

“People are just firefighting and coping with it, until they’re not”: Qualitative insights into barriers to staff seeking support before they reach crisis in an NHS Trust.

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Abstract

Abstract Introduction NHS staff face mental health problems due factors including burnout, workload, exposure to trauma and lack of support. Healthcare professionals often face barriers to seeking help and are less likely to seek out professional help for their own mental health. Following staff suicides, this study aimed to identify the perceived barriers to seeking support faced by staff members across an NHS Trust. Methods Semi-structured interviews with 29 participants, each lasting approximately 90 minutes. A further 10 informal conversations were had with staff not wanting to be formally interviewed. Results Framework analysis was used to analyse the data, resulting in four themes being identified around perceived barriers to seeking support: stigma organisational culture privacy access to support Discussion Findings indicated that staff perceived significant barriers, including mental illness-related stigma, workplace trauma, organisational culture, confidentiality concerns and access to support. Many staff members who needed to help did not reach out for support within the workplace, despite knowing they needed it. Conclusion There are perceived barriers to seeking help affect both the individual and the culture of the organisation. Larger studies are needed to assess the perceived barriers experienced by staff nationwide, with the aim of tackling these to improve staff wellbeing.

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Appendix Barriers.docx available at <https://authorea.com/users/580333/articles/621445--people-are-just-firefighting-and-coping-with-it-until-they-re-not-qualitative-insights-into-barriers-to-staff-seeking-support-before-they-reach-crisis-in-an-nhs-trust>