



**Jonathan's Voice**  
Speaking out for mental health

# ***The Sticking Plaster and the Stairwell***

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Panel: Joanne Donaldson

Jonathan Foster

Vicky Maynard

Jennifer Unsworth

Jonathan's Voice

[www.jonathansvoice.org.uk](http://www.jonathansvoice.org.uk)

Registered Charity 1180424

# Introduction to Jonathan's Voice



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Jonathan was a patent attorney in Bristol. On the outside, life appeared to be going well. But a month after his 35th birthday he tragically took his own life on 30th October 2017. An “out of the blue” suicide. Sadly, he had been masking his mental health struggles very, very well.

**Shortly after this tragic event his family founded Jonathan's Voice, now a registered charity, to promote better mental health in the workplace.**

# What we do



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We work with mental health consultants, in partnership with firms, to develop a mentally healthy workplace where all may thrive.

- We provide workshops, webinars and resources. A guide for those in support roles in IP organisations is currently being written.
- As a charity, we can offer these free at the point of delivery.
- We fund vital research into suicide prevention.



**Both available to download  
free of charge from  
[www.jonathansvoice.org.uk](http://www.jonathansvoice.org.uk)**

# Looking after staff mental wellbeing



The sticking plaster

and

The stairwell



# What do we mean by 'mental health'?



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- We all have mental health in the same way as we all have physical health
- Mental health is on a continuum
- We can move along this continuum at different times in our life
- 25% of us will experience a mental health difficulty at some point in our lives
- Many different things can impact on our mental health and resilience

