MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID AT WORK

Tips & Tools for Mental Health First Aiders In The Workplace
The MHFA At Work Team

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We are the unifying voice of over 3,000 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.

The **MHFA AT Work** program was introduced in 2014 to address the needs of the corporate sector.
2.5 Million
Mental Health First Aiders Trained!
Thank You
Corporate Context

1 in 5 American adults has a mental illness.

Mental illnesses are the leading cause of disability worldwide.

1 in 10 full-time employees has an addiction.

40% of employees with a mental illness take time off because of it – up to 10 days a year.

The impact of depression & anxiety cost the global economy $1 trillion per year in lost productivity.

Workplace stress and burnout can increase the risk for any employee to develop a mental health concern.
Mental Health First Aid is the help offered to a person developing a mental health concern or experiencing a mental health crisis. The first aid is given until appropriate treatment and support are received, or the crisis resolves.

Mental Health First Aid At Work is provided within the context of workplace policies and procedures and is just one piece of the puzzle.

Mental Health First Aid
Employee Assistance Program
Healthcare Plan
Workplace Resources
Local Resources
The Role of Mental Health First Aid in the Workplace

We Are:

- Caring colleagues.
- Mental health ambassadors.
- Informed helpers.
- Resource knowledgeable.
- Aware of what is appropriate for our role.

What We Can Do:

- Observe changes in behaviors.
- Offer a nonjudgmental listening ear.
- Respect the person’s privacy.
- Serve as a vital link to early intervention.

What We Are Not:

- Diagnosticians.
- Long-term care providers.
- Trained interventionists.
- Prescribers of medication.
- Emergency providers.
- Stigmatizing.
Mental Health Awareness in the Workplace

Strong mental health awareness enables employees to better navigate and cope with work-life stressors, to work productively, and to realize their fullest potential.

**Additional Benefits:**

- Promotes a safe and welcoming work environment
- Contributes to reducing mental health stigma
- Drive employee engagement and promotes early intervention
- Establish a positive employer brand image to attract and retain talent
- Improve EAP and other benefits utilization
Today’s Agenda

Hot Topic:
• The impact of the pandemic on mental wellbeing in the workplace

MHFA On The Job:
• Psychologically healthy workplace
• Prioritizing mental health as peer support champions / ambassadors.
• Engagement opportunities with employees

Taking care of YOU the First Aider:
• Support fatigue
• Self-care

MHFA at Work Now & What’s Next
• Responsibility of our role
• The new workplace and what it means for us
• Continued support opportunity from MHFA
Hot Topic
Impact Of The Past Year

- Health disparities awareness is now magnified
- Collaboration between sectors
- Capable of quickly adapting to changes
- Compounded stressors to already stressful lives
- Collective Trauma experience
Our Window of Tolerance:

The state of mind in which we are able to readily receive, process and integrate life without much difficulty.

When we are at our best and most able to cope with any challenges thrown your way.

Sometimes, traumatic experiences shrink our window of tolerance.

Source: Dr Dan Siegel's Window of Tolerance (1999).
Impact of Stress & Trauma on The Brain

Responding to stress is natural and necessary for survival

• Flight, Flight, Freeze

But there are limits to our stress response /reactivity

• Acute versus chronic stress

Impacts of the biological response to psychological stress include impairments to:

• Cardiovascular, endocrine, circulatory, neurological, and metabolic systems.

Resulting in:

• Hypertension, diabetes, rheumatoid arthritis, heart attack, stroke, cancer, infectious disease, inflammation, and lowered immunity...and emotional, cognitive and behavioral problems.
The Shock To Employee Mental Health

Mental Health Decline

- Overall
- Managers
- C-Level
- Individual Contributors
- Remote - 2+ wks
- Remote - newly
- Unemployed

Mental Health Decline

0.00%  10.00%  20.00%  30.00%  40.00%  50.00%  60.00%
Common Symptoms

Mental health symptoms since COVID-19 outbreak

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Symptom</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
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<tr>
<td>More emotionally exhausted</td>
<td>53.8%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased sadness in day-to-day life</td>
<td>53.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More irritable</td>
<td>50.2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feel generally more confused</td>
<td>42.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased insomnia</td>
<td>38.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased anger</td>
<td>32.3%</td>
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<tr>
<td>Increased feelings of guilt</td>
<td>24.4%</td>
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Signs & Symptoms Of Mental Health Concerns At Work

Can manifest in a variety of ways in the workplace, including:

- Calling in sick often/Absenteeism, Presenteeism
- Withdrawal/isolation
- Personality changes
- Difficulty focusing and remembering details
- Appearing more unkept than usual
- Difficulty organizing thoughts and tasks
- No longer enjoying work, hobbies, activities
- Sadness/ Worry/ Increasing self-blame & self-criticism
- Hopelessness/Helplessness/Feeling trapped
MHFA
On The Job
Psychologically Healthy Workplace

6 Components of Employee & Organization Well-being:

- Addressing mental health stigma
- Employee involvement
- Healthy scheduling
- Growth and development
- Wellness programs
- Employee recognition

Psychological safety:
The freedom to authentically be yourself at work.
MHFAider Strategies for Engagement

- Be vulnerable
- Model healthy behaviors
- Create a culture of connection through check-ins
- Offer flexibility and be inclusive
- Information share
### Supporting People From a Distance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A</th>
<th>Getting to know remote workers when they are well makes you more able to spot when they are struggling. Consider how online workers approach you. Are you easy to get in touch with digitally? Check-in regularly!</th>
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</thead>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>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 and apply the same principles as in person!</td>
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<td>G</td>
<td>Giving support in-person might mean speaking to a person’s line manager with them or supporting them to contact their EAP. It is important to offer remote workers the same support you would give any other colleague.</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>When encouraging professional help, make sure you work with the person to discover what professional support might be available to them locally.</td>
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<td>E</td>
<td>Offer some self-care tips that they can do from home – going for a walk, meditating, and eating well can be done from almost anywhere</td>
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Taking Care of You
Support / Compassion Fatigue

Compassion fatigue occurs when a person is physically, emotionally, and spiritually exhausted from caring for others. It is often cumulative.

