

CBC Online Seminar Q&A

The Things We Don't Say: Mental Health Education for Craft Brewers

Q: What ways can breweries work with our internal employees to check-in and support their mental health, and from there help our employees be advocates for mental health to the public?

A: While we spoke to this during the presentation, we think a daily check in prior to shifts starting or the busy times of the day is a crucial part of keeping the communication open and having a face to face interaction with everyone on your team.

Regarding being advocates for mental health, our educational programming has a focus on how to be supportive, so if you'd like to set up a Zoom meeting with one of our educators, we can go over that pretty succinctly!

joel@hftd.org

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Q: In lots of the beer world, long hours and endless effort are expected (for brew days, festivals, weekend shifts, farming, etc.). What are some pieces of advice for steeling yourself for this kind of endurance work and not burning out?

A: I think our response during the presentation was spot on in making sure you understand what your capacity is and that putting 100% behind something 100% of the time is a recipe for burnout. Referencing those tools we each use to bring ourselves back to that "ok" level, taking time for those activities should be a priority as stress levels increase.

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Q: Alcohol abuse (if you want to call it a "stigma" in the context of this conversation today) has a severe impact on the mental and physical health of individuals, yet may not culminate in suicide. How can we have this discussion about mental health issues and the promotion of the well-being of our employees and co-workers without addressing alcohol abuse, when our industry inherently promotes and seemingly condones alcohol consumption and behaviors associated with (over) consumption?

A: The 1:11 point in the presentation, Jonny begins to touch on how the importance of saying something, however small, can have a rather large impact on the culture of the business because the silence is broken. By addressing the wellbeing of your employees and co-workers, and then by illustrating the importance of taking care of ourselves, making sure you're including alcohol abuse in the context of something that isn't necessarily a healthy choice when it's overly consumed, you've opened the door.

Highlighting the resources that are available to us, regardless of insurance plans and whatnot, and making sure to highlight the substance abuse resources, you're not just showing someone the path to talking about it with a professional, you're showing that this is a place to talk about it.

For LOCAL resources, visit this page and type in your zip code: <https://www.hftd.org/find-help>

For NATIONAL resources, oh and the number for SAMHSA for substance abuse and mental health is 1-800-662-4357, consider downloading resource card templates for your brewery here: <https://www.hftd.org/educationalmaterial> All of the resource card templates have the 6 vetted services:

DESPITE THE THINGS YOU'VE BEEN THROUGH, IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK.



Hope For The Day achieves proactive suicide prevention through outreach and mental health education.

**NATIONAL SUICIDE
PREVENTION LIFELINE**
(800) 273-TALK(8255)

CRISIS TEXT LINE
TEXT "ITSOK"
TO 741741

**THE TREVOR PROJECT
FOR LGBT YOUTH**
(866) 488-7386

**NATIONAL SEXUAL
ASSAULT HOTLINE**
(800) 656-HOPE(4673)

FOR VETERANS
CALL: (800) 273-8255 (PRESS 1)
TEXT: 838255

**SUBSTANCE ABUSE &
MENTAL HEALTH SERVICES**
1-800-662-HELP (4357)



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FOR MORE RESOURCES, VISIT [HFTD.ORG](https://www.hftd.org)

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Q: How does one get involved in Hops for Hope?

A: We touched on this during the presentation, but please reach out if you're interested in partnering with HFTD on an education, beer collaboration, or event: Email me at joel@hftd.org or fill out the Craft Beer Intake Questionnaire: <https://bit.ly/HFTDxBREWING>

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Q: What are the best ways for small breweries to get involved in their local community's mental health advocacy, right now?

A: There are a few things you can do right now, this very second.

1. INTERNALLY: Set up a Zoom coffee talk check in with your staff, and give everyone the opportunity to share what they've been doing during the quarantine to not only stay busy, but to take care of themselves. Forget work once a day and let staff just talk about their day, their pets, their hobbies, anything. By having these scheduled check in's, you end up putting a little bit of normalcy back into the day.
2. EXTERNALLY: Check in with your customers in a similar fashion, using Zoom or Facebook, etc., the virtual happy hours or coffee chats are great ways of not only introducing your customers to who you are as people, but the culture you've created in your brewery. If you take the opportunity to highlight what individual members of your staff are doing to stay busy during the quarantine and you're inquiring with your community what they're doing, you're starting a conversation and leading by demonstrating you genuinely care about what they're doing to take care of themselves too.
3. SOCIALLY: Share HFTD social media assets to your brewery accounts. Our branding is specific and to the point, and easily relatable because it doesn't focus on just one type of person. Take advantage of our assets and share them to increase the likelihood that the person that needed to read IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK saw it fly by in their feed. All of our accounts are tied to @hopefortheday handles and we're doing our best to post every day.
4. OUTWARDLY: Discover the local mental health organizations around you that are found through entering your zip code here: <https://www.hftd.org/find-help> - and then follow and try and support their messaging through all this.
5. Email me at joel@hftd.org or fill out the Craft Beer Intake Questionnaire: <https://bit.ly/HFTDxBREWING> - just because we're under stay at home orders doesn't mean we can't set up a Things We Don't Say zoom meeting with your local community right the hell now. Reach out.

