

**SUPPORTING**

# Mental Health

**FOR SAFER WORKPLACES**

Mental health issues, such as stress and anxiety, often lead to distractions, reduced attention to detail and slowed reaction times, increasing the risk of workplace accidents. Similarly, depression and fatigue can also lead to mental exhaustion, impaired judgment and reduced decision-making abilities, further amplifying safety risks.

Taking proactive measures to support employees' mental health can improve their well-being and foster a safer work environment while boosting job satisfaction and improving productivity. Strategies employers can implement to improve mental health and, by extension, workplace safety include the following.



## **CREATE A SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACE CULTURE AND NORMALIZE MENTAL HEALTH DISCUSSIONS**

Advocacy from leadership for mental health and wellness can foster a culture of openness where employees feel comfortable discussing their

challenges and seeking help. Building awareness and encouraging discussions about mental health can allow employees to feel more comfortable when requesting assistance. Business leaders and managers should also model healthy work practices and demonstrate that mental health is an organizational priority.

## **PROVIDE MENTAL HEALTH RESOURCES**

Employers should offer assistance programs to provide access to mental health services, including professional counseling and peer support groups, to ensure workers can get the help they need.

## **ESTABLISH POLICIES THAT CREATE HEALTHY AND SAFE WORK ENVIRONMENTS**

Workplace policies should prohibit discrimination, harassment and bullying, as these behaviors can negatively impact employee mental health. Employees should also feel their workplace provides safe physical working conditions to support their overall well-being.



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Information from Eastern Kentucky University highlights that

**60%-80% OF WORKPLACE ACCIDENTS ARE LINKED TO STRESS-RELATED DISTRACTIONS OR SLEEPINESS.**

Industries with long hours and high demands are particularly vulnerable to these risks.

## PROVIDE TRAINING AND EDUCATION

Employers should offer programs that incorporate regular mental health education, self-care guidance and stress management sessions. Training for leadership and staff on how to recognize, discuss and address mental health concerns within their teams is also essential.

## ESTABLISH FLEXIBLE WORK ENVIRONMENTS

Clearly defining job responsibilities and leaving room for employees to have flexibility and a good work-life balance can decrease work-related stressors that can lead to unsafe behavior or working conditions. Paid mental health sick days that allow employees to take time off when needed could also be provided.

## ENSURE EMPLOYEES KNOW THEIR VALUE

When employees know their worth and feel valued, it can have a positive effect on their mental health. To foster this, business leaders and managers should acknowledge employees' contributions and provide opportunities for professional growth and development.

## EVALUATE AND ADAPT PROGRAMS

Business leaders must continuously evaluate their mental health programs and adapt them to help address the evolving needs of personnel. Gathering regular feedback through surveys, focus groups and individual consultations can ensure these programs remain accessible and effective.

## CONCLUSION

Prioritizing mental health and wellness is essential to individual well-being and for the operational success of organizations. By supporting mental health, business leaders can reduce the risk of burnout and other mental health concerns, thereby creating a healthier and safer workplace.

Contact us today for more risk management guidance.