June 2024

OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

Mental Health in the Workplace

Employees do not leave their struggles at the door when they walk into work. The workplace can be an important location for support designed to improve well-being among adults. Workplace wellness programs can identify those at risk, connect them to treatment, and put in place support to help people reduce and manage stress. Investing in mental health and safety is critical to building solid workplaces, a strong workforce, and strong communities.

What Can Employers Do?

There are several ways employers can promote a healthy workplace.

Offer insurance coverage and employee assistance programs (EAP). Review benefit packages you offer to ensure they support access to mental health and substance use disorder insurance benefits. Additionally, it is important to help employees understand how to access and utilize their insurance benefits not only during open enrollment, but year-round. If you offer an EAP, share information through your company's typical channels of communication.

Consider workplace policies, practices and procedures. Management is encouraged to take time to review company practices and policies that address mental health in the workplace to ensure they are up to date and meet company needs.

Engage employees through education and awareness. Many employees are not aware if their company has mental health support services.

Offer regular educational mental health and suicide prevention content (communications, lunch and learns, trainings etc.), continually promoting resources and making information available to all employees so they know where and how to get help.

Research shows once someone who's struggling with suicidal thoughts has an opportunity to have an open conversation about it, they are likely to feel a sense of relief and take the opportunity to seek help.



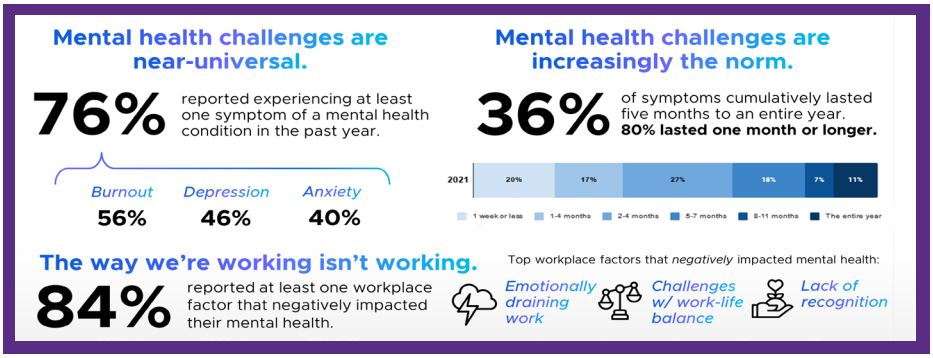
Source: Economic Cost of Poor Employee Mental Health Gallup Poll 2022

WHAT TO DO DURING A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

In the case of an employee experiencing a mental health crisis or someone shows warning signs of a crisis, here are a few things management and colleagues can do:

- Keep calm and avoid overreacting
- Do not leave the employee alone
- Ask how you can help
- Treat the person with respect and dignity
- Notify management/ leadership
- Contact the company's EAP, if it is available
- Be their advocate

"Many employees are not aware if their company has mental health support services."



Suicide is the leading cause of death among working-age adults, with approximately 80% of all people who die by suicide being in the working age of 18-65. The suicide rate in the U.S. working-age population overall has increased by approximately one third during the last two decades.[1]

As represented in the graphic above, 76% of U.S. workers reported at least one symptom of a mental health condition, and 84% cited at least one workplace factor that negatively impacted their mental health.[2]

Training is Available

The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation has several trainings, resources, and materials that employers and employees can utilize in their workplace. Employers are encouraged to review these resources and build on mental health strategies that will positively impact well-being, the employers bottom line, and our communities.

VitalCog: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

VitalCog trains organizations to proactively address the early warning signs of suicide in the workplace. Just as organizations have realized they can help reduce heart disease by encouraging exercise, they can also reduce suicide by promoting mental health and encouraging early identification and intervention.

This free training will educate and equip businesses with tools to address mental health and suicide concerns within the workplace.

For more information about VitalCog training, contact support@ohiospf.org.

Resources

- Employer Resource Guide https://www.ohiospf.org/employer-toolkit/
- American Psychiatric Association Suicide Prevention & Response: New Tools Help Employers Take Action https://workplacementalhealth.org/Mental-Health-Topics/Suicide-Prevention
- National Action Alliance for Suicide Prevention Workplace Suicide Prevention and Postvention https://theactionalliance.org/communities/workplace

References

1 Sussell A. Suicide Rates by Industry and Occupation — National Vital Statistics System, United States, 2021. *MMWR Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report.* 2023;72(50). doi:https://doi.org/10.15585/mmwr.mm7250a2

2 Infographic and information from MindShare Partners' 2021 Mental Health at Work Report. BIT.LY/msp-2021-report. Accessed June 7, 2024

ABOUT
OHIO SUICIDE PREVENTION FOUNDATION

Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) educates, advocates for, and builds connections and support for individuals, families, and communities to prevent suicide.

OSPF Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation OhioSPF.org

(614) 429-1528 / OhioSPF.org

This resource is brought to you by the Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) with funding from the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services.