

8 Best Workplace Practices for Helping Employees With Mental Health



Mental health isn't a wellness priority that should be put on the back burner. Unlike physical illnesses, mental health concerns can be harder to identify. For many individuals, anxiety and depression can go undiagnosed for years causing problems at both work and home.

Without treatment, employees may face substance abuse, recurring hospital visits, difficulty in relationships, and more. That's why starting conversations candidly in the workplace can be helpful and turn employees toward the resources they need to get help sooner.

Diving into mental health topics can be challenging and is seen as taboo. When HR and leadership get involved in promoting those topics, it can lead to open dialogue to destigmatize mental health issues.

Ready to take action?

We share best practices for creating a mentally healthy workplace:

1. Increase awareness



The first step to creating a workplace environment that fosters mental health discussions is to broach the topic openly and regularly. For your workplace, it may mean simply starting with this kit. Or, it may mean announcing to your team the new mental health benefits package.

2. Train managers



Look at ways you can provide training for your managers to better understand how to create a supportive mental health culture. Every employee is different, so it's important to remember there's not a systematic approach to mental health. Encourage management to attend seminars, workshops, and training to learn how to support staff with mental illness.

3. Encourage mental health days



Sometimes, all employees need is a mental health day or two to reset. Other times, they may need an extended leave of absence. Consider incorporating flexible policies that allow employees to feel they'll be supported — and not fired — for taking care of themselves mentally is one of the top best practices companies can incorporate.

4. Provide screening resources



Luckily, these days employers have access to plenty of free mental health resources to share with employees. If you can't bring a company in to do mental health screenings, online options are a quick and easy way for your employees to confidentially see what mental health conditions they may be struggling with.

5. Model healthy behavior



Company leadership has to walk the walk when it comes to mental health priorities in the workplace. Employees are uncomfortable as it is with the topic of mental health. But if they see it in regular practice by leadership, they may feel more at ease. Think of ways to follow-through on your mental health pep talks.

6. Check-in



With more employees working from home frequently (and potentially permanently), one of the most important supportive actions an employer can take is checking-in. No just on projects, either. Making it a point to personally connect with team members can make them feel more looped in. Many people rely on work for a sense of community and camaraderie.

7. Let employees know where to get support



Not only do you want your employees to feel supported within your company, but letting them know about local resources can be helpful, too. Some individuals may not want to have mental health visits on their insurance record. Help them by creating an updated and comprehensive packet of where they can get free, sliding scale, and paid services within your community or online.

8. Regularly review your benefits packages



Your employees may know they have company-sponsored health insurance that covers mental health. But they may not know how many visits they get or how to see which providers are in-network. Make it a point to review it with them at least once a quarter so they know what's available to them.

Don't forget to check out our "Take Action" Checklist to help implement these tips!