody is struggling with their thought processes it's not as easy to identify. The importance of open conversation is fundamental as is the realisation that there shouldn't be any stigma associated with people coping with everyday life whilst dealing with mental health challenges.

Anita Kaur

Senior Programmes Exec, B2BC



Hi, I am Anita and I became a Mental Health Champion soon after getting my Mental Health First Aider qualification. I wanted to raise awareness of Mental Health within TMI and let colleagues know that I was there to support them and also to emphasise the fact the Mental Health is not a stigma.

Rich Fowler

Commercial Partnerships Manager, Marketing Manchester



Hi I'm Rich. After 4 years at MM I jumped at the chance to become a Mental Health Champion & first aider. Dealing with anxiety and low self-esteem on a daily basis, I wanted to normalise speaking about feelings and try to reinforce that mental health issues are just as important as physical issues. After seeking help from a number of different sources, I wanted to be there for someone else who might be struggling so we can move forward together.

Cherryanne Dawson

Operations Manager, BSBF (Midas)



I became a mental health champion because I have experienced close friends and family suffer with their mental health and I understand the importance of not feeling alone. It is important that we raise awareness and remind people "it's ok not to feel ok" and to support them when they do. I jointly run weekly well-being calls with the MIDAS team to make sure we stay connected and everybody feels supported.



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