



# **RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS**

**Mental Health in the Workplace**

**OhioSPF.org**

# Mental Health in the Workplace

## RESOURCE GUIDE FOR EMPLOYERS

The workplace can be an important location for support designed to improve well-being among adults. Workplace wellness programs can identify those at risk, connect them to treatment, and put in place supports to help people reduce and manage stress.

**Investing in mental health and safety is critical to building solid workplaces, a strong workforce, and strong communities.**

Employers across the state are encouraged to review these resources and build on mental health strategies that will positively impact employee well-being, the employer's bottom line, and our communities.



**EVERY 3 MONTHS**

**PATIENTS WITH DEPRESSION**

miss an average of **4.8 workdays**  
and suffer **11.5 days** of reduced  
productivity.\*

**A 2022 GALLUP POLL FOUND 50% OF EMPLOYEES EITHER REPORT THE ABSENCE OF EASILY ACCESSIBLE MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN THEIR WORKPLACE OR ARE UNAWARE IF SERVICES EXIST \***

\* Economic Cost of Poor Employee Mental Health Gallup Poll 2022

## PROMOTING SUICIDE PREVENTION IN THE WORKPLACE

Many people suffer from anxiety, depression, and suicidal thoughts in silence, and the warning signs of suicide often go unnoticed. Below are some myths and facts about suicide:

### MYTH:

*Only experts can prevent suicide...*

### FACT:

Suicide prevention is everyone's business, and anyone can help to prevent the tragedy of suicide.

### MYTH:

*If a person decides to die by suicide, there is nothing anyone can do to stop them...*

### FACT:

Suicide is the most preventable death, and almost any positive action may save a life.

# Warning Signs for Suicide



## CUES TO WATCH FOR WITH EMPLOYEES

- » Giving away prized possessions
- » Withdrawal from family & friends
- » Sudden change in appearance / personality / sleep habits
- » Poor performance at work
- » Feeling disconnected / overwhelmed
- » Excessive risk taking
- » Rage or talking about seeking revenge / being a burden to others
- » Increased use of alcohol or drugs

## DIRECT VERBAL CUES

Direct verbal cues are conveyed through spoken language and elicit a response or action from the listener. They are specific, such as:

*"I have decided to kill myself."*

*"If (blank) does not happen, I will kill myself."*

*"I'm going to end it all."*

## INDIRECT VERBAL CUES

Indirect verbal cues convey uncertainty because they are ambiguous, such as:

*"I am tired of life, and I can't go on."*

*"This place would be better without me."*

*"I will not be around much longer."*

## WHAT CAN EMPLOYERS DO?

Research shows that once someone who's struggling with suicidal thoughts has an opportunity to have an open conversation about it, they are likely to feel a sense of relief and take the opportunity to seek help. When having a conversation with a colleague, keep the following in mind:

1. Be direct
2. Treat the person with respect and dignity
3. Ask open-ended questions
4. Make observations rather than state opinions
5. Offer consistent emotional support and understanding
6. Briefly restate what they share with you; ask for clarity
7. Be their advocate

Employees do not leave their struggles when they walk into work. In the case of an employee experiencing a mental health crisis or someone shows warning signs of a crisis, here are a few things management and colleagues can do:

- Keep calm and avoid overreacting
- Do not leave the employee alone
- Ask how you can help
- Notify management/leadership
- Contact the company's EAP if one is available
- Offer resources: 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline

# Organization Assessment Checklist

This assessment tool lists recommendations for employers to gauge their organization's mental health focus and ensure they provide a healthy workplace environment. Use the topics that align best with your organization and industry.

## REVIEW YOUR WORKPLACE

- Do clearly stated workplace values reflect concern for the well-being of employees, supervisors, and managers?
  - Are they included in the new hire packet/forms?
- Are guidelines established to monitor employee mental health and wellness regularly?
  - Are supervisors and managers checking on their staff?
  - Are directors and executive directors checking on their supervisors and managers?
- Do communication practices encourage open communication?
  - Do supervisors and managers have an open-door policy?
  - Do directors and executive directors have an open-door policy for their supervisors and managers?
- Does your workplace view mental health, wellness, and resources as investments in a stable and productive workplace?
- Have you identified how your workplace culture, mission, and services impact mental health?
- Are there mental health benefits offered?
  - Are they covered at the same level as other physical disorders?
  - Does your workplace allow for medical leave for a mental health crisis?
- Are brochures, posters, and fact sheets available to help promote or educate employees about mental health?
  - Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services resources
  - Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation (OSPF) resources
  - Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) resources
  - 988 Suicide and Crisis Lifeline publications
  - Ohio Department of Education Youth and Mental Health resources,
  - Ohio Department of Veterans Services resources
  - First Responder Wellness resources

# Organization Assessment Checklist



## CONTINUED...

- Are mental health screening days promoted in the workplace?
  - Depression
  - Anxiety
  - Alcohol abuse
  
- Has the workplace identified local resources or employee assistance programs if a referral for mental health treatment is needed?
  
