



Let's talk about Mental Health

Looking after your mental health is important. But it is also important to talk about it; to continue to break down the stigma and to create an environment where people can talk openly, especially in the workplace.

The **ConveRSE** project aims to continue the conversation around mental health in the research software community, as well as provide information and resources so people know where to get help when they need it.

"If we want to make research software more sustainable, we have to help sustain the PEOPLE writing the software too!"

The Importance of Mental Health

1 in 4 adults will experience a mental health problem each year in England. ^[1]

Poor mental health results in **72 million lost working days**, costing UK employers **£45 billion** each year. ^[2]

52% of respondents to our survey reported experiencing a mental health problem since becoming a Research Software Engineer.

It is clear that we need to do more to improve mental health in the workplace. But it can be difficult to know who to talk to, how to look after ourselves or where to go to get support.

[1] - mind.org.uk [2] - MHFA England



If You Are Struggling

1. Talk to your line manager.
2. Talk to a **Mental Health First Aider**, who can direct you to additional help and support.
3. Your institution may have an **Employee Assistance Programme**, providing free, confidential counselling and support. Their **Occupational Health** service can also help with support in the workplace.
4. Talk to your **Doctor**; they can prescribe medication to help manage your condition or refer you to other specialist services.
5. A wide range of different forms of **therapy** through the NHS or privately.

SAMARITANS

In an Emergency

Call Samaritans on 116 123.



More Information

For more information and support, we recommend visiting **Mind** in England and Wales, **SAMH** in Scotland or **Action Mental Health** in Northern Ireland.



To find out more or to contribute:

<https://mdsimpson42.github.io/converse/>



We know
it's never
easy...

Talking to your colleagues or line manager can be particularly daunting. There is still a lot of stigma surrounding mental health in our society and it may be perceived as a sign of weakness.

However, if employees are more open, and employers create an environment where people feel able to speak up, then it is in everyone's best interests. It is usually easier - and cheaper! - to address an issue before it becomes a serious problem than to fix it afterwards.

Or, in other words...

**"It's better to raise a RED FLAG,
before you're forced to wave a WHITE ONE!"**

About ConveRSE

Mike Simpson is someone who knows the importance of looking after your mental health and what can happen when things go wrong. He is working with **Dave Horsfall** and others to continue the conversation around mental health in our community, supported by a Fellowship from the **Software Sustainability Institute**.

ConveRSE is an online hub for mental health information and support for Research Software Engineers and other Research Technical Professionals. The site includes tips for looking after yourself, your colleagues and your team, as well as links to a variety of other resources.

Visit the
ConveRSE site



Join us in the **#mental-health** channel on the RSE Society Slack workspace to keep the conversation going!

Contributing to ConveRSE

We need your help to improve the **ConveRSE** site and maximise the impact of the project:

- We want to collect blog posts - including case studies and advice - on a variety of topics from a diverse range of authors.
- Tells us about any projects, communities or resources that you think will be of interest to the community.
- Or help contribute to the website's development.

Submit a
blog post



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