



6 steps to improve mental health in your workplace

Today's Workplace

A key element of positive mental health in the workplace is the ability for organizations to respond quickly and effectively when members of your teams experience problems with their mental health – or when they face mental illness.

Where nearly all employers fall short, however, is in addressing and ultimately eradicating the stigma still surrounding mental health and mental illness. The reason they fail to do so is rooted in their inability – or unwillingness – to recognize the **four realities** facing every employer today, as outlined on the following pages.



Mental illness is common



1 in 4

People will experience a mental illness in their lifetimes



62%

Of missed work days can be attributed to mental health conditions



15% to 20%

Increase in global rates of anxiety and depression in the last decade



There is stigma in your workplace



98%

Agree that people with a mental illness are stigmatized and discriminated against



81%

Of employees said the stigma associated with mental health issues prevents employees from seeking help



55%

Of employees with depression would not disclose their illness to their manager



It costs you money



82%

Of employees with a mental illness indicate it impacts their work



\$16.3 trillion

Projected global cost of mental health disorders between 2011 and 2030



\$210 billion annually

The cost of depression alone to the US economy, with 50 percent of that cost shouldered by employers



You can do something about it



9 in 10

Respondents agree that employers have a responsibility to support mental health



66%

Of managers reported not having training to intervene when employees show signs of depression



302% ROI

Realized over a 2-year period in one US-based study after initiating programs to reduce workplace stigma



Why Supporting Your Employees Can Save Lives

When it comes to mental health and mental illness in the workplace, it is important to provide meaningful support to your employees. By eradicating stigma in your workplace and improving your response to these challenges, you have an opportunity to have a major positive impact on their well-being – and in some cases even save lives.

When a person feels free to seek help in the early stages of experiencing the symptoms of a mental illness, they have a dramatically increased chance of finding an effective treatment before things progress too far. With mental illnesses such as depression, “too far” can mean suicidal thoughts and actions. And ending stigma includes ending self-stigma, which can be a major factor in whether a person seeks treatment or hides from their illness and simply tries to “soldier on.”

While mental illness can be treated, stigma can be cured.

As the first reality illustrated, mental illness is common and will only continue to be so. It is therefore vital for employers to improve their response to this inevitable challenge. An effective, impactful and rewarding course of action that will dramatically improve the mental health of your organization is to **eliminate stigma.**

Any employer that embraces a stigma-free culture with respect to mental health and mental illness can expect the following benefits:

- **The ability to better support your employees**
- **An increase in productivity**
- **A reduction in presenteeism (and related lost revenue)**
- **The ability to attract and retain top talent**
- **An improved workplace culture and employee morale**
- **Improved mental health company-wide**

Improving Mental Health in Your Workplace

This may all sound good, but how can you achieve all of this? The answer is, in short, training – because simply providing mental health awareness isn't enough. Many organizations have improved their efforts to raise awareness and literacy surrounding mental health, however they are not reaping the benefits outlined on the previous page.

The reason is the stigma surrounding mental illness is a deeply rooted mindset, one which is reinforced on a daily basis by pop culture and the behaviour of the majority of those around us. In fact, stigma is a trap our society sets us up to fall into – and we don't break free without highly specialized, workplace-specific training designed for this exact purpose.

Any training that will effectively improve mental health in your workplace must include the 6 steps outlined on the following pages.



1

Develop mental health literacy

Although mental health awareness isn't enough, it is a vital first step to educate your employees, managers, HR personnel and senior leaders on the facts about mental health and mental illness to make sure everyone is starting with a similar understanding.

2

Appropriate employee action and response

Once mental health literacy has been developed, your employees need specific tools and strategies to improve their actions and responses to workplace mental illness – both within themselves and their colleagues. An example of why this is needed: when one employee hears a fellow employee speaking in a stigmatized way about a colleague, how should they react to minimize this stigma?

3

Development of emotional intelligence and empathy

Two of the key skills that are vital to the elimination of stigma are also important assets to any successful employee: empathy and emotional intelligence. Empathy is required to understand a situation that you have never actually experienced, while emotional intelligence is essential to respond in a positive, effective manner to complex situations – all while accurately understanding what another person needs in a given situation.

4

Build a psychologically healthy workplace

Focusing your efforts on eliminating stigma will help you to increase the psychological safety of your workplace and create opportunities for all your employees to flourish – no matter their health. The culture of a given workplace, along with your leadership styles, plays an important role in supporting psychological health. Creating and maintaining a workplace that is psychologically safe makes good business sense – for employers, managers and employees alike. Prevention, intervention and accommodation are strategies you can use to improve the psychological safety of your team and workplace.

5

Manager & HR response to incidents of workplace stigma

Managers and HR personnel are leaders and influencers of change within an organization. They are often a first responder to employees with mental illness and likely have a strong understanding of each individual on any given team. As such, specific scenario training is an important step to prepare the best possible response.

6

Sustainable development of policies and guidelines

A vital aspect of sustainable policies and guidelines is ensuring all medical absence policies are applied equally to cases of illness, whether physical, like cancer, or mental, like depression. Far too often, they are not and employees with mental illnesses are treated vastly differently. Many companies have strong policies and guidelines in place, however this alone simply isn't enough. It's important to actively ensure that employees and managers are not only aware of these policies, but are confident in how to use them.



Why Web-Based Training?

In order for a successful rollout of any training initiative, access must be easy and engagement must be as high as possible. By providing web-based training, you allow your employees to consume the content at their own pace and from a location of their choosing.

In addition, when training is web-based it avoids the “one-and-done” problem; employees can access the program anytime from anywhere, so if they encounter a specific situation in 6 months from now, they can easily login and leverage a tool, resource or quick video to best respond to the situation. In addition, you can make this training a standard part of your process when on-boarding new employees; this will ensure a consistent skill development as your company continues to grow.



6 steps to improve mental health
in your workplace

Improve mental health in your workplace today

Changing our understanding of the experience of mental illness is required before stigma can be eradicated. We can learn about the existence of mental illness all we want, but doing so won't end stigma, nor will it make a significant improvement to the mental health of your organization.

In the end, you have the power to make this happen. As an HR leader, you have the ability to initiate a culture change that can have a significant and lasting positive impact on the mental health of everyone in your organization.

At StigmaZero, we invite you to improve the mental health of your workplace by ending the stigma – and we're here to help. Our innovative web-based *Create Your StigmaZero Workplace* training program provides the training and tools companies of all sizes need to implement these 6 steps today.

STIGMAZERO



StigmaZero works with companies of all sizes looking to improve their response to workplace mental illness. With stigma reduction and elimination, not only can employers better help and support their employees but they will see increases in productivity and a positive impact to the bottom line.

The innovative web-based *Create Your StigmaZero Workplace* training program educates and trains employees using the current best practices in online training. The program is engaging, impactful and will prepare your employees, managers, leadership and HR personnel to minimize the impact of stigma in the workplace.

Sources: [The World Health Organization | Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) | [The CEO Roundtable](#) | [A StigmaZero Workplace Pays in Profits](#)

1-800-359-1241

stigmazero.com

hello@stigmazero.com