



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS

1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experience some type of mental illness each year, with depression and anxiety being the most common and frequently co-occurring. However, two-thirds don't get the treatment they need due to neglect, stigma, cost, wait times, and lack of access to treatment.

This last year has shown us the negative impact stress, uncertainty and trauma can have on people's well-being. The lines between work and home have been blurred and employees may be struggling with comparing their current selves to their pre-pandemic selves. One thing we can do to help create a mentally healthy work environment is to fight the stigmas around mental health.

Mental health stigmas are negative attitudes toward people with mental health challenges. They can lead to discrimination, which is when people with mental health challenges are treated worse because of their illness. Stigmas can make it hard for people to talk about their problems and get help. We are not defined by our diagnoses, disabilities, or challenges.

Destigmatizing the need for mental health care is critical to an inclusive workplace. Marginalized populations often feel that stigma more keenly than others. The more we normalize our need for mental health support, the less frequently employees will need to hide which frees up energy that flows into their lives and into the workplace community. We must train managers and leaders to lead by example and hold space and normalize these conversations.

While it may be challenging to both recognize and treat mental health disorders, early intervention is key to preventing them from getting worse. Check-in on your teammates and colleagues to ensure no one is suffering in silence. If you're feeling overwhelmed, take time off to recharge and seek additional support if necessary.



RESOURCES

1. 988 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

988 is now active across the United States. This Lifeline provides 24/7, free and confidential support for people in distress, prevention and crisis resources for you or your loved ones, and best practices for professionals in the United States.

<https://988lifeline.org/>

3. THE TREVOR PROJECT

Provides 24/7 crisis intervention and suicide prevention services to LGBTQ young people under 25.

Phone support: 1-866-488-7386

Text support: Text **START** to 678-678

www.thetrevorproject.org/get-help-now

5. CRISIS TEXT LINE

Connect with a trained crisis counselor to receive free, 24/7 crisis support via text message.

Text **HOME** to 741741

www.crisistextline.org

7. TEEN LINE

Provides emotional support to youth. Their mission is to provide peer-based education and support before problems become a crisis, using a national hotline, community outreach, and online support.

Call **(310) 855-HOPE** or **(800) TLC-TEEN**

(nationwide toll-free) from 3pm-7pm EST or Text **TEEN** to 839863 between 3pm-6pm EST

<https://www.teenlineonline.org>

2. NATIONAL SEXUAL ASSAULT HOTLINE

Connect with a trained staff member from a sexual assault service provider in your area that offers access to a range of free services. Crisis chat support is available at Online Hotline. Free help, 24/7.

Call **800-656-HOPE (4673)**

www.hotline.rainn.org

4. NATIONAL DOMESTIC VIOLENCE HOTLINE

Trained expert advocates are available 24/7 to provide confidential support to anyone experiencing domestic violence or seeking resources and information. Help is available in Spanish and other languages.

Call **800-799-SAFE (7233)**

www.thehotline.org

6. NAMI HELPLINE (NON-EMERGENCY)

The NAMI Helpline is a free, nationwide peer-support service providing information, resource referrals and support to people living with a mental health condition, their family members and caregivers, mental health providers and the public. The NAMI Helpline can be reached Monday through Friday, 10 a.m.–8 p.m., ET.

1-800-950-NAMI (6264) or info@nami.org

www.nami.org/help

8. ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

Find a therapist:

www.psychologytoday.com

Mental Health Screening:

www.screening.mhanational.org



5 WAYS TO FIGHT MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Stigma has various definitions, but they all refer to negative attitudes, beliefs, descriptions, language, or behavior. In other words, stigma can translate into disrespectful, unfair, or discriminatory patterns in how we think, feel, talk, and behave towards individuals experiencing a mental illness. Here are 5 simple ways that you can fight against mental health stigmas.

1. Don't label people who have a mental illness.

Don't say, "He's bipolar" or "She's schizophrenic." People are people, not diagnoses. Instead, say, "He has been diagnosed with a bipolar disorder" or "She is living with schizophrenia." You can also say "has a mental illness" instead of "is mentally ill." This is known as "person-first" language, and it's far more respectful, for it recognizes that the illness doesn't define the person.

2. Don't be afraid of people with a mental illness.

People with mental illness aren't more likely to be violent than the general population. In fact, research shows that they are more likely to be victims of violence. Don't fall prey to other inaccurate stereotypes from movies, such as that of the disturbed killer or the weird co-worker.

3. Don't use disrespectful terms for people with mental illness.

In a research study with British 14-year-olds, teens came up with over 250 terms to describe mental illness, and the majority were negative. These terms are far too common in our everyday conversations. Also, be careful about casually using "diagnostic" terms to describe everyday behavior, like "That's my OCD," or, "She's so borderline." Given that 1 in 5 US adults experience a mental illness, your words may unintentionally shame others and discourage them to reach out for support.

4. Don't be insensitive or blame people with mental illness.

It would be silly to tell someone to just "buckle down" and "get over" cancer. The same applies to mental illness. Also, don't assume that someone is okay just because they look or act okay or sometimes smile or laugh. Depression, anxiety, and other mental illnesses can often be hidden, but the person can still be in considerable internal distress. Provide support and reassurance when you know someone is having difficulty managing their illness.

5. Be a role model.

Stigma is often fueled by lack of awareness and inaccurate information. Model these stigma-reducing strategies through your own comments and behavior and politely teach them to your friends, family, co-workers and others in your sphere of influence. Spread the word that treatment works and recovery is possible. Most importantly, prioritize your own mental health and reach out for support when needed.