When They Might Need You the Most

Tips and Tools for Mental Health First Aiders in the Workplace

April 7, 2020

Part of a Special MHFA at Work Educational Series in Response to the COVID-19 Pandemic
Welcome!

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NCBH
How Companies Teach Their Employees First Aid for Mental Health

DEPRESSION AND ANXIETY COST THE GLOBAL ECONOMY ABOUT $1 TRILLION A YEAR IN LOST PRODUCTIVITY.
- WORLD HEALTH ORGANIZATION

By MANDY OAKLANDER
FEBRUARY 13, 2020

Colleagues Become Confidants in the Age of Coronavirus

With millions of people stressed out and working from home, mental health takes center stage

By Rachel Feintzeig
April 2, 2020 8:10 am ET

Are you OK? Your co-worker wants to know.

Companies are training employees to recognize when colleagues might be having mental-health struggles and to serve as a listening ear if needed. Some companies, such as Alphabet Inc.’s Google, are turning to the Mental Health First...
National Engagement
TODAY’S AGENDA

- How the MHFA Action Plan can be used in current work environment
- COVID-19 stressors
- Signs of support fatigue
- Recommended resources
- Self-care practices in your new work routine
- Real-time Questions & Answers
2 Million
Mental Health First Aiders Trained!
MentalHealthFirstAid.org
We are the unifying voice of America’s health care organizations that deliver mental health and addictions treatment and services.

The National Council is committed to all Americans having access to comprehensive, high-quality care that affords every opportunity for recovery.

The National Council introduced Mental Health First Aid USA in 2008.
Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing thinking, emotional or behavioral symptoms or experiencing a crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received or until the crisis resolves.

MHFA is provided within the context of your company’s policies and procedures.
# Mental Health First Aiders

## What we are

- Mental Health Ambassadors
- Caring Colleagues
- Informed Helpers
- Resource knowledgeable
- Aware of what’s appropriate within our role

## What we are not

- Diagnosticians
- Treatment Providers
- Trained interventionists
- Long term care providers
- Emergency providers
Mental Health First Aid

**Approach**
- acknowledge risk, assist and ask the question (if applicable)

**Listen**
- non-judgmentally

**Give**
- reassurance and information

**Encourage**
- appropriate professional help
- self-help and other support strategies
What to look for...

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Signs</th>
<th>Symptoms</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Weight change</td>
<td>Sadness/anxiety</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawal from others</td>
<td>Low energy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Irritability</td>
<td>Sleep disturbance</td>
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<tr>
<td>Changes in self-care/appearance</td>
<td>Appetite change</td>
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<tr>
<td>Personality change</td>
<td>Headaches</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tearfulness</td>
<td>Tolerance*</td>
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<tr>
<td>Indecisiveness/confusion</td>
<td>Physical Withdrawal</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased alcohol or drug use</td>
<td>Unexplained aches and pains</td>
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<tr>
<td>Having a dramatic change in mood</td>
<td>Hopelessness</td>
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<tr>
<td>Self-criticism</td>
<td>Helplessness</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Thoughts of death and suicide</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
How to use MHFA
In the Current Environment
Supporting People Remotely

**A**

Consider how online workers approach you. Are you easy to get in touch with digitally? Does your staff know who their MHFAiders are?

**L**

When listening to an online worker, much of their non-verbal communication – facial expressions, posture, body language – can be lost. Using video calling is best wherever possible.

**G**

In a face-to-face setting, one might speak to a person’s manager with them or supporting in contacting their EAP. Where possible, it is important to offer remote workers the same support you would give any other colleague.

**E**

Work with the person to discover what professional support might be available to them locally. Where they live may be different then where they work.

Talk with workers to find out what other supports are available to them. Consider sharing some guidance about how to support their mental health when working from home.
Engaging With Co-workers

MH CHAMPIONS

– Understand why mental health is as important as physical health
– Help build a mentally healthy workplace and understand how Mental Health First Aid fits into the workplace
– Recognize the main symptoms of mental health conditions
– Listen non-judgmentally
– Use ALGEE to provide Mental Health First Aid for the most common mental health conditions
– Guide a person towards appropriate professional support

MHFA AT WORK

– Understand why mental health is as important as physical health
– Support a mentally healthy workplace
– Recognize some signs of mental health distress
– Start a supportive conversation about mental ill health and listen non-judgmentally
– Guide a person towards appropriate professional support
– Go on to become a Mental Health Mental Champion or First Aider
Get to know remote workers and check in regularly

Show that you are a Mental Health First Aider in your email signature or by sharing a digital poster so remote workers know who you are

Apply the same principles to video calls as you would to conversations in person – set time aside, minimize distractions, and give the person your full focus

Make it clear that you are there to support the person remotely in any action they want to take – Know how the person can contact HR, their line manager, or their EAP remotely

Offer self-care tips that they can do from home – going for a walk, meditating, keeping a schedule and eating well can be done from almost anywhere
Current Stressors

COVID-19
COVID-19 Stressors

Fear and anxiety about a disease can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions in adults and children.

