Workplace services and speaking out

analysis of mental health in tech

by The Real Ricardo

Background

According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), only **17 percent** of adults are operating at "optimal mental health." ([1](#))


One of the main reasons for this high degree of incidence is **fear of speaking out**. This is especially true in the workplace, where discrimination continues to be a major issue, with studies showing that people are unlikely to disclose a mental condition for fear of repercussions ([2](#)).

What can your company do to create an environment where people feel safe to speak out?

Dataset

- The data used in this report was downloaded from Kaggle (3).

- The source of the data was a survey done in 2014 by OSMI (4), a non-profit organization dedicated to raising awareness, educating, and providing resources to support mental wellness in the tech and open source communities.

- The survey included approx. 1200 people and were asked questions about their own mental health, family history and how mental health issues are perceived in their working environments among other subjects.
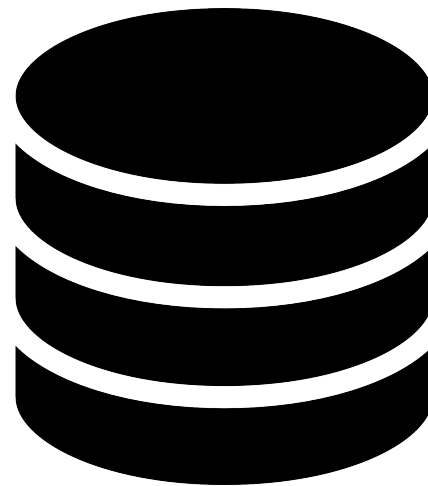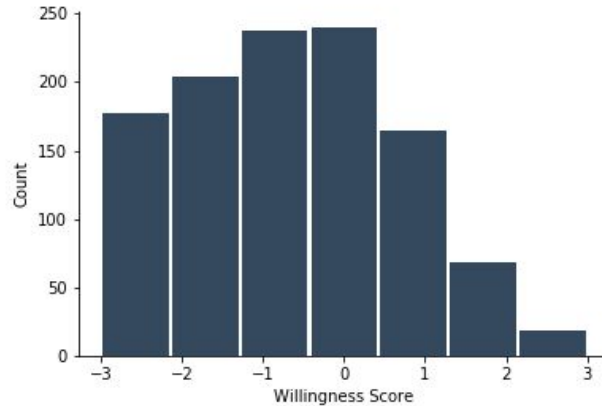
Analysis

- I calculated a metric to evaluate each person's **willingness to speak** about mental health and a **score for the company based on the number of health resources available.**
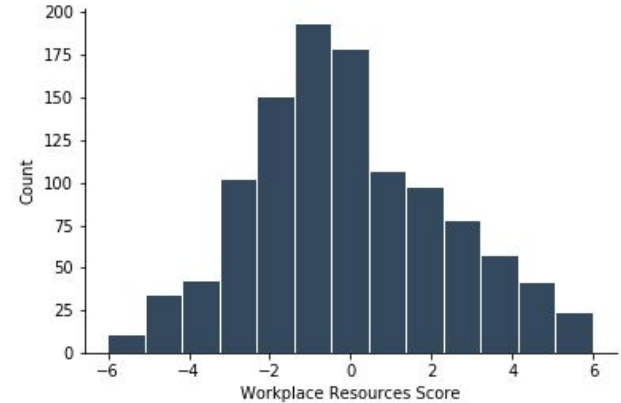
Scoring method

column	willingness
coworkers	**-1 -> +1**
supervisor	**-1 -> +1**
interview	**-1 -> +1**

column	resources
benefits	**-1 -> +1**
wellness	**-1 -> +1**
anonymity	**-1 -> +1**
seek_help	**-1 -> +1**
leave	**-2 -> +2**

Distribution of people by willingness to speak

Most people are **not willing** to discuss mental health

### Distribution of companies by mental health score

Analysis

- Before moving forward, I decided to explore **if having more care options** in a company would **translate into more employees knowing** about their options.

