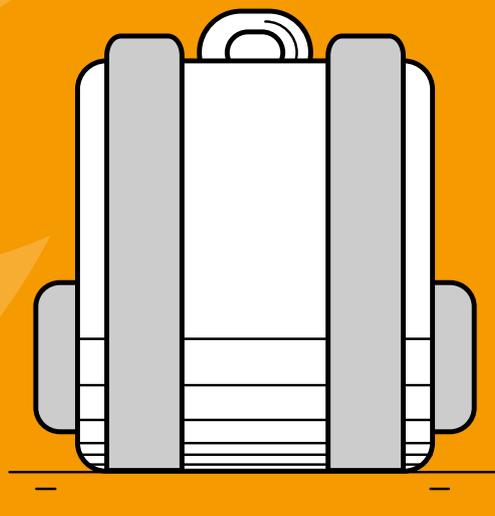




## **Building block 3**

# **Case study: Mental health awareness and literacy**

**A case study from HM Passport Office  
(by Sharon Edwards, Chair of ABLE –  
The Home Office Disability Network)**





My journey with See Me started after I trained as a Mental Health and Suicide First Aider in 2016. Although my office signed up to the See Me in Work programme there wasn't much progress with our action plan to reduce the mental health stigma and discrimination in the office. I decided to develop and facilitate mental health awareness sessions in various formats.

In September 2016 I organised my first sessions, which included showing two of the See Me in Work e-Learning dramas. The sessions have included 'Bun n' Blether', 'Time to Talk Day', Awareness for Employees, Awareness for Managers and TED style talks. Since September 2016 I have delivered 64 mental health awareness sessions with 740 employees attending across the HM Passport Office estate in the UK, and the feedback I received so far included: "The value of the session is beyond measurable", "Personal experience invaluable for understanding" and "I know I can't fix things but I can listen and I can ask 'Are you okay?'".

The See Me in Work e-Learning drama I rely on during my sessions is about a group of workers badmouthing a colleague who has left work early due to mental health problems. This particular drama creates a lot of animated conversations, and it really hits home about the language used by those who don't understand what it feels like to experience a mental health problem.

**Our take-home message:** Tackling mental health stigma and discrimination is foundational to driving mental health improvement in the workplace. Mental health awareness and literacy in the workplace is key. In my experience, the following ingredients make for a successful mental health awareness session that aims to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination:

- 1) **Sharing my own mental health story** which spans a period of more than 20 years.
- 2) **Facilitating healthy debate** on what we see and how we feel about it, showing See Me in Work e-Learning dramas as prompts.
- 3) **Helping attendees to reflect** on a list they are asked to create of mental health conditions that they are aware of, plus listing what the signs and symptoms are of depression, anxiety and stress.
- 4) **Including group work** to discuss case studies that I have created for the sessions.
- 5) **Creating a relaxed and safe space to talk** open and honestly about mental health.





### **Contact:**

Visit the See Me website

**<https://www.seemescotland.org/workplace/>**

for other case studies, helpful information and practical resources.

