

# How to be a Mental Health Ally in Your Personal and Work-Life



# Objectives

- Define what it means to be a mental health ally
- Learn how to help someone who is struggling
- Discuss how to foster a positive environment

# Mental health versus mental illness

- Mental Health is a state of mental wellbeing that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, realize their abilities, learn well and work well, and contribute to their community.
- Mental illness is a health condition involving significant changes in thinking, emotion and/or behavior; distress and/or problems functioning in social, work or family activities.

# Mental Health in the workplace

1 in 5 Americans suffer from one mental health issue or another each year.

Common effects of work-related stressors:

- Depression
- Anxiety
- Loss of concentration
- Changes in behavior (irritability, restlessness, nervousness)
- Physical symptoms (shoulder, back, and neck)

[Click here for reference from the NAMI](#)

[Click here for reference from rtor.org](#)

# Defining what it means to be a mental health ally

To be a mental health ally at work is to help those struggling with mental health issues feel valued and needed.

Long-term benefits of mental health allies in the workplace include:

- Increased employee engagement
- Increased productivity
- Loyalty

# Know the signs

## **Here are a few signs to look for as a guide:**

- Impulsive behaviors or being more irritated than usual
- Not functioning like their usual selves (i.e., changes in how they dress, general appearance, eating or sleep habits)
- Talking about feelings of loneliness or despair
- Excessive worry
- Trouble concentrating
- Substance misuse

# Fostering a positive environment

## **Educate yourself**

- Attend a webinar on mental health
- Familiarize yourself with your company's mental health resources
- Talk with your primary care physician
- Talk with a counselor
- Read articles or listen to a podcast about mental health from trusted sources

# Fostering a positive environment

## **Reduce stigma**

- Talk openly about mental health
- Educate yourself and others
- Be conscious of language
- Encourage equality between physical and mental health
- Show compassion
- Choose empowerment over shame
- Be honest about your personal journey and treatment
- Don't harbor self-stigma



# Fostering a positive environment

## **Promote peer-to-peer engagement**

- Exercise and fitness classes
- Volunteer
- Cooking classes
- Book club
- Meditation and mindfulness programs

# Mental Health First Aid

- Action 1: Approach the person and assess for risk of suicide or harm.
  - Always seek emergency medical help if the person's life is in immediate danger. If you have reason to believe someone may be actively suicidal, call the Suicide and Crisis Lifeline at 988.
- Action 2: Listen non-judgmentally.
- Action 3: Give support and information.
- Action 4: Encourage the person to get appropriate professional help.
- Action 5: Encourage other support.

# Resources for additional training

## National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Support & Education

NAMI Peer-to-Peer is a free, eight-session educational program for adults with mental health conditions who are looking to better understand themselves and their recovery.

NAMI Family & Friends is a free 90-minute or four-hour seminar that helps people who have loved ones with a mental health condition learn how to best support them. It's also an opportunity to meet other people in similar situations and gain community support.

# Your Program

**Call toll-free or visit us on the web**

**24 hours a day/7 days a week**

**Thank you!**

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