HOW TO CREATE A WORK ENVIRONMENT THAT SUPPORTS MENTAL HEALTH

Even though employers recognize the importance of supporting their employees' mental health, many have a hard time knowing where to start or what to do.
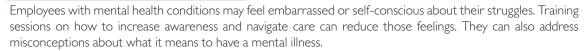
By taking a few simple steps, employers can create a work environment where people feel that their mental health and overall well-being matter. Here are a few steps to get started:

Talk openly about mental health.
Leaders can talk about the importance of mental health and acknowledge its impact on employees' well-being. Consistently communicate that mental health is a priority using company newsletters, emails and other effective channels.

Provide training to increase awareness and reduce the stigma around mental illness.
Employees with mental health conditions may feel embarrassed or self-conscious about their struggles. Training sessions on how to increase awareness and navigate care can reduce those feelings. They can also address misconceptions about what it means to have a mental illness.

Understand employees' mental health needs.
Gain insights into the health challenges employees are experiencing by looking at aggregate claims data or self-reported data from reliable and valid surveys. This can inform which resources will be most beneficial before a crisis arises.

Offer a range of resources.
It's important to keep in mind that employees' mental health needs vary widely, as do their preferences on how to receive support. Offering online, digital programs, telehealth and in-person care makes it possible to help the full spectrum of employees with mental health challenges—from those dealing with daily stressors to those experiencing more severe mental health issues.

Direct employees to existing mental health resources.
It's important for leaders to not only talk about mental health, but show through their actions that they fully support it. This could include using team meetings or social events to encourage employees to learn about the benefits available to them.

Remind employees about full-family support offerings.
Employees are healthy when their families are healthy. Many employee benefits offer support for employees' dependents and children struggling with mental health issues. This can be an effective way to create a work environment that's truly supportive – at home and at work.

Employee mental health is just as important as physical health. Offering comprehensive benefits, talking openly about mental health care and encouraging benefit usage will strengthen the health and well-being of employees and their families.

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