

Support and Share Mental Health at the Workplace

“If we start being honest about our pain, our anger, and our shortcomings instead of pretending they don’t exist, then maybe we’ll leave the world a better place than we found it.”
– Russell Wilson

Before starting the topic, let’s see what mental health means.

What is mental health?

A person’s emotions, psychological, and social well-being are included in their mental health. Mental health completely affects a person’s thinking, feeling, and how he/she acts. It also helps in determining how someone is handling his stress, communicating with others, and making decisions.

Having healthy and stable mental health is very important in one’s life, no matter what stage of life that person is, from childhood to adolescence and throughout adulthood.

Mental health at the workplace

For many people like us, work is a major part of life. At the workplace, a person spends half of his day with other employees. And at that place, you make friends who also become your other family. So, it is very important to have a fulfilling job that can maintain your mental peace and general well-being.

Let’s take an example of a workplace, a workplace has different types of people who are coming from different places and backgrounds. It is quite often that it takes time for a person to settle at a new place and in the beginning, he/she is quite shy and usually doesn’t share his/her feelings with others.

There are several things that make you suffer mental issues at the workplace like, work-related problems, deadlines, or travels and sometimes there are other things like health, relationship, or any other circumstances. So, a person needs to protect himself and share his/her problems with their friends at the workplace to avoid huge mental trauma.

Sometimes, it is quite tricky to talk about mental health but it can let you feel more tricky at best and terrifying at worst. But it also becomes a vicious cycle because if any person who is suffering from mental issues will talk less with other employees about things like how they are struggling at their workplace then the stigma will grow more.

So, to stop this poisonous cycle, you need to take a step, so just stand up and address your issue proactively, thoughtfully, and strategically. Because in the end, the way you talk to others who are having anxiety issues brings a major impact on how you feel. And things like the COVID-19 pandemic have also increased this gap of communication between employees.

So, if you are a leader or manager of any organization then here are some easy to support and share mental health among your employees without overstepping.

Ways to support your employees' mental well-being:

- **Speak about mental health**

Stop treating mental illness as taboo is the first step to beat the stigma. Be free to share your personal experience of mental health, because if one will speak about it then others will join you and will share their issues and experiences. You can conduct a seminar on mental illness so that others can know that they are not suffering alone and can try to treat their illness.

- **Have a healthy conversation**

As you all know, a workplace has a nurtured culture, which means that it is not necessary that one will speak about mental health once and expect it to catch on. So, as a leader, you need to find opportunities so that employees' can talk about it more often and it stays top-of-mind.

- **Include all employees from every category**

As you know, the work culture starts at the top. So, every manager and executive needs to demonstrate the importance of mental health among employees, because employees won't believe that you are genuinely taking care of their well-being.

- **Give mental health days off**

If one of your employees is suffering from mental health, then you can either provide a doctor's note or ask them to give a legitimate reason and take a day off. Because of preventative health, it is very important to give a break to your mind and body. So allow your employees to take some daff off if they are suffering from some mental health issues.

- **Always be ready to help others**

If you find that any employee is behaving differently, like having a low mood or irritability, etc, then ask them if everything is alright and if anyhow you can be helpful for them, then help them. Even if they don't share anything, then remind them that you are always there to help them without any hesitation.

- **Facilitate access to resources**

Your staff won't get much use out of the information if it's difficult for them to find. So try to reduce barriers to access by providing the content in a variety of formats like audio, video, written, etc, and minimizing the number of steps it takes for them to find it.

- **Prioritize confidentiality and anonymity**

It is possible that mental health might be normalized at your workplace after taking all these measures. Some of them may still feel uncomfortable discussing it with others, mainly when they are struggling with trauma, addiction, or any suicidal thoughts. So, at first, try to reassure your staff that your top concern is their privacy, and their use of mental health resources will never be mentioned in front of others and never be tracked or monitored.

- **Maintain a healthy workspace**

It's important to make sure that your employees are feeling safe at the workplace. And your employees are feeling energized and uplifted by their workplace environment.

- **Focus on the positive side.**

Mental illness is a very serious issue for everyone, and sometimes people feel very hesitant about discussing it. So make sure that your employees feel appreciated, understood, and hopeful regarding this matter. Let your employees know that you and your company are always ready to help them and have a clear plan of action for their loved ones so that they can get well.