Proportion of employees
that **know their options**
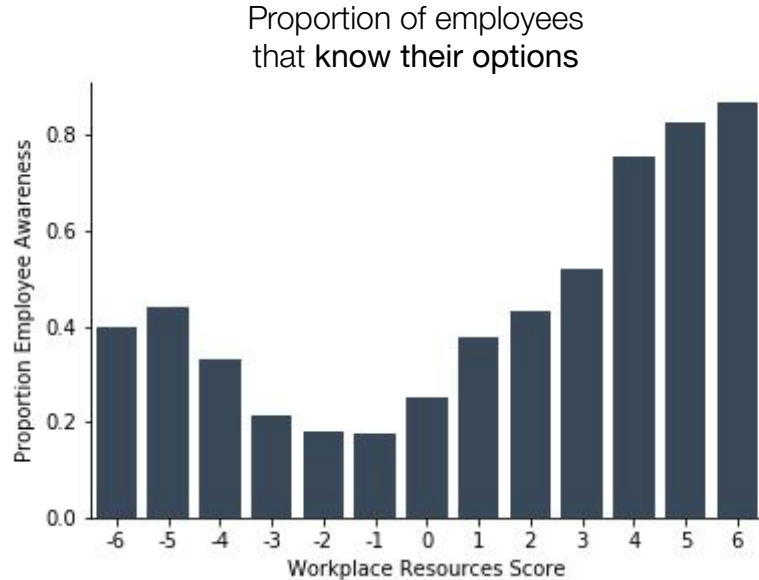
When **more options are available** in a company,
more employees are aware of them

Analysis

- Next, I explored whether an **employee's willingness to speak** would be affected **by personal variables** unrelated to the company where they work.
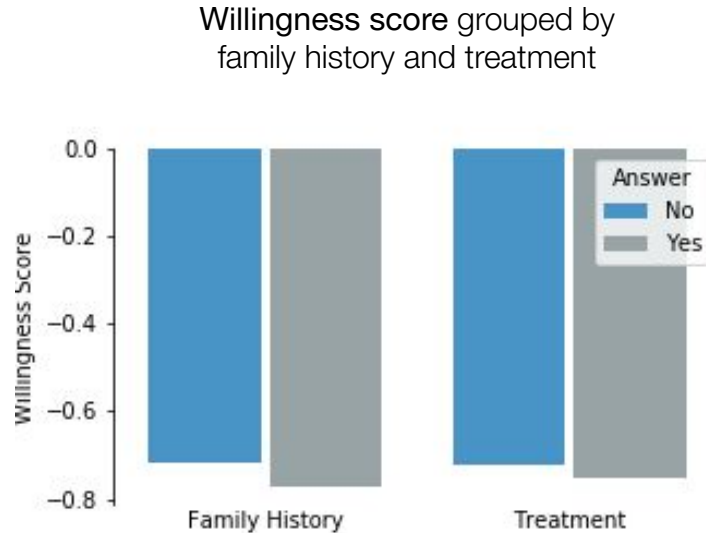
Willingness score grouped by
family history and treatment

Surprisingly, a person's willingness to speak seems to be influenced very little by family history or prior diagnosis

Analysis

- Finally, I compared the **average willingness to speak up** about mental health for employees grouped by the **number of mental health resources that are available** in a company.

Average **willingness score**
vs workplace score

Linear regression of mean **willingness**
score vs workplace score

Slope **0.13**
r2 **0.04**

There seems to be a positive relationship between availability of mental health resources
and willingness to speak, however our model only explains **4%** of the variation.

Conclusions

- Most people are **not willing** to discuss mental health

- Surprisingly, a person's **willingness to speak seems to be influenced very little by family history or prior diagnosis**

- When **more options are available** in a company, **more employees are aware of them**

- There seems to be a **positive relationship between availability of mental health resources and willingness to speak**, but a linear model only explains **4%** of the variation.

Having more resources for mental health **is a step in the right direction**, but a **lot more needs to be done** if we want people to feel safe about opening up.

References

(1) https://www.cdc.gov/mmwr/preview/mmwrhtml/su6003a1.htm?s_cid=su6003a1_w

(2)https://www.headsup.org.au/training-and-resources/news/2015/08/12/the-fear-of-speaking-up-about-mental-health-conditions-at-work

(2) https://www.kaggle.com/osmi/mental-health-in-tech-survey

(3) https://osmihelp.org/

And a big thanks to **Jo**.