



A very real hidden danger

The following is an article that was posted on LinkedIn in June 2019 by Resilient Me's founder and principal Rachel Munns. It was not intended to alarm, but rather to inform people of the lack of outward signs of some mental health issues. The post received a staggering 35,000+ views and was shared by over 700 people worldwide. Proof, if proof were needed, of the widespread and very often hidden dangers of stress in the workplace, and the impact it can have on individuals, families and colleagues.

The article...

Eight years ago I came home to find my husband lying on the sofa, grey and shaking.

He'd been driving home from work and almost blacked out at the wheel. We had no idea what caused this and when the doctors asked "might you be suffering from stress Mr Munns?". We both just laughed.

You see, he never 'stressed' about anything. He's not a worrier like me. He always just dealt with things if they needed to be dealt with. He was a senior manager and didn't have time to worry about stuff that hadn't happened yet.

How naive we were.

The people who get ill from stress are usually the ones who work the hardest and care the most - the ones you trust with everything. NOT the ones who run around like headless chickens!

At that time we simply had no idea about the human stress response and how easily and frequently it can be triggered. We also had no idea how this response can lead to both physical and/or mental illness. Stress is exactly what caused the blackout and the subsequent two years of poor mental health.

Mental health issues can be a hidden danger but, when they strike, the damage can be severe and long-lasting.

Do you know the signs? Do you know how to protect yourself?

Educating people about this is what I do, and this is why.

Rachel Munns, LinkedIn June 2019

Just some of the comments...

"Taking care of mental health is every bit as important as physical health. The good thing is that often what is good for one is good for the other. In my case I had stopped focusing on either as I had lost sight of what is important. Mental health and stress awareness are important for all."

"If you have a mental illness, often aggravated or accelerated (as you said) from the stresses of your challenging work, it is usually ignored and hidden for fear of the stigma that will accompany it. You fear that your bosses or colleagues will see it as weakness, something to be "shaken off" or suppressed. This only serves to speed up the negative spiral and bring with it all the concomitant issues."

"I think businesses don't spend money or look into training because employees don't talk about it to their bosses in fear of being manipulated out of the company. Personally I think it's about time training was mandatory in all businesses no matter what the size"

"We definitely need more education & discussion around the topic & also discuss how sufferers can be highly valued employees. It's saddened me at times to see those with incredible work ethic and talent 'let go' shortly after disclosing they suffer from a MH condition"

"This is truth we know but most employers fail to admit or acknowledge the fact that stress is prevalent and there is always something can be done it to overcome it. Thanks Rachel for sharing your experiences."

Read more about other people's experiences of stress overleaf...

“I didn’t think I was stressed until...”

These are some of the real-life experiences that we received as a result of the many shares of Rachel’s LinkedIn post. They are genuine events and symptoms that have occurred because of stress at home or at work.

“Something very similar happened to me. In my case it was a TIA or mini stroke and caused by me not acknowledging the effect the stress was having on me. I was asked by a colleague the other day about how I managed having reflected on these past mental health issues. I replied that one of my new ‘strengths’ is that I now admit my vulnerabilities and actively work to protect myself.”

“I didn’t know I was suffering any form of mental health issues until I went to see the doctor after a constant stream of palpitations anytime anyone at work spoke to me. She asked ‘how are you?’ I totally broke down and years and years of ‘stuff’ poured out of me...”

“I had a similar experience and could not identify what it was for sometime. I thought it was due to something else. I was very concerned. One day something happened and my chest got really tight, I was gasping for air and sweating. At that moment, I realised what it was.”

“An almost identical thing happened to me last year, only I collapsed in front of my kids at the breakfast table in the morning. I was working all hours and work emails became my social media. I was never able to switch off and was never mentally present with the people who meant the most to me.”

“Recently I blacked out when in the office after a long day where I got a sudden headache then blacked out followed by convulsions. After a CT scan they found I am stressed yet all knew if there is someone who doesn’t stress it’s me I was so shocked...”



In conclusion...

We were both surprised and saddened at the sheer volume of people who could relate to our own experiences of stress and its side effects. But we were also encouraged by the strength of feeling that EVERYBODY, not just the individual affected, needs to do more to combat these issues.

When employers or managers have a better understanding of stress and how it can be as hidden in some people as it is visible in others, they are able to do something about it. Prevention is always a better alternative to absenteeism, presenteeism or ill health - and is considerably less expensive to any business than lost hours, extended sick leave or recruitment/induction should the individual be forced to leave.

A culture of empathy and support for those suffering stress and associated illnesses is not just desirable - its essential. And it’s perfectly possible to achieve through our workshops and training. Contact us to find out more.

