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Mental Health First Aid

Strategies for Supporting your Teams



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Mental Health First Aid

Strategies for Supporting your Teams



- › Mental Health Spectrum
- › What is Mental Health First Aid?
- › ALGEE Methodology
- › Mental Health in Workplace Relationships
- › Resources

What is Wellness?

Definition

The ideal state of stable/improved/enhanced Physical and Mental health

Measurements:

- › disease burden
- › life expectancy
- › infant mortality rates



Mental Wellness

Something highlighted by pandemic is the *instability* of our mental wellness

- › Increased burnout
- › “The great resignation”
- › Difficulty of addressing child/elder care responsibilities

All can be encompassed/
explained by our
attitude toward
mental health... or
more specifically
mental illness

Mental Health Conditions are Common



Almost 21% of adults (over 50 million Americans) are experiencing a mental illness – **5%** are experiencing a severe mental illness¹



21.5 million Americans suffer from both mental health and Substance Use Disorders²



Anxiety disorders are the most common mental illness in the US, **affecting 40 million adults**³



Over 21 million US adults experience major depression each year, but only ~35% of those seek treatment⁴

Mental Health is a Spectrum

Everyone is on it!

We as a society need to accept this reality and stop the stigma associated with anything related to “mental illness”

According to the World Health Organization, mental health encompasses more than just the absence of mental illness.



Mental Wellness on a Spectrum

Flourishing



Sense of purpose, mastery, and mattering to others

- › Self-acceptance
- › Self-Determination
- › Growing in self-knowledge and personal effectiveness

Joyful, cheerful, energetic, enthusiastic, mindful, proactive

Languishing



Sense of meaning and significance

- › Content
- › Positive
- › Calm and Relaxed
- › Gratitude
- › Hopeful
- › Positive relationships with others

Languishing



Sense of stagnation and emptiness

- › Feel indifferent, joyless, and purposeless but not worthless or devoid of energy
- › The void between depression and flourishing - **the absence of well-being**

Dulling of delight and Dwindling of drive and motivation

Languishing



Sense of agitation, tiredness, and escape

- › Inability to relax
- › Irritated
- › Mood swings
- › Self-undermining behaviour, e.g.: *Self-criticism, Self-neglect, Self-doubt, Intrusive and negative thoughts, Procrastination*

Depression



Sense of worthlessness and hopelessness

- › Despondent and sad
- › Low self-worth
- › Exhausted
- › Emotional numbing
- › Rumination
- › Isolation
- › Stress-related physical ill health symptoms

Risk Factors for Mental Health Challenges

Biological

Genetics / family history, brain chemistry, physical health conditions, age, sex, hormonal changes

Psychological

Adverse childhood experiences or trauma, low self-esteem, chronic stress, negative thinking patterns, personality traits

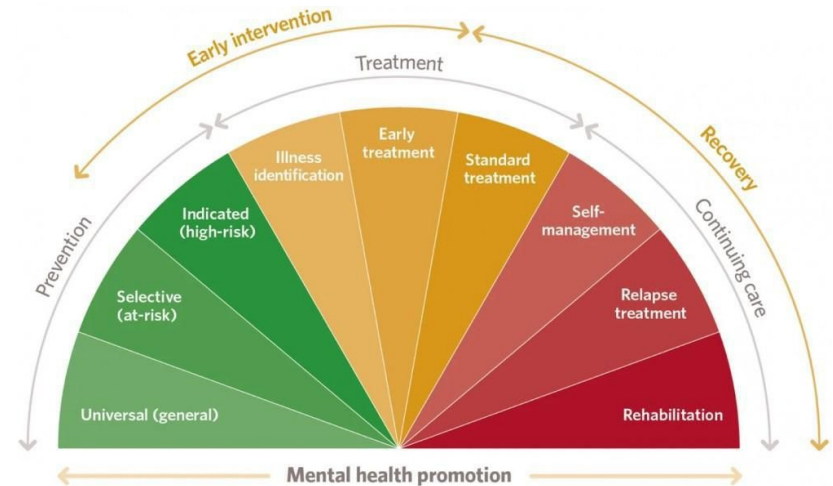
Social

Social isolation, socioeconomic status, family dynamics, cultural factors, life events, physical environment

Common Signs of Mental Health Conditions

Each condition has its own symptoms, but common signs of mental illness in adults and adolescents can include the following:

- › Excessive worrying or fear
- › Feeling excessively sad or low
- › Avoiding friends and social activities
- › Changes in sleeping habits or feeling tired and low energy
- › Changes in eating habits such as increased hunger or lack of appetite
- › Thinking about suicide
- › Inability to carry out daily activities or handle daily problems and stress



Spotlight: Burnout

3 Aspects of Burnout:

- › Emotional Exhaustion
- › Depersonalization
- › Lack of Personal Accomplishment

Remember...

