

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

Stephanie Flannery



TODAY'S AGENDA:

- Discuss the mental health stigma that is in the workplace
- Understand how mental health challenges affects our employees' safety
- Reasons why we should focus on total worker health
- Ways to offer help and education



ABOUT ME

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MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

For the past couple of years, safety professionals have been seeing increased levels of mental health issues, mostly stemming from the pandemic.

Analyses show 27% of people are reporting symptoms of anxiety and depression in the past two years. Prior to COVID, that rate was 10.8%



MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

- 3 out of 5 employees don't feel comfortable discussing their mental health at work.
- Resistance to openness regarding a sensitive issue like mental health reflects the mindset that's been in place for many of us our entire careers. We were taught to leave our personal life at home, and not bring it to work.
- Younger workers don't share these beliefs. They're open about all aspects of their lives, including their health. Many look to employers to help solve personal issues, including mental health.

WORK CAN AFFECT MENTAL HEALTH, AND MENTAL HEALTH CAN AFFECT WORK

Mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It helps us determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make healthy choices.

WORKPLACE STRESS

- 9 in 10 employees report that their workplace stress affects their mental health
- 3 in 5 employees are not receiving adequate support from supervisors to help manage stress

EMPLOYEE BURNOUT

- 4 in 5 employees feel emotionally drained from their work, an early sign of burnout
- 56% of employees spend time looking for a new position compared to 40% of employees in 2018

EMPLOYEES' SAFETY

- When employees don't get the support they need to navigate their mental health challenges, they can become a safety hazard.
- Mental health issues can inhibit focus and concentration. Working under these conditions can lead to serious injury to themselves or others.

Workplace violence is often related to mental health challenges as well

Stress, distraction, and mental fatigue are leading causes of workplace injuries.

TOTAL WORKER HEALTH

Because mental health can affect workers' safety and productivity, we should focus on their health and safety more holistically, addressing not only their physical welfare, but mental and emotional well-being as well.

Companies that invest in and support the health and well-being of their employees will get in return increased productivity, decreased injury and illness risk, decreased health care spending, and more engagement with their work.

WHY SHOULD WE ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK?

Mental health concerns are both common and long-lasting

- About 18% of the US adult population has a mental illness in any given year. These illnesses, like depression and anxiety cross every industry and occupation, every socioeconomic status, every race and ethnicity.
 - Unlike some physical chronic conditions that don't start in workers until their 40's, 50's, or 60's, mental health concerns can present in a worker's 20's or 30's and can last throughout their entire working career.
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WHY SHOULD WE ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK?

Mental health affects worker productivity and the bottom line.

- Evidence supports the connection between individuals' mental well-being and their ability to function at work.
- Employers are reporting that mental illness is one of the leading causes of disability in their workplaces, and that is expensive.
- Mental illness worsens other underlying conditions. If someone is injured at work and they also have an anxiety or depressive illness, their likelihood of returning to work quickly goes down significantly and the cost of recovery goes up.

WHY SHOULD WE ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK?

Workplace stress contributes to poor physical and mental outcomes.

- There is growing evidence that shows a connection between workplace stress and the development of depression and anxiety disorders.
- Employees don't want their mental health issues to impact their careers, so they keep quiet.
- Educating employees on how to manage and reduce stress can help.
- We also need to focus on the cause of the stress – bosses need to determine and understand if and when they are causing stress for others.

WHY SHOULD WE ADDRESS MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK?

Mental health can affect worker safety.

- Employees' mental state can affect their ability to make good decisions and recognize hazards.
- Mental focus and clarity is required to ensure good decisions are made.
- To work safely, people need to be mindful of what they're doing, and that's part of the conversation on mental health.
- Incidents often occur because they related to how people are making decisions, where distraction comes into play. If we can eliminate things that are causing them stress or taking their minds off-task, that can contribute to a safer working environment.

HOW TO IMPROVE MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



EDUCATE ON MENTAL HEALTH

Provide resources.

- How to identify signs/symptoms of mental illnesses
- Where employees can get help

APRIL SHOWERS...
Don't always bring May flowers.
How can we combat seasonal depression during Ohio's rainiest month of the year?

More Than Just the Rainy Day Blues?
Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) is a mood disorder, in which you are more likely to experience negative effects on your mood as a result of weather. Often times, this occurs during parts of the year that are coldest or rainiest. The lack of sunlight during these times has been proven to decrease serotonin levels, a hormone in the body that has a key role in mood, sleep and digestion. Even without a diagnosis of SAD, many individuals will feel a decrease in motivation, energy or happiness when it is gray and rainy outside.

