

## **Business Design Centre, Mental Health First Aider Case Study**

### **Summary**

What is the nature of your organisation?

The Business Design Centre (BDC) is a leading multi-purpose venue that welcomes over 900,000 visitors and over 250 events a year as well as being home to over 100 permanent businesses. The company is committed to both the safe and responsible operating of all areas of the business and realises that supporting both staff and venue users when it comes to their mental health is of vital importance.

### **Background**

Why did you choose to carry out this training? How did you allocate delegates?

Working in the events industry is well known as one of the top five most stressful jobs. With the long hours, pressure to execute plans perfectly coupled with factors such as multiple contractors or staff to coordinate and extensive logistical challenges, the role can be likened to spinning plates. As such, it's key for us to ensure that staff, clients and those working on the events have people that they can talk to about how they might be affected by the work that they are so passionate about.

In July this year we booked a two day training course for 18 of our staff including the CEO and the four other Directors to become Mental Health First Aiders. We take the mental health and the wellbeing of our employees in particular very seriously and it's great that now just under half the company are trained Mental Health First Aiders.

### **Outcomes**

What did you learn?

Many of the team weren't sure what to expect before the course but most of the attendees commented that it was a huge eye opener for them. The realisation of how many people are suffering from mental health issues behind closed doors without making anyone aware is simply staggering. One of the main points taken away from the course was that people do need to talk more and help remove the negative stigma that can be linked with mental health issues.

It's empowered the trained members of the team to take this back into the wider company and even to events or office space clients to be a first point of call when it comes to beginning the conversation.

### **Conclusion**

What's next for your organisation in this field?

Other things we have in the pipeline is offering out a mental health APP such as Headspace or Calm to all employees; and for a number of years now we have offered chair massages for staff 2-3 times a year and going forward we will be looking at other things such as yoga or meditation classes.

How is membership to our Association helping you achieve your goals?

The value of AEV membership is integral to the development of the events industry. The AEV in particular offers a model that allows us to build on that which we do on a day to day basis as event venues, and share key knowledge. We share similar challenges, celebrate similar victories and at the end of the day, benefit from the sharing of concepts and ideas. When it comes to the care of our teams and the way in which we support their mental health there is no better way to set best practice and learn from each other in the ways each of us approach such an important, relevant issue.