- Has the workplace identified a process to re-integrate an employee on mental health leave for a mental health crisis?
  
- Has your workplace made reasonable accommodations for individuals who would otherwise be fully qualified to overcome the challenges they face due to a mental disability?
  
- Does your workplace routinely have educational programs on mental health topics?
  - Is this training for all employees, especially supervisors and managers, to create a workplace culture that fully understands mental health issues?
  
- Are suicide prevention training opportunities available for employees, supervisors, and managers?
  - VitalCog: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace
  - Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)
  - Mental Health First Aid (MHFA)
  - Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training (ASIST)
  - Columbia Training, Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) Training
  - Kognito Training (Educator's only)

# Managing a Mental Health Crisis

## WHAT TO DO FOLLOWING A SUICIDE

### WHAT IS POSTVENTION?

Postvention is an organized, immediate, short-term, and long-term response in the aftermath of a suicide to promote healing and mitigate the adverse effects of exposure to suicide. The suicide death of employees, clients, vendors, or a family member of an employee can have an impact on the workplace.

#### STEP 1

##### Provide an immediate response to the traumatic event.

- Protect and respect the privacy rights of the deceased employee and their loved ones

#### STEP 2

##### Follow a short-term recovery plan.

- Identify and link employees to additional resources, including professional mental health services
- Offer grieving support for the employees impacted by the loss

#### STEP 3

##### Develop long-term strategies for helping employees cope.

- Prepare for anniversary reactions
- Establish a plan to transition from postvention to prevention

**HELPFUL TIP: Identify a point person to coordinate all postvention efforts and communication.**

## HELPFUL TIPS FOR PROMOTING MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE

### 1. Offer insurance coverage and employee assistance programs.

Review benefit packages you offer to ensure they support access to mental health and substance use disorder insurance benefits. Additionally, it is important to help employees understand how to access and utilize their insurance benefits not only during open enrollment, but year-round.

If you offer an Employee Assistance Program (EAP) share information about the EAP through your company's typical channels of communication. EAP information can be shared during onboarding for new employees, on the company digital pages, and in staff emails or newsletters.

If you are unable to offer an EAP, ensure that 988 resources are available throughout the property and facilities.

### 2. Consider workplace, policies, practices and procedures.

Management is encouraged to take time to review company practices and policies that address mental health in the workplace to ensure they are up to date and meeting company needs. It is helpful to review these policies annually and make them available to all employees when necessary.

### 3. Engage employees through education and awareness.

Offer regular educational mental health and suicide prevention content (communications, lunch and learns, trainings etc.), continually promoting resources and making information available to all employees so they know where and how to get help. A helpful tip would be to provide magnets or reference cards to each employee that list all crisis service numbers including company EAP, 988, Veterans Crisis Line.

# Mental Health RESOURCES



**DON'T WAIT! CALL OR TEXT 988.**

## CRISIS RESOURCES

### **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Dial 988

### **Crisis Text Line**

Text "4HOPE" to 741741

## STATE RESOURCES

### **The Ohio Suicide Prevention Foundation**

Call (614) 429-1528

### **The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services**

Call the Ohio CareLine at 1-800-720-9616

- 24/7 for free, confidential support

*Helpful Link* - [Stress First Aid](#)

### **The Ohio Department of Insurance**

Call the Mental Health Insurance Assistance Office (MHIA) at 1-855-438-6442

*Helpful Link* - [The Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Employer Benefit Guide](#)

## TRAINING RESOURCES

### **Trainings can be requested for virtual or in-person**

VitalCog: Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Contact [Jason.Hughes@ohiospf.org](mailto:Jason.Hughes@ohiospf.org) or 614-429-1528

### **QPR Training: Question Persuade and Refer**

Contact 614-429-1528

## **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**

Call or Text 988

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