

Hidden Depression Among Workers - How to Identify It and How to Help

Find out how managers can help their workers stay healthy and maintain good mental health on the job, and avoid healthcare related financial penalties.

AUSTIN, TEXAS, UNITED STATES, January 6, 2022 /EINPresswire.com/ -- What Is The Incidence And Cost Impact Of Depression And Anxiety In America?



According to the CDC, 1 in 5 Americans will experience a mental illness in a given year, and more than 50% of us will be diagnosed with a mental illness or disorder at some point in our lifetime.

Prior to the pandemic, mental health researchers calculated that depression and anxiety disorders alone were responsible for \$210 billion in added costs to the economy every year.

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Take the time to “normalize” and destigmatize issues of mental health by demonstrating best practices for wellness in the workplace.”

Formaspace

As you might expect, the pandemic has made things worse.

The number of workers who report dealing with one or more mental health conditions (including anxiety, depression, or PTSD) doubled from 20% to 40% between 2020 and 2021, according to a survey by Lyra Health.

The Covid Pandemic Has Dramatically Increased Stress Levels

The pandemic has increased our overall stress levels considerably – and this, in turn, will have a major negative effect on our collective mental health.

If we make a scorecard of the typical external factors that contribute to stress and anxiety, Covid

is hitting all the marks, with many Americans experiencing one or more of the following:

- Income Instability, Increased Poverty due to Job Losses, Business Closures
- Political Arguments Leading to Family or Friend Estrangement, Divorce
- Lockdown Loneliness and Social Isolation from Friends, Family, Co-Workers
- Lack of Timely, Affordable Access to Medical Care
- Increase in Significant Health Conditions, including Covid and Long Covid
- Grief due to Illness and Death
- Increased Levels of General Anxiety and Fear of the Unknown
- PTSD
- Sleep Disorders and Fatigue
- Job Burnout, Concern over Workplace Safety
- Poor Eating Habits, Decreased Exercise and Fitness, Increased Alcohol Use
- Increased Incidence of News Doomscrolling and Catastrophizing
- Public Outbursts, Online Bullying and Trolling,
- Negative Impact of Social Media on Self-Esteem

We might assume that older workers would bear the brunt of this stress, but researchers from AP and the University of Chicago's NORC found that members of the Gen Z generation (currently aged 13-24) have been especially hard hit by the stress of the pandemic.

The Case For Investment In Improved Mental Health



Formaspace introduced this new mid-century modern inspired table at NeoCon 2021. It features brass powder-coated hairpin legs and a gray laminate top with a distinctive birch wood edge.



Formaspace introduced the unique multipurpose seating/table/planter design at NeoCon 2021. It features natural Ipe wood and Caesarstone accent surfaces with a white powder-coated steel frame..

According to a survey conducted by the human resources company Paycor, 86% of business leaders are concerned about mental health in the workplace as a result of the pandemic.

One piece of good news is that investing in better treatment for depression and anxiety could save significant money over the long run, according to a 2016 World Health Organization (WHO) study.

WHO found that, on a global basis, every dollar spent on treating the most common forms of mental illness results in a \$4 return on investment, thanks to improved worker health and increased capacity to work.

Ways To Help: Create A Healthy [Work Environment](#) That Focuses On Mental Health Wellbeing

American business leaders seem to be getting the message.

Companies across the country are making larger investments in “holistic” employee wellbeing programs that not only focus on the physical health of workers but on their mental health as well.

One reason for this is the tight labor market, which is encouraging employers to look for ways to improve their recruiting and retention efforts while at the same time reducing worker absenteeism and job turnover/separations.

Many of these programs are based on common sense approaches:

- Workers have anxiety about coming to the office? Then allow employees to continue working from home and/or make the work environment feel safer and more inviting – with a greater emphasis on sanitation, fresh air ventilation, more open workspaces, and the addition of calming biophilic design elements inspired by nature (such as natural light, indoor plants, and views to the outside).
- Workers are stressed out and not getting enough exercise? Create guided meditation spaces and gym workout rooms in the workplace. Conduct similar online programs for those working from home.
- Workers concerned about Covid when visiting crowded restaurants during the lunch hour? Offer nutritious on-site food options, including delivery to the desk or open cafeterias with grab-and-go meal solutions.
- Workers suffering from lack of social interaction? Be the catalyst and encourage people to meet face-to-face, even if it's a social meeting on Zoom.
- Encourage employees to help others by participating in volunteer programs in their community.
- Workers feeling burned out on the job? Create more liberal time off policies that recognize workers may need a break to handle increased stress from the pandemic or to assist others in need.

- Workers feeling anxious about or disconnected from their job? Go the extra mile in communicating with employees (especially those working from home) to reassure them and provide fair, honest, clear information and actionable feedback to avoid unnecessary anxiety – and quash any toxic workplace rumors.

Ways To Help: Streamline Access To Mental Health Counseling And Treatment

In addition to investing in wellbeing programs, many companies are also expanding their mental health counseling and treatment program offerings for their employees.

However, you may want to review if there are still hidden barriers in place that would discourage employees who might benefit from these programs from taking advantage of them.

What should you look for, and what actions can you take?

Increase Awareness of Available Benefits

According to 2018 research by the National Council for Behavioral Health and surveys by Lyra Health, 40% of employees said they didn't know about available mental health benefits offered by their employer or that they found them hard to access.

Simplify the Presentation of Benefits

Employment law and HR departments have created a confusing soup of acronyms that may intimidate employees looking for help. As proof of this, take a look at this Thomson Reuters primer on HR and employee law acronyms!

Normalize Healthy Behavior at the Workplace

As managers, we're probably all familiar with psychologist Bruce Tuckman's famous phrase "forming, storming, norming, and performing." Take the time to "normalize" and destigmatize issues of mental health by demonstrating best practices for wellness in the workplace.

Reduce the Employee's Cost for Accessing Benefits

With the increased need for mental health counseling services increasing, review your co-pay and paid time off policies to see if you can reduce the financial barriers for employees who need help.

Online Counseling is Convenient and Helps Ensure Privacy

Many healthcare plans now offer online counseling options which can increase employee access to mental health services while also reassuring them that their privacy will be maintained.

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