Cultural Considerations:

- Background
- Uniqueness and differences from other people
- Your community
- Capacity to understand what is happening around/to them
- Exposure to information, media, etc.
COVID-19 Stressors

Vulnerable Populations

• Older people and people with chronic diseases who are at higher risk for COVID-19

• Children and teens

• People who are helping with the response to COVID-19, like doctors and other health care providers, first responders, grocery staff, essential industry workers

• People who have mental health conditions including problems with substance use
COVID-19 Stressors

- Fear and worry about your own health and the health of your loved ones
- Changes in sleep or eating patterns
- Difficulty sleeping or concentrating
- Loss of income, finances being challenged/stretched
- Changes in routine and structure of daily activities
- Worsening of chronic health problems
- Increased use of alcohol, tobacco, or other drugs
National Council Resources

Resources for COVID-19

Resources and Tools for Addressing Coronavirus (COVID-19)

https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid19/
Signs of Support Fatigue
Compassion and Quality of Life

Compassion Satisfaction
• Positive aspects of working as a helper

Compassion Fatigue
• Negative aspects of working as a helper

Burnout
• Inefficacy and feeling overwhelmed

Work-related traumatic stress
• Primary traumatic stress direct target of event
• Secondary traumatic exposure to event due to a relationship with the primary person

Compassion Satisfaction vs. Fatigue

Pleasure and satisfaction derived from helping and care-giving
- Work with colleagues
- Beliefs about self
- Altruism

Negative aspects of working in helping systems
- Providing care ("not my job")
- Work with colleagues ("not my friends")
- Beliefs about self ("not what I am good at")

- Burnout
- Work-related trauma

Burnout and Secondary Trauma

**Burnout**
- Work-related hopelessness and feelings of inefficacy

**Impact on an Individual**

**Secondary Trauma**
- Work-related secondary exposure to extremely or traumatically stressful events

**Impact on an Individual**

Resources
If you, or someone you care about, are feeling overwhelmed with emotions like sadness, depression, or anxiety, or feel like you want to harm yourself or others call:

**Disaster Distress Helpline** - 1-800-985-5990 and TTY 1-800-846-8517

**Text** “TalkWithUs” to 66746

**National Domestic Violence Hotline** or call 1-800-799-7233 and TTY 1-800-787-3224

**Local / State online websites and resources**
External Resources

IN AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS

- If you or someone you know tried to hurt themselves, get help immediately by calling 911
  Call 911 – Ask for a Wellness Check and CIT trained responder

- If you or someone you know is having suicidal thoughts and needs to talk to a crisis counselor, please take advantage of these free resources:

  - National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 800-273-8255 (TALK)
  - Crisis Textline: Text “MHFA” to 741741
  - Suicide Prevention Chat Services (NSPL)
  - Call 988
## Encourage Appropriate Professional Help

### Types of Professionals

- Employee Assistance Program
- Doctors (primary care physicians)
- Nurse Practitioners
- Psychiatrists
- Psychologists, social workers, counselors, and other mental health professionals
- Certified peer specialists
- Certified drug and alcohol counselors

### Types of Professional Help

- “Talk” therapies
- Medication
- Group therapy
- Other professional supports (complimentary medicine)
- EMDR (for trauma)
Leverage Your Corporate Resources

- Know how to access corporate resources (i.e. websites, HR, EAP, etc.)
- Keep the numbers handy for quick use during conversations
- Share links and resource information in a variety of ways (i.e. via daily email communication, Online resources/Wellness websites, social media, etc.)
- Be visible and available
Self-Care

IN THE NEW WORK ENVIRONMENT
How can you help?

Encourage the person to:

• Tell others what he or she needs
• Identify sources of support
• Take care of himself or herself
• Use coping strategies that have helped in the past
• Spend time somewhere in a safe and comfortable place
• Seek trained professional help for support

Encourage positive coping strategies.
Self-Care

Accept Negative Emotions
– acknowledge that anxiety and emotions will show up and then let them go

Create New Routines
– plan and execute structured, predictable, healthful activities

Reinvent Wellbeing
– eat, exercise, socialize just as before but differently

Reflect, Relate, Reframe
– find the best ways to emerge from crisis with new insights and knowledge
Self-Care

- Physical Movement: exercise, yoga, aikido, tai chi, qi gong
- Relaxation and Meditation
- Peer support groups/12 Step programs
- Bibliotherapy (self help books)
- Family, friends, faith, and other social networks
Give Yourself The Space For A New Perspective

ATTITUDE

GRATITUDE

KINDNESS

CONNECTION
THANK YOU!

Questions & Answers
April Webinars

Cultivating Wellness in the Workplace: Approaches to Mental Health Training and Education

Thursday, April 9, 2 – 3 p.m. ET
Join the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Foundation to hear from business leaders on how companies and employees are addressing mental health in the workplace before and during COVID-19.

Speakers include:
Jae Kullar, Delta Air Lines
Jennifer Posa, Johnson & Johnson
Chun Yee Yip, Lendlease

Register Now!
April Webinars

Employee Support Under Stressful Conditions

Tuesday, April 14, 12 – 1 p.m. ET
Learn how to practice Mental Health First Aid among those employees who continue to provide essential services on the job and in their communities.

Register Now!

Resourceful, Resilient and Remote: Mental Health First Aid in the New Work Environment

Thursday, April 16, 12 – 1 p.m. ET
Explore MHFA tools, resources and best practices as we honor recommendations for physical distancing.

Register Now!