How scams and acts of fraud can impact our mental health

Even though lockdown restrictions have now eased, individuals may be feeling anxious, tired and fed up. Mental Health support during times like these are paramount, which is why Care first have worked tirelessly to ensure our services remain available 24/7 throughout the pandemic to provide emotional and practical support and ensure we have every aspect of your overall wellbeing covered.

Coronavirus fraud -

Fraud is a crime that can happen to absolutely anyone. Often, when someone is a victim of a fraud, they are not certain if a crime has been committed or how to report what has happened to them. Many frauds go unreported by victims because of personal embarrassment. It is likely that if a fraud has been committed against you, someone has also suffered a similar crime, so you are not alone.

Organisations can also be targeted by fraudsters online through hacking, account compromise or online extortion. With the current situation and with many employees working from home. Security may not be quite as robust as in the office and new ways of working may be targeted by fraudsters. This in turn leads to new ways fraudsters can manipulate their way in to steal and coerce information and money out of businesses. This could lead to the revenue, reputation and long-term health of a business being at risk.

Unfortunately times like these are goldmines for fraudsters. The best way to prevent yourself from becoming a victim of fraud is knowledge.

- Keep up to date with information about scams that are doing the rounds and to ensure you know how to protect yourself and your business. (Use Action fraud and follow local police forces on social media, they often issue local and national warnings and information).
- Be savvy when anyone is asking for information about you or your organisation.
- Don’t be afraid to question why or if they need the information and if you are ever in doubt do not give any information out, go away and do some more research into what they want, who they are and why they need it. You do not have to tell anyone anything without a reasonable explanation or belief that they are who they say they are.
- Be cyber aware, there are numerous free online courses and information that is out there for you to utilise.

Fraudsters will try to catch you off guard so remember stop, think and question what you are doing and what they are saying. Don’t be so swift to click on the dodgy link, HMRC will not contact you for a refund via email and banks won’t call to ask for your passwords.
Fraud and Mental Health -

Fraud and becoming a victim of fraud can have a huge impact on our mental health. People are often embarrassed to admit they have become a victim of fraud because they see it as being their fault that someone managed to ‘pull the wool over their eyes’, or they can’t believe they fell for something that with hind sight seems so simple, rather than seeing themselves as a victim of a well-planned and well-rehearsed crime.

Because fraud is a crime that is, in theory, invisible to the outside world and extremely personal. On the face of things it only affects those that have been the direct victim and with no physical outcomes for anyone to see, unlike if it were a robbery or an assault, people often feel very alone when dealing with it.

Fraud and certainly fraud against individuals can make us feel personally violated and often people will ask the questions ‘why me?’, ‘what did I do so wrong?’ and ‘how was I so stupid enough to fall for it?’

When you have been a victim of fraud it is common to suffer from poor mental health, it is however extremely important to keep on top of it and ensure you are in control of your thoughts. Common signs that you are perhaps suffering more than you should be are, and not limited to the following:

- Lack of concentration on whatever you are doing
- Feeling alone
- Lack of sleep
- Feeling that you are not capable of making decisions about things
- A constant strain of feeling under pressure
- Feelings that you cannot overcome your difficulties
- Not being able to enjoy your normal day-to-day activities
- Being unable to face up to problems or what has happened
- Feeling unhappy and depressed
- Losing self-confidence in yourself
- And thinking of yourself as a worthless person

Some of the information sourced for this article was originally published by Action Fraud and CIFAS. If you would like to access this and further information in more detail please follow the links below –

https://www.actionfraud.police.uk

How Care first help?

If you feel you may need some emotional or practical support, you can contact Care first on the Freephone number. Care first is a leading provider of confidential, professional counselling, information and advice services. Whilst our BACP accredited Counsellors are available 24/7 to provide support with emotional issues, our expertly trained Information Specialists are available 8am-8pm Monday-Friday to provide advice on any practical issues that may be causing you a stress or worry and help you feel more in control of a situation. All employees are eligible to use Care first, our services include; telephone counselling, information services and online support. Call Care first on the Freephone number provided by your organisation and you can speak to a professional in confidence.

If you would like to view the Webinar on ‘How scams and acts of fraud can impact our mental health’ is being delivered live on Wednesday 3rd November 2021 at 12pm, please use the below link to register for this session –

https://register.gotowebinar.com/register/8406623332378247435

If you are unable to join the webinar live, a recording of the session can be accessed using the same link above after the webinar has taken place.