# The mental health continuum

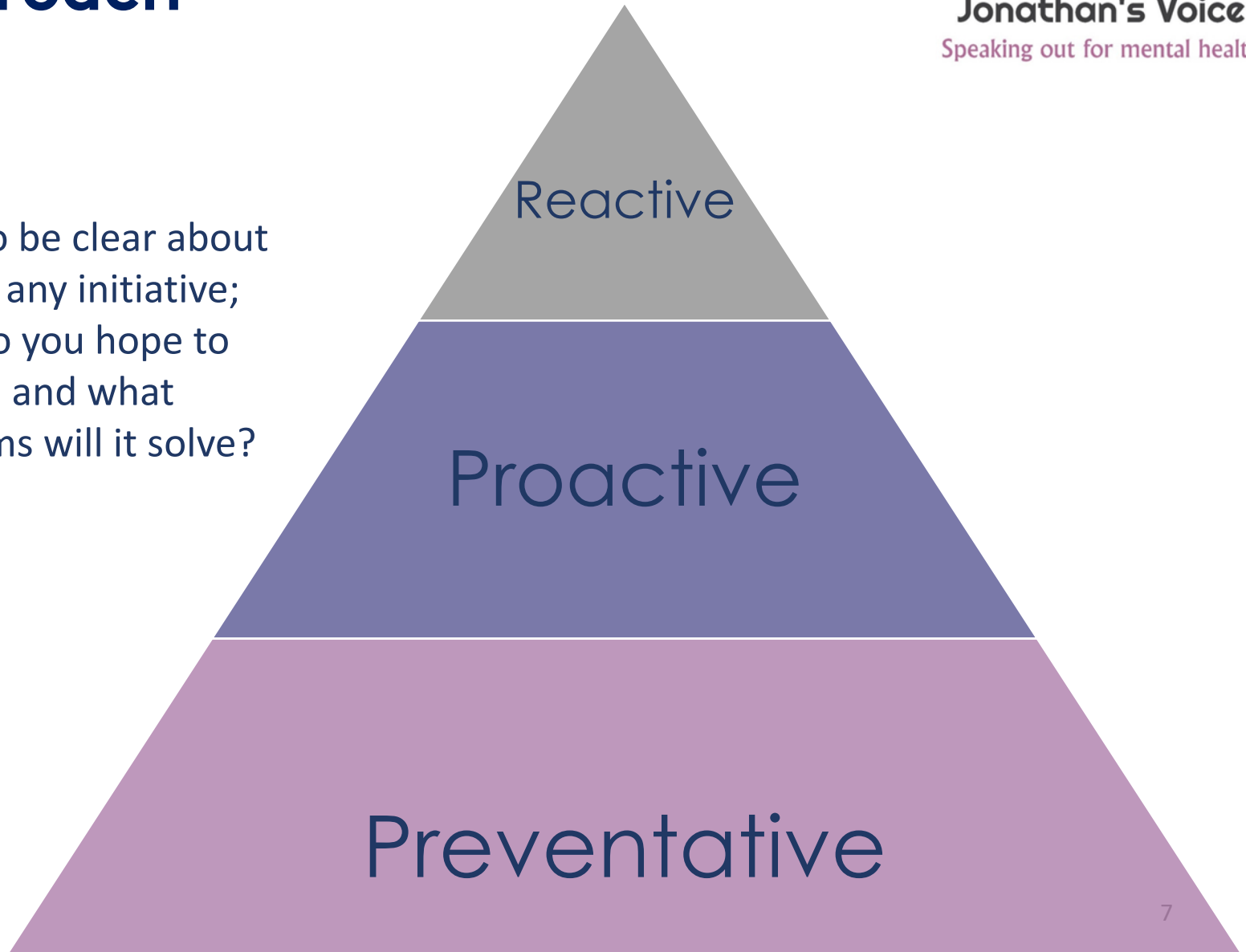


# Whole organisation (3-tier) approach



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Need to be clear about aims of any initiative; what do you hope to achieve and what problems will it solve?



# Preventative



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Measures aimed at all staff to create an environment that enables mental health to thrive for everyone

- Making sure staff feel valued, appreciated and respected,
- Developing a psychologically safe environment where people feel able to be open about mental health (and other issues)
- Having policies including sickness absence that enable a good work-life balance eg flexible working
- Having a pleasant working environment
- Realistic job-design/workloads





# Proactive

Being able to anticipate and take action to address predictable areas where staff mental health might become more vulnerable eg

- Certain groups of employees who might be under extra pressure,
- Specific challenging events, activities, deadlines etc
- Training managers to recognize and support staff who are struggling
- Putting in place reasonable adjustments where necessary

***This will also involve senior leaders challenging their own attitudes to issues around mental health and Diversity and Inclusion***

# Reactive



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Timely and accessible help available for individuals who are starting to struggle eg

- Trained line managers who can provide timely interventions and support
- Access MHFAs or MH champions/mentors
- Access to counselling/EAPs
- Supportive sickness absence/return to work policies
- Access to Occupational Health (for larger companies)
- Reasonable adjustments

# Benefits of creating a culture that supports mental health and wellbeing



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- Recruitment
- Retention
- Productivity
- Reputation

**Ethically, it's the right thing to do**

# It makes sense financially

- One of the leading causes of sickness absence in the UK
- Average direct cost of £1652 (private sector) - £1716 (public sector) **per employee**, an increase from 2017  
Mental Health and employees: Refreshing the case for investment Deloitte 2020
- Absence: **£6.8bn**
- Presenteeism: **£26.6bn to £29.3bn**
- Turnover: **8.6bn**  
Mental Health and employees: Refreshing the case for investment Deloitte 2020

**NB Pre-pandemic figures**

# And Looking after your company's mental health pays for itself!



On average an organisation will get a £5 return for every £1 spent on mental health interventions (especially preventative and proactive)

Mental Health and employees: Refreshing the case for investment Deloitte 2020

# But...creating a culture that fully supports the mental wellbeing of all employees is not always easy



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It needs:

- Understanding that change means doing things differently
- Full buy-in and commitment from senior leaders
- A 'top down/bottom up' approach
- Acceptance that all this might take time
- Awareness that looking after the mental health of your whole company, large or small, needs to be part of the company's DNA, including policies, procedures and job design
- Full and authentic attendance to all aspects of diversity and inclusion

# How might we begin to do this?



Over to Lisa with some ideas about how all this might work in practice