MENTAL HEALTH, TIME FOR CHANGE IN TECH

Content Warning: Part of this presentation talks about suicide

Disclaimer: All work and views my own, and not connected to the BCS, or any other organisations that I have worked with (both past and present)
MENTAL HEALTH AND SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT CONCERNS

Deadlines/ Time Pressures
Isolation
Concentration

Fatigue
Work to Break Ratios
Fixing bugs

Reducing hours can be difficult
MENTAL HEALTH AND SOFTWARE TESTING CONCERNS

Deadlines/ Time Pressures
Unrealistic/ High Expectations
Developers busy

Bullying
Developer to Tester Ratios
Job Loss/ Redundancies

Blame it on the testers
MENTAL HEALTH AND CYBER SECURITY CONCERNS

24/7/365 Pressures
Incompatible systems
Personal responsibility

Lack of budget/tech
Fatigue/ Burnout
65% considered leaving - Forbes

Wellbeing & access to mental health services essential!
MENTAL HEALTH AND THE TECH INDUSTRY

- 2/5 near to burnout
- 55% Increased workloads
- 24% Managers - Trained
- 52% Anxiety/Depression
- 75% Mental Health Concerns
- 80% Supportive Companies

Mental Health in Tech needs to be addressed
MY EXPERIENCES OF TESTING AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Anxiety
- Pressures
- Redundancy

Source: www.watershed.co.uk
MY EXPERIENCES OF TESTING AND MENTAL HEALTH

- Onboarding
- Imposter Syndrome
- Lockdown
MANAGING MENTAL HEALTH IN TECH

Timescales and workloads
Checking In
Work/ Life Boundaries
WAYS TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH IN TECH

- A day at a time
- Food/Exercise
- Be Creative
- Plan work
- Boundaries
- Routine
- Wellbeing
- Be Honest!
WHAT ORGANISATIONS ARE DOING?

- First Aiders & Champions
- Events
- Training/Checking In
WHAT I AM DOING, AND AM PLANNING TO DO

My story (2009)

Talks

Events & Awareness
R;pple – Alice’s Story

- Lost brother to suicide
- Created R;pple online interceptive tool
- Made a difference to the lives of others

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvhC_huW-8s
R;PPLE – INFORMATION

Guided breathing exercises
Reassuring messages
Immediate access to helplines & mental health support

Safeguard staff
Safeguard clients & customers
Mental health & wellbeing agenda

Downloading R;pple – Support team there to help!
R;PPLE – THE IMPACT

- Downloaded >1.8 million times
- Interception of 23,180 genuine harmful online searches
- 30 people – Lives saved by R;pple
- 29 awards – Mental Health & Innovation space
MENTAL HEALTH AND LEGAL RIGHTS

Job/ Workplace
Planning ahead
Review regularly
Flexible hours
Quiet areas
Action plan
ARTICLES OF INTEREST

https://securityqueens.co.uk/stressed-out-burned-out-and-a-i-feel-like-a-fake/ - Stressed out, burned out and I feel like a fake
QAs Weigh In On Burnout Among Software Testing Professionals (thegovalead.com) – QAs weigh in on burnout among software testing professionals
https://www.computerweekly.com/news/252499473/Tech-professionals-most-likely-to-see-mental-health-decline-due-to-pandemic - Tech professionals most likely to see mental health decline due to pandemic
MORE ARTICLES OF INTEREST

https://betterprogramming.pub/we-need-to-talk-about-mental-health-for-software-developers-65bfa00e2356 - We need to talk about mental health for software developers
https://rosieclaverton.com/2015/08/17/5-mental-health-truths-from-inside-out/ - 5 mental truths from Inside Out
https://www.turing.com/blog/ways-to-maintain-good-mental-health-as-a-software-engineer/ - 7 ways of maintaining good mental health as a software engineer
https://www.zdnet.com/article/developers-are-burned-out-heres-what-theyre-doing-and-not-doing-to-tackle-it/ - Developers are burned out. Here’s that they are doing to tackle it
MORE R;PPLE INFORMATION

Alice’s Story: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WvhC_huW-8s
R;pple tool: https://www.ripplesuicideprevention.com/
R;pple – West Ham United FC: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=C9l2q3GgFR8
Alice Hendy - TEDx talk: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=W5tFF6vKx98
R;pple for Business: https://www.ripplesuicideprevention.com/downloads/r-pple-for-businesses-overview
CONCLUSIONS

Mental health awareness is essential and everyone matters

We need to address mental health awareness in the Tech Industry, regardless of role, and encourage people to speak out when things are difficult.

Organisations need to pro-actively address mental health awareness and concerns, and promote an environment of wellbeing and so people can reach out if needed

Thank you everyone for your support, encouragement, and attending tonight’s event!

#MentalHealthAwareness #BeKind #SuicidePrevention #Wellbeing #MentalHealthInTech