**Emotional Difficulties**
- anger, irritability,
- anxiety,
- increased cynicism, hypersensitivity /insensitivity
- feeling emotionally exhausted,
- or difficult feeling empathy

**Mental Changes**
- reduced sense of accomplishment or meaning in work,
- confusion/trouble concentrating,
- preoccupation or disengagement in social situations, or social isolation,
- no enjoyment in leisure activities,
- feeling helpless/hopeless.

**Physical Troubles**
- increased muscle tension, head-neck-back pain,
- sleep difficulties
- frequent headaches, nausea,
- neglecting hygiene,
- frequent illnesses,
- eating-drinking-smoking more.
Self-care is the practice of taking action to preserve or improve one’s own mental or physical health.

Noticing when you need self-care:
How do YOU know when you need to REFUEL/RECHARGE with self-care?
Benefits of Self-care

- Improving well-being
- Decreasing morbidity and mortality
- Reduces healthcare costs
- Stress management
- Boost's immunity
- Decreased inflammation
- Lowers risk of heart disease, gastrointestinal issues

National Council for Behavioral Health
How to Cope with Support Fatigue

- Maintain personal relationships
- Share your feelings
- Prioritize activities that bring you joy
- Get outside
- Exercise, Relax, Laugh
- Stay on top of your doctor visit’s
- Eat & Sleep
### Encouraging others to Practice Self-care

<table>
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<th>Tell</th>
<th>others what they need</th>
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<tr>
<td>Identify</td>
<td>sources of support to debrief</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prioritize</td>
<td>Time to care for himself or herself</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Coping strategies that have helped in the past</td>
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<tr>
<td>Encourage</td>
<td>The establishment of boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Seek</td>
<td>trained professional help for support</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use</td>
<td>Your resources. Take time off – You Have Earned It!</td>
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Mindfulness & Grounding

**MINDFULNESS**

Techniques encourage us to remain focused on the present moment, rather than living in the past or worrying about the future. Practice can include meditation, breath work or deep breathing, listening to music, cooking or eating, walking/running and yoga.

**GROUNDING**

Grounding techniques also encourage you to stay rooted in the present moment, or grounded, by taking stock of the world around you. Sensory Count
Self-care Tips To Get You Started

1. Don’t do things you hate
2. Plan ahead & schedule it
3. Keep it SIMPLE
4. Remain flexible
What Now & What’s Next
Your Responsibility as a MHFAider

- Keeping yourself safe and well – Be active in your own Self-care!
- Communicating concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of anyone in your workplace, to an appropriate resource/support.
- Following your workplace’s policies and procedures on how MHFA is implemented.
- Upholding your role as a Mental Health First Aider alongside your other responsibilities.
- Maintain appropriate boundaries between yourself and colleagues you may be supporting.
- Refreshing your skills every three years in an MHFA Refresher course.
Engaging in MHFA at Work

- Explore your policies and that relate to mental health.
- Clarify the referral pathways for mental health support.
- Clarify how your role will be or should be communicated.
- Know your resources
- What supports are there for YOU?
MHFA At Work Community Building

Certified MHFAiders since October 2020

• 700+ certified
• MH Advocates, Champions, Peer Support Specialists
• Ongoing best practice and continuing education

General Awareness since October 2020

• 2500+ trained in MHFA at Work
• People managers and all employees
• Signposting, support, and engagement
Building Industry Awareness

Employee Support Under Stressful Conditions

Thursday, April 14: 12 – 1:30 p.m. EDT
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

Wednesday, May 19, 12 – 1:30 p.m. EDT
Explore MHFA tools, resources and best practices with key MHFA at Work industry thought-leaders

Register Soon!
Resources and Tools for Addressing Coronavirus (COVID-19)

https://www.thenationalcouncil.org/covid19/

IN AN EMERGENCY OR CRISIS
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:

Call 911 – Ask for a Wellness Check or CIT trained responder
National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-8255 (TALK)
Crisis Text Line: Text “MHFA” or “HOME” to 741741

Disaster Distress Helpline    #1-800-985-5990
   Text “TalkWithUs” to 66746   website: https://www.samhsa.gov/disaster-preparedness

National Domestic Violence Hotline    #1-800-799-7233    website: http://www.thehotline.org/

Local Call Centers and Hotlines

If you or someone else are experiencing high levels of stress, anxiety or depression, reach out for support.
Resources

GLOBAL WELLNESS INSTITUTE
https://globalwellnessinstitute.org/
PositivelyWell: Global Health Resources

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION
Self-Care Resource Center https://www.apa.org/topics/self-care

Kaiser Permanente
Wellness Resources
https://healthy.kaiserpermanente.org/health-wellness/mental-health/tools-resources

active minds
https://www.activeminds.org/about-mental-health+self-care/

Meditation Apps

NATIONAL COUNCIL FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH
What is happening at your organization around Mental Health Awareness?

New initiatives?
Upcoming events?
Wish List?

Please share with us!

MHFAatWork@thenationalcouncil.org