Risk Factors for Depression:
There are many factors that can contribute to depression beyond the weather such as:

- Sedentary lifestyle
- Chronic stress
- Unbalanced diet
- History of trauma
- Previous grief and loss
- Major life changes
- Physical illness
- Certain medications
- Genetics

UNDERSTANDING DEPRESSION

What is Depression?
Depression is a mood disorder that can be described as feelings of sadness, loss or anger that interferes with a person's daily activities. Although grief and depression share similarities, depression is different in that it usually involves self-loathing or a loss of self-esteem. Depression can also contribute to worsening physical symptoms, such as:

- Arthritis
- Asthma
- Cardiovascular disease
- Cancer
- Diabetes
- Obesity

Everyone feels down at times, and this is a normal part of life. However, if you are feeling down or hopeless on a regular basis, you may be dealing with depression.

Depression is considered a serious medical condition that can get worse without proper treatment.

Signs and Symptoms
If you experience some of the following symptoms of depression nearly every day for at least two weeks, you may be living with depression:

- Feeling sad, anxious, empty, pessimistic
- Feeling hopeless, worthless
- Crying excessively
- Feeling bothered, annoyed or angry
- Loss of interest in hobbies you once enjoyed
- Decreased energy, fatigue
- Difficulty concentrating, remembering, making decisions
- Difficulty sleeping or oversleeping
- Appetite or weight changes
- Chronic physical pain with no clear cause that does not get better with treatment (headaches, digestive problems, cramps)
- Thoughts of death, suicide, self-harm

NEED TO TALK?
LifeWorks is Bilstein's official EAP service. They offer 24/7 confidential help that may range from life and family issues to money, work and health related topics.
See Nurse Emily or any members of the Safety Team for more information.

We are here for you.

If you are having thoughts of suicide or self-harm, you don't have to cope with them alone.
To get help coping with overwhelming or distressing thoughts, **you can reach out 24/7, 365 days a year.**

Text support: Text HOME to 741741 to connect with Crisis Text Line
Phone support: Call 988 to connect with National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

ENCOURAGE OPEN CONVERSATIONS



What can we do, as employers, to break the stigma?

- Check in with employees
- Listen and practice empathy
- Normalize talking about mental health
- Provide access to programs related to behavioral and mental health

ARE YOU A LEADER?

For 70% of people, their manager has more impact on their mental health than their therapist or their doctor, and it's equal to the impact of their partner.

The stakes for leadership have always been high, but knowing you're affecting people that much, is cause for leaders to take stock and ensure they're doing all they can to be their best and have their most positive impacts on people.

EDITORS' PICK

Managers Have Major Impact On Mental Health: How To Lead For Wellbeing

Tracy Brower, PhD Contributor ©

I write about happiness, work-life fulfillment and the future of work.

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ACCESS TO MENTAL HEALTH CARE



Make sure that everyone has help, support, and access to mental health professionals.

Employer Assistance Programs (EAP)
Internal support (company nurse)

EAP RESOURCES

Feel Supported

If you're feeling stressed, having sleep problems or worrying about your budget, connect with us confidentially

CareNow Self-Directed

CareNow Counselor-Assisted

Chat



(888) 267-8126

Toll-free



(888) 732-9020

Toll-free



Phone, text, chat, app, in-person, blogs, podcasts, webinars - so many options and tools

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EAP RESOURCES

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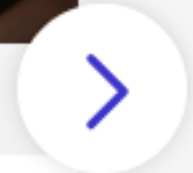
ANXIETY

Dealing with Persistent Worry



STRESS

Relaxation Tips to Help You Beat Stress



ANXIETY

Breathe: Managing Stress (Audio)



ANXIETY

Finding a Counselor, Therapist, or Coach Podcast

PROVIDE OPPORTUNITIES TO EXERCISE

Not only does exercise help prevent physical ailments, but it improves mental well-being as well.



Daily physical activity directly impacts your next work day as it contributes to higher quality sleep, higher energy levels and focus capabilities.



ASK FOR FEEDBACK



Empower everyone to actively contribute and provide feedback on how to improve mental health.

What else can we do?

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

WHY MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AT WORK?

Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) at Work teaches employees how to identify, understand and respond to signs and symptoms of mental health and substance use challenges encountered in the workplace.

Approximately

**10.8
million**

full-time workers
have a substance
use disorder.

- [*Substance Abuse
and Mental Health
Services Administration*](#)

As many as

200 million

workdays are lost each year due to
mental health challenges.

- [*Harvard Business Review*](#)

Less than **10%**

of employees feel their workplace is
free of stigmas about mental health.

- [*McKinsey Center for Societal Benefit*](#)

Having trained and certified individuals within the organization that can assist and guide people struggling with mental health concerns is an added benefit we can provide.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID

What it covers:

- noticing signs and symptoms of mental health challenges and substance use**
- navigating conversations about these things**
- knowing that recovery is possible, and how to support it**
- tackling mental health stigma in the workplace**
- principles of safety and privacy**
- building resilience and strategies to alleviate burnout**
- reinforcing relevant employee assistance programs and resources**

ANY QUESTIONS?



THANK YOU!



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automotive.com

SOURCES:

safetyandhealthmagazine.com

ehstoday.com

thenationalcouncil.org

forbes.com

linkedin.com

