

REACTMH[®]: Bitesized support for your people

A small dose of active listening training for supervisors

As part of the strategy written and delivered by Professor Neil Greenberg to help support frontline staff during the COVID-19 crisis, March on Stress has developed a short workshop for supervisors, to allow them to have a 'psychologically savvy conversation' with their teams, identify those struggling and signpost them for further support. The length of the session (just 90 minutes) means that busy staff can access the training and it can be as widespread as possible throughout your organisation.

At the end of the short session the supervisors will have had a small dose of training in 'active listening', and be equipped with knowledge and some practice in how to have that mental health aware conversation, using an approach called REACTMH[®].

REACTMH provides an opportunity for starting a conversation with people who either do not appreciate they have a mental health problem, or who do appreciate it but do not want to seek help. This approach may be especially useful should a colleague have had to deal with repeated, often occupationally related, exposure to Potentially Traumatic Events (PTEs). Such on-going trauma exposure is known as Type 2 trauma. Type 2 trauma may cause an insidious deterioration in mental health occurring over a period of time. The sessions also include content related to moral injury.

In brief, the process follows these steps:

- Recognise
- Engage
- Actively Listen
- Check Risk
- Talk to them about specific actions

REACTMH was developed by our team of experts, led by Professor Neil Greenberg, in 2017 to enable individuals to have psychologically informed conversations, as a form of support in the workplace. The approach is evidence-based and, while we are not aware of any alternative active listening packages which have good evidence, the REACTMH approach is very much in line with the evidence in Milligan-Saville ([link to research paper](#)) which clearly demonstrates a positive effect on mental health and reduction in sickness absence. Evaluation data from REACTMH90 sessions delivered by March on Stress for the NHS indicates a significantly positive shift in participants confidence to hold a wellbeing conversation and also that skills are rapidly being put into practice to support the wellbeing of their team members and wider colleagues.

The tool is well-established, having been delivered for the past three years to thousands of personnel across public and private sector organisations, usually embedded within TRiM (Trauma Risk Management) and StRaW[®] (Sustaining Resilience at Work) training and also as a standalone (longer, half-day) workshop to frontline workers.

Training delivery

March on Stress can deliver these 90 minute sessions remotely (via Zoom or Microsoft Teams) for up to 10 people with one trainer.

REACTMH90 sessions are ideal for accelerated roll out when organisations need widespread mental health support and are very short of time (i.e. during the current pandemic) but also, in steady state, for getting mental health conversations started throughout an organisation. They are however a complement, rather than a substitute for implementation of a good peer support system like TRiM or StRaW. Ideally they work within a tiered approach to mental health support.

'Train the trainer' option

March on Stress can also run a two and a half hour 'train the trainer' session for either peer support practitioners or other key personnel (preferably with some training experience) to train these REACTMH90 sessions to supervisors within your organisation. At the end of the two and a half hours, we will share the slideset for use by those present, as well as the REACTMH aide memoire for them to give out during the subsequent 90 minute-long sessions. We run these remote sessions for up to 8 delegates.