

# THE 4 PILLARS OF CREATING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE

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# MY STORY ...





# 6 THINGS I'VE LEARNED

1. My story is not unique.
2. Employees living with a mental health condition rarely feel their workplace is a place of safety.
3. Employees are afraid to ask for help for fear of judgment, retribution or job loss.
4. Employees thrive when they are in a safe environment.
5. Stigma and discrimination thrive on lack of knowledge and understanding.
6. Many leaders don't feel prepared to open the dialog about mental health.





# THE 4 PILLARS OF CREATING A MENTALLY HEALTHY WORKPLACE



# Pillar 1:

## Recognize the Impact of Unaddressed Mental Health In the Workplace





**1 in 5 people** experience at least one mental health episode in their lifetime.

**8 in 10 people** feel *shame, stigma, and fear* of ramifications are reasons they do not disclose living with a mental health condition.

Source: The Partnership for Workplace Mental Health Survey

**Mental illness** is more common than cancer, diabetes and heart disease **combined**.



**75%**

Of medium to large organizations offer an employee assistance program (EAP).

**Stigma, Shame,  
and Fear**  
are the largest barriers  
to EAP usage.

**National  
EAP usage rate is  
3-5%**



People experiencing mental health conditions often face rejection, bullying, and discrimination

**Less than half** of the adults in the U.S. get the help they need.

Mental health conditions are the **leading cause** of disability across the globe.





# PRESENTEEISM

When employees ~~are~~ *work but not fully functioning* because of an illness, injury, or other condition.

*Absenteeism* most employees ~~\$~~ *\$150 billion* per year

*Presenteeism* ~~is~~ *10x more costly* than absenteeism

## WORKING AT A LESS THAN OPTIMAL LEVEL CAN RESULT IN:

- ✓ Decreased concentration
- ✓ Decreased engagement
- ✓ Poor interactions with customers / co-workers
- ✓ Accidents
- ✓ Errors
- ✓ Turnover





**Presenteeism** can be difficult to identify because it's not clear what level the employee is suffering.



# SIGNS AND SYMPTOMS



- Withdrawn
- Sad
- Isolated
- Aggressive
- Mood swings
- Irritable
- Poor hygiene
- Poor nutrition
- Inability to concentrate
- Intrusive thoughts
- Worry
- Fear
- Decreased productivity
- Increased productivity

*Never overlook the high performers they can suffer too.*



# Pillar 2:

Share the Lived Experience to Bring the Human Connection to Mental Health.



“One of the most effective antidotes to stigma in the workplace is direct contact between peers.”  
NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS





# PEER SUPPORT IN THE WORKPLACE

- **CREATES** a safe space for open dialog
- **ILLUSTRATES** we are not alone
- **BREAKS** down barriers
- **INSPIRES** employees to take the first step
- **GUIDES** employees through their journey of recovery
- **DISPELS** myths about living with mental illness or substance misuse
- **PROVIDES** a roadmap of available resources

## RESULTS OF PEER SUPPORT

- **INCREASED** EAP utilization
- **INCREASED** employee satisfaction
- **INCREASED** employee engagement
- **INCREASED** productivity
- **DECREASED** health care costs
- **DECREASED** sick leave both short and long term





# Pillar 3:

Change the Perception of Mental Health  
By Decreasing Stigma



Stigma contributes to  
fear, shame, silence, stereotyping,  
bullying, harassment, and turnover.



# IMPACT OF STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE



- ✓ **DRASTICALLY REDUCES** an employee's ability to come forward and disclose they need help
- ✓ **LACK OF DISCLOSURE** limits the employer's ability to accommodate the worker.
- ✓ **LACK OF ACCOMMODATION** can lead to decreased engagement, concentration, productivity, absenteeism, presenteeism, and workplace accidents.







Decreasing stigma begins by embracing

**Person-centered language**



# Stigmatizing words and phrases

Alcoholic

Addict

Nuts

Junkie

Psycho

Crazy

Schizophrenic

Lunatic

Bipolar

Drama queen

Frequent Flyer

On/off the wagon

Admit

Committed suicide



# Person Centered / Person First Language



Crazy/Psycho  
Addict  
Alcoholic  
He/She is bipolar  
Schizoid  
On the wagon  
Off the wagon  
Admit  
Committed suicide

- ✓ Person living with a mental health condition
- ✓ Person living with substance misuse
- ✓ Person living with alcohol misuse
- ✓ Person living with bipolar disorder
- ✓ Person living with schizophrenia
- ✓ Person in recovery
- ✓ Person who relapsed
- ✓ Acknowledge
- ✓ Died by suicide



WORDS MATTER

# Phrases to remove



I'm so OCD

I'm so ADD/ADHD

The weather is bipolar

That's insane

Stop being paranoid

They are crazy/insane/psycho

They are anorexic/bulimic

Snap out of it

It's all in your head

People have it worse than you

Your life is perfect!

Just take your meds and you'll be fine

I had a panic attack when I saw my electric

Stop being so dramatic



# Pillar 4:

## Create a Culture of Safety in The Workplace



# Culture of Safety:

A culture where everyone feels  
*safe speaking openly about mental health  
without fear of judgment, retribution, or job  
loss.*



# CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY



- ✓ **COMMIT** to mental health as a top priority
- ✓ **CREATE** top-down leadership communication
- ✓ **EMBED** commitment to mental health in all communications
- ✓ **TRAIN** leaders on mental health, signs and symptoms, stigma peer support, and the power of words



# CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY



- ✓ **FOSTER** psychological health and safety
- ✓ **CREATE** a peer support network
- ✓ **SHIFT** to person centered language
- ✓ **PARTNER** with employee assistance program
- ✓ **BUILD** continuous awareness of resources to support mental health
- ✓ **REVIEW** and improve return to work strategy and accommodations
- ✓ **EMPOWER** leaders to open the dialog about mental health





**“The most powerful organizations create a safe workplace culture that empowers employees to remove the mask of fear and shame and speak openly about mental health.”**

**- Kim LaMontagne, MBA**





# QUESTIONS?





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