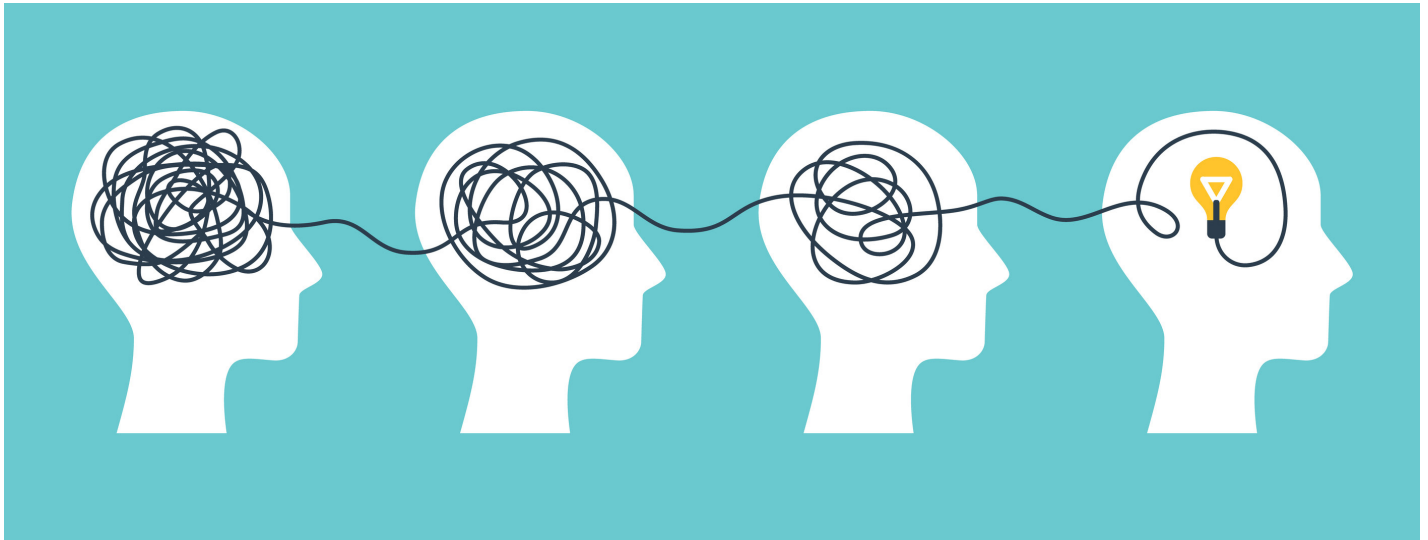


MENTAL HEALTH *tips* FOR LEADERS



BE VULNERABLE AND MODEL HEALTH BEHAVIORS.

Employees look to leaders for appropriate behavior at work. If managers and leaders are not visibly making mentally healthy choices, employees will do the same. In a remote workforce, there is much less contact between leaders and employees, which limits the opportunities for healthy modeling to happen.

- Be honest about the challenges you are experiencing personally.
- Share how you're managing your own mental health to normalize self-care and needing to set boundaries.
- Practice and commit to healthy working norms to model healthy behavior.
- Normalize the challenges that come with virtual working. Continue communicating that it will take time to adjust for everyone.

LEAD WITH COMPASSION DURING THIS TIME OF UNCERTAINTY.

- Be flexible and accommodating to individual employees' needs.
- Be as generous as possible with resources and accommodations.
- Be honest and human in interactions with colleagues and teams.

ELIMINATE THE STIGMA.

Many employees will not seek treatment or use available resources due to stigma and shame. Naming mental health and its impact at work will reduce barriers to seeking treatment and support.

- Acknowledge the impact of the situation on mental health and make clear that mental health is something the company cares about and prioritizes.
- Acknowledge all employees' mental health experiences. In addition to words like stress, wellness, and mindfulness, be intentional about naming depression, anxiety, and other common mental health challenges.
- Don't be afraid to say the words "mental health." People usually talk about "stress," "worry," or "well-being" without genuinely describing what they're going through. Make it okay to talk about one's mental health.

INTENTIONALLY CHECK IN WITH COLLEAGUES AND CREATE A CULTURE OF CONNECTION.

- Create intentional opportunities for 1:1 check-ins throughout the workweek.
- Be intentional about the questions you ask, beyond "How are you?" Better questions include: "How has the transition been?" "What support would be helpful to you?" "You didn't seem like yourself today."

- Having a good relationship means you will know what their normal behavior is and you can identify when things have changed.

RESPOND SUPPORTIVELY TO EMPLOYEES WHO ARE STRUGGLING.

Social isolation and economic uncertainty can worsen symptoms of mental health challenges. Managers may find themselves in a conversation about mental health, and it's important to respond appropriately and with compassion rather than immediately deferring to HR.

- Be present and listen actively. Don't diagnose colleagues or assume what they need.
- Reassure them about what they're experiencing and their value to the company.
- Accept the process. Sample dialogue could be: "I want to make sure I can support you. Can we check in tomorrow so I can think through some solutions to help you?"
- In cases where employees disclose a mental health condition to you as a manager, tell the employee you will notify HR and that they have your confidence.

SHARE COMPANY RESOURCES FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND ENCOURAGE THEIR USE.

- Remind employees about the company's mental health resources regularly and through multiple channels. Make them easy to find.
- Have a list of contacts for a range of help and support services posted prominently in your workplace.
- Make sure your health care plan gives convenient access to mental health services and prescriptions. It often can take three months just to get an initial appointment with a psychiatrist.
- Adopt new resources or adapt existing ones to bolster resources during this time.
- Consider offering an online therapy subscription or virtual therapy app as part of your benefits package.
- Ensure your leadership team and all managers complete mental health training.

BRUSH UP ON YOUR HR BENEFITS AND POLICIES.

- Be mindful of privacy policies. To be compliant with the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), you cannot force someone to disclose a medical or mental health condition. Instead, focus conversations on the impact at work.

PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID TRAINING.

- A typical course shows employees how to recognize the signs of a problem and gives them the tools and vocabulary to help.
- Training can help allay employees' fear and hesitation about starting conversations with others about mental health and substance abuse.
- [Mental Health First Aid](#) is structured around a mnemonic device: ALGEE. When workers recognize telltale signs of a mental health problem or emergency, such as erratic behavior or a sudden shift in personality or appearance, they are taught to:
 - > Assess for risk of suicide or harm.
 - > Listen nonjudgmentally.
 - > Give reassurance and information.
 - > Encourage appropriate professional help.
 - > Encourage self-help and other support strategies.

FIND EASY WAYS FOR TEAM MEMBERS TO REACH OUT.

- Check out case studies of how other organizations are fostering cultures of caring, such as EY's ["R u ok?" campaign](#) and PWC's [Green Light to Talk](#).
- Ask employees to send you five emojis that describe how they are doing that day.
- Ask employees to send you the emoji heart color that describes their state of mind. .