

ScotRail joins Samaritans and asks people to look out for each other

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On World Mental Health Day 2020 ScotRail is joining the Samaritans and encouraging people to look out for each other.

Railway staff across Scotland are being encouraged to share their coping mechanisms and to strike up a conversation with people who they feel may be struggling.

From taking a walk and chatting with friends to boiling the kettle for a cup of tea, staff have been sharing what they do to improve their mental health when they are having a tough day.

The train operator has 70 mental health first aiders across Scotland who have received extensive training through NHS-accredited material.

The training has provided staff with the skills needed to be able to identify someone who is developing a mental health issue and guide them to the relevant service.

However, while physical distancing guidelines have been in place, ScotRail's mental health first aiders

have had to find new ways to ensure colleagues receive the support they need.

Derek Monaghan, Customer Service at Glasgow Central station, has made use of video conferencing calls to allow support group meetings to continue to take place.

Colin Reed at Markinch station received ScotRail's Employee of the Month Award earlier this year for his kind-heartedness.

Colin reached out to his customers during the height of the Coronavirus pandemic through a thoughtful notice board message displayed at the station. He offered to keep in contact with any person requiring help by calling them weekly and even giving out his phone number to those needing it.

The kind gesture was shared on Twitter, resulting in hundreds of re-tweets, thousands of likes, and comments from others who had their own story to tell about Colin.

Martine Grivil, ScotRail Fatigue Manager, said: "During this unprecedented global pandemic, it's more important than ever to ensure those going through a difficult time get the help they need.

"Don't be afraid to speak to someone and strike up a conversation if you think they may be struggling. Whether that's texting a friend, chatting to colleagues through video conferencing apps, or checking in with a vulnerable neighbour – a moment of your time can make a massive difference in someone's life."

A Samaritans spokesperson said: "As the pandemic continues, we must remember to prioritise our mental health and stay connected with others. The age of social distancing has meant people are having less face to face contact so it can be much harder to spot signs that someone might be struggling.

"Looking after mental health and emotional wellbeing is everybody's business, we all have a part to play. We need to work together to ensure that we check in and support anyone who may be struggling during these challenging times."

Photo credit: ScotRail

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