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Q: I am currently setting up a training program/employee handbook for a new brewery geared to open in the fall. Mental health and creating a safe culture at work is extremely important to me. What would you suggest for the best resources to offer to employees aside from creating and (hopefully) maintaining an uplifting and safe work environment?

A: Awesome question. And high five for taking all of this seriously and to heart. I would strongly recommend attending one of our full Things We Don't Say education sessions. We are currently holding them twice a week, Tuesdays and Saturdays, during the quarantine. It's an intimate space that allows a full back and forth with the educator, and it's a great place to pick up items you could slip into your brewery's culture. Visit [Peervention.org](https://www.hftd.org) to see the upcoming virtual sessions.

Regarding specific resources, I would discern what's available through your insurance coverage and inquire with your provider on who you can send people to if it isn't just a phone number to call. I would also put up supportive signage and tear-off tab resource sheets in high staff traffic areas to give your crew the chance to snag a phone number should they need it. Both of these types of materials are located here: <https://www.hftd.org/educationalmaterial>

Lastly, I would make the in-person pre or post shift team check in a part of your culture right out of the gate. Nothing communicates intentions quite like consistent communication.

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Q: I am a professional Mental Performance coach for an organization. Do you see a potential market to working with the brewing industry as a Mental Performance coach with difference matters as improving performance, team dynamics, team inclusion and so on?

A: Short answer: absolutely.

Longer answer: Abso-frickin-lutely.

The craft beer industry is no different than any other industry when it comes to mental health, the only exception being there's alcohol readily available to exacerbate some issues and shroud some others. You just have to understand that in order to fully accept your team members, you have to understand what stigmas they're living up to or battling, and which stigmas your brewery is inadvertently supporting.

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Q: How do you wade through comments from consumers/industry members that are borderline trolling or don't take your mental health material seriously? (IE: "A whole bottle of scotch a day? Noice!") How do you respond when the comments are sarcastic and trolling?

A: You're not going to have everyone agree with everything you're doing, but it's important to realize that just like Nelson (the bully from The Simpsons), everyone's got a story behind them. Nelson had it rough, and his HA HA was one of the ways he dealt with his own stressors.

Whenever I have someone spout off to me about how mental health is cute or just a kitschy fad, or that IT'S OK NOT TO BE OK is a middle aged white person's feel good platitude meant to sell vinyl printed coffee cups and shabby chic shiplap etsy signs, I accept their opinion as their own and simply respond with respect that I've been impacted by mental health and after losing friends to suicide, I'd rather work to make the world more aware of how feelings can impact health than picking another cute mantra to bedazzle on my super plushy oversized hoodie.

Was that too many words in one sentence? DON'T STIGMATIZE MY RUN ON SENTENCES.

Honestly though, you don't have to defend yourself or stoop to anyone's level. Ignore who you can, and move on. We'll be ready to talk to them when they're ready, but don't let them bring you down. They're the same people who talk trash about hazy IPAs and pastry stouts, and we both know those things are delicious (for the most part).

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Q: What is the best way to approach a coworker who is having a mental breakdown/issues when management is clearly ignoring it?

A: We run through the 6 steps for being supportive in our usual education programming, and you can download a truncated version of that on this page: <https://www.hftd.org/educationalmaterial> - the last item is an "educational instagram stories" zip file, and the third story image summarizes those 6 steps.

I'll break it down for you here briefly.

You aren't going to help in every situation, but it's important to remember being supportive doesn't always mean knowing what to say. BEING THERE is what's important. So:

1. Listen. Don't talk. Listen, and understand first and foremost that you don't have to do anything but not add to their pile.
2. Be non-judgemental. Don't minimize what they're experiencing, and don't force yourself to understand what they're going through or why they're responding to their crisis the way they are.
3. Ask WHAT questions, not WHY questions. Why questions are inherently judgemental and force people to legitimize or justify or defend their feelings, whereas WHAT questions force people to summarize and list out the things that are causing them to feel how they feel. You want bullet points, not book reports.
4. Give information, do not diagnose. It's never a good idea to make assumptions about someone's illness or current condition, so rather than saying "you sound like you're depressed", show someone a resource that can help identify and treat mental health

resources. NO BS, I bookmarked hftd.org/find-help on my phone for this very reason. I'm not a trained mental health professional, I just give a shit.