- › Burnout can affect anyone at any level at any organization
- › Burnout is not a mental health diagnosis
- › Burnout can accompany or lead to other mental health conditions

Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace

What it is:

Mental Health First Aid is a program designed to educate employees on how to recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health issues, provide initial health, and guide someone toward professional mental health care

Why it's important:

- › Identifies issues early
- › Reduces severity
- › Reduces stigma
- › Promotes understanding
- › Enhances employee mental health
- › Increases morale
- › Improves productivity
- › Reduces absenteeism
- › Preparedness for crisis management

How to know if someone needs support

Emotional

- › Persistent sadness, anxiety disproportionate to situation, rapid mood swings, irritability

Performance changes

- › Decline in work performance, frequent absences, lack of motivation

Behavioral

- › Withdrawing, changes in eating or sleeping patterns, neglecting responsibilities, substance abuse

Verbal cues

- › Talking about feeling overwhelmed, expressing feelings of worthlessness or being a burden
- › Mentioning self-harm or suicide

ALGEE Methodology

A

Assess for risk of suicide or harm

L

Listen non-judgmentally

G

Give reassurance and information

E

Encourage appropriate professional help

E

Encourage self-help and other support strategies

Practical Application:

ALGEE in Action

Mental Health in Workplace Relationships

Colleagues & Peers

Managers

**Team Members /
Direct Reports**

Senior Leaders

The Scenario:

Kyle is a dedicated employee who regularly offers help and lightens the mood with a joke. In recent weeks, you've noticed he has become quieter and more distracted at work. It takes him longer to complete tasks and has declined the last two company outings. He's expressed being tired and you noticed he no longer eats with everyone at lunch.

- › **What are the concerning behaviors?**
- › **How can we apply ALGEE?**

- A**ssess for risk of suicide or harm
- L**isten non-judgmentally
- G**ive reassurance and information
- E**ncourage appropriate professional help
- E**ncourage self-help and other support strategies



ALGEE in Action:
**How might you handle the situation
based on Kyle's relationship with you?**

Colleagues & Peers

Managers

**Team Members /
Direct Reports**

Senior Leaders

Resources for Help



Company
Resources
+ EAPs



Your Manager



HR Team



Crisis Hotline:
988



Emergency
Department

It's important to know your company's reporting structure and your roles' reporting requirements

Managers as Mental Health Resources

- › Managers have a direct impact on mental health – as much as or more than romantic partners
- › Organizations that equip managers with tools to help themselves and their teams foster a supportive environment

How can managers support their teams?

- › Foster open communication
- › Model behaviors (i.e., taking time away)
- › Encourage time off and breaks
- › Build in schedule flexibility
- › Set clear expectations and deadlines
- › Drive awareness of benefits available & how to enroll
- › Share contact information of direct HR contact if needed

After Supporting Someone Else



Fill your Own Cup

General Mental Wellness:

- › Mental Wellness is a spectrum
- › Resilience supports with the management of emotions and situations
- › Self-care is what you need it to be - it looks different for everyone

Let's Practice!

DIAPHRAGMATIC BREATHING

SENSORY EXERCISE

Additional Resources

Mental Health First Aid Courses:

- › [National Council for Mental Wellbeing](#)

Workplace Mental Health Training:

- › [Active Minds @Work](#): Improve Culture of Mental Health in High-Performing Environments
- › [Notice.Talk.Act.® at Work](#)

General Mental Health:

- › [Mental Health America Webinars](#)

When an employee mentions that they are struggling with depression, anxiety, stress, or other mental health-related conditions, it is recommended to speak with your HR department. It may be the employer's duty to engage in an interactive process about reasonable accommodations under the Americans with Disabilities Act or other comparable laws if the employee advises that they are experiencing a medical condition that is interfering with their ability to perform their job.

This content is not to be considered legal advice. It is recommended to consult employment counsel for legal advice.