Workplace Mental Health for Leaders

What is Mental Health?

A state of well-being in which every individual realizes his or her own potential, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and fruitfully, and is able to make a contribution to her or his own community.   –World Health Organization

Warning Signs/Symptoms

IN CRISIS	STRUGGLING	SURVIVING	THRIVING	EXCELLING
Very anxious	Anxious	Worried	Positive	Cheerful
Very low mood	Depressed	Nervous	Calm	Joyful
Absenteeism	Tired	Irritable	Performing	Energetic
Exhausted	Poor performance	Sad	Sleeping well	High performance
Very poor sleep	Poor sleep	Trouble sleeping	Eating normally	Flow
Weight loss	Poor appetite	Distracted	Normal social activity	Fully realising potential
		Withdrawn		

How Will You Know?

Typically, issues surface in at least one of three areas in the workplace:
- Performance
- Behavior
- Attendance

The 5 A's Strategy

- Awareness
  - Become aware of mental health issues-arm yourself with knowledge
  - Identify workplace risk factors for stress
  - Identify internal biases related to mental health
  - Reach out to community partners who can present topics related to mental health (i.e. Psychological First Aid)
  - Train leadership to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues
- Accommodation
  - Become aware of mental health issues-arm yourself with knowledge
  - Identify workplace risk factors for stress
  - Identify internal biases related to mental health
  - Reach out to community partners who can present topics related to mental health (i.e. Psychological First Aid)
  - Train leadership to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues
- Assistance
  - Offer comprehensive mental health support
  - Provide free or subsidized lifestyle coaching or wellness programs
  - Establish peer support programs or connect people with other community resources
  - Offer a mental health "toolkit"
- Access
  - Research the barriers in your organization and work to remove them
  - Connect people to resources and follow up
  - Resources need to be readily available and visible (both physically and virtually)
  - Prioritize privacy and trust
- Acceptance
  - Seek ways to combat stigma and stereotypes
  - Encourage open discussions
  - Normalize mental health issues
  - Use inclusive language
  - Create quiet spaces to decompress
  - Establish a "Time to Talk" meeting or day
  - Support Employee Resource Groups (ERG)
  - Become an internal advocate for change!

We ALL Play a Role

- Ask tough questions and genuinely listen
- Safeguard confidentiality to foster trust
- Lean on experts in/out of your organization

- Lead by example by checking your bias(es) and take care of your own mental health
- Acknowledge where there's room for improvement
- Normalize mental health issues
- Give people grace

Additional Resources

- Mental Health America Workplace Mental Health Research https://www.mhanational.org/workplace-wellness
- Mental Health America https://mhanational.org/
- Stigma Free Workplace
- Project Implicit https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/takeatest.html
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health-Supported Performance Management https://www.workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com/managing-workplace-issues/supportive-performance-management
- Time to Change: Choose Talk, Change Lives https://www.time-to-change.org.uk/get-involved/time-talk-day
- Nebraska Psychological First Aid education http://disastermh.nebraska.edu/education/psychological.php
- Best Care EAP www.BestCareEAP.org
- The Wellbeing Partners www.thewellbeingpartners.org