5. BE THE BRIDGE. Connect that person to the resources we just hit on in #4. Resources are everything from family, to school administrators, teachers, athletic coaches, police, mental health professionals, and organizations like ours. You're taking them seriously, you're allowing them to feel what they're feeling, now you're just ensuring that the "what next for them" gives them options.
6. Be a teammate in support. The best support you can give is listening non-judgmentally, helping them navigate the resources, giving encouragement, and checking in. Solutions to mental health issues are not instant or overnight, and remembering that being on the team doesn't just apply to game time, you'll be better equipped to realize that it's for the long haul.

Now if you're witnessing your co-worker or someone you know having a mental health crisis, it's the same as if you came across someone with a bullet hole in their leg. Take them seriously, stay with them, and connect them with medical professionals. Plain and simple.

I've been an elected official in a small city outside of Chicago for 7 years and every time I call the chief of police and ask who a resident should reach out to when they're concerned for a member of their family's mental health, the answer has been the same. The police, and first responders like EMT and firemen, are trained in crisis intervention and de-escalation. Preface the call to 911 with important information that will allow them to dispatch the appropriate emergency service for your particular situation.

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Q: For those who work under someone or have people in their lives who are more closed off to this topic, specifically of "the monolith," how would you recommend to make them more aware of this idea and potentially open their minds up to it?

A: I get asked this sort of question a lot and it all comes down to making sure I'm living and loving out loud. I shouldn't be expected to act a certain way in front of a certain person just because they're closed off to the idea that someone else is experiencing a mental health challenge, so I act how I would normally act everywhere. I consider my outward display of caring about the people around me a consistent aspect of my personality and who I am, so I lead with that, and respect the dignity of the individual.

I know what it's like to have a boss or a co-worker who poo-poo's other people's experiences and downplays the possibility of someone having a hard time by using methods like one-upping, or blowing it off, or making recommendations like "they should just..." or "if I was them I would just...". You can't fix those people (overnight), but you can influence them through consistency, blatant acts of humanity, and literally wearing your feelings on your clothing.

I'd say 100% of my clothes are either brewery shirts or Hope For The Day or mental health related shirts, and that's intentional. Live out loud. They'll catch up.

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Q: What are some ways to motivate our team during this time? Especially when we don't know when we will re-open to the public (we are to-go only right now) or move forward.

A: The video check-ins and phone calls are our best bet right now. It takes into consideration that we're following the instructions of the medical professionals, but it's still a personal connection. In addition to check-ins, and virtual happy hours, or virtual coffee talks, there are seminars popping up everywhere and an insane amount of free classes out there. In our HFTD group we have a few people taking this course: <https://www.coursera.org/learn/the-science-of-well-being/>

I've also seen some of the restaurants I work with putting together art projects, or finding ways to virtually volunteer for projects benefiting local first responders, or by raising money to buy food from other local restaurants, there are examples galore out there, just make sure you're motivating them in all things beyond just work.

Also, ordering your staff a pizza and having it delivered to their house for no reason other than you care about them is a cool gesture too.

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Q: How would you suggest approaching business owners (bars, restaurants, liquor stores) who may be struggling with mental health more at this time due to the stress of Covid-19? It is still important for us to promote our breweries at this time (My depression levels have been more up and down to my own fear of continued work) but we want to be conscious of others own struggles? Balance now is more difficult to find than ever before.

A: I know we all have our own methods of broaching uncomfortable subjects with the people we interact with, but I would realize that the beer and business side of things is second to making sure our people are heard and feel supported. Rather than 5% pleasantries and 95% business, I would lead with humanity and follow it up by a shortened business portion of the conversation, but then remember to remind those you're interacting with that you're working for another independent business or a great family or a longtime friend of yours, etc... Even inserting towards the tail end of the conversation with "I hate to bring up business during all this, but we're doing X with Y and Z, and they're great people and I wanted you to be aware of it."

You're human first, and a money maker second, so leading with dignity for the individual, and for the situation, and then respecting that person's current headspace, keeping in mind the human connection between creator of product and seller of product, you won't offend someone for doing your job. You just have to be the human first.

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Q: What are your go-to “what” questions when engaging someone experiencing a mental health challenge?

A: This is obviously dependent on the situation, but a good brief list of what questions that aren’t as general as “what’s going on?” or “what’s the matter?” can be variations of:

- What is causing all of this stress you’re under?
- Can you tell me what happened?
- What is making you feel like this?
- How’s are good, too. How long have you felt this way?

However it comes out, you just want to assist in letting that person vent while you determine the best next step. Whether you’re calling your boss, or your HR director, or a hotline number, or the police, the conversation keeps them connected. Keep connected until you can connect them with a professional.