

INTRODUCTION

Employees in all industries may be living with or experiencing mental illness. While mental health issues are becoming less stigmatized due to greater awareness, many employees may choose to stay silent about their condition.



WHO IS AFFECTED BY MENTAL ILLNESS?

Anyone, at any age, can be affected by mental illness. While there are many people who live with or experience mental illness, many do not seek support or treatment. The reasons why some people do not seek support and treatment are varied and depend on the individual.

SYMPTOMS OF MENTAL ILLNESS

Everyone at some point or another experience changes in feelings or actions. However, changes in feelings or actions that continue for two or more weeks may be indications of metal illness.

Symptoms of mental illness can appear differently in every individual. When experiencing or living with mental illness, emotions or changes in behavior can be amplified. Some signs of mental illness include the following:

- Feelings of worry or fear.
- Having problems concentrating or experiencing confusion more than normal.
- Feelings of being flat or numb.
- Feelings of anger, irritability, or aggression.
- Being unconcerned with your appearance.
- Feelings of sadness or hopelessness.
- Feeling low or excessively tired.
- Having trouble relating to others.
- Avoiding friends or social activities.
- Change in sleeping habits.
- Uncontrollable thoughts after a traumatic event.
- Changes in eating habits, which may include increased hunger or lack of appetite.
- Thoughts of suicide.
- Change in sex drive.
- Difficulty perceiving reality including delusions or hallucinations.
- Physical problems such as headaches, racing heart, stomach aches, and/or unexplained aches and pains which have no obvious cause.



REACHING OUT

Coworkers, friends, and family play an important role in helping encourage those who live with or are experiencing mental illness to seek support and treatment. If you, a friend, a relative, or coworker is experiencing any of the following, please reach out for help:

- Abusing drugs or alcohol.
- Having a hard time recognizing their own unusual behavior.
- Seeming unable to carry out daily activities or handling daily problems and stress.
- Talking about suicide.

SUPPORT AND TREATMENT

Mental illness can be managed and treated. Treatment for the most common conditions of mental illness are effective 80% of the time. Treatment should be done with the help of a professional such as a doctor, psychologist, or licensed mental health provider. Depending on the individual needs, treatment plans may include any of the following:

- Peer support
- Medication
- Therapy sessions (one-on-one, or with a small group)

If you or someone you know needs help finding treatment options, you can:

- Ask your doctor
- Call 1-800-273-HELP (4357)
- Text: 1-800-487-4889
- Visit: <https://findtreatment.samhsa.gov/>



If you or someone you know is a veteran and is in crisis or needs help finding treatment options, please contact one of the following numbers:

- Veterans in crisis – Call: 1-800-273-8255 and Press 1 or text 838255
- Treatment options – Call 1-866-966-1020

If you, a friend, relative, or coworker are in crisis and experiencing thoughts of suicide:

- Call (or direct a person to call): 911
- Call (or direct a person to call): 1-800-273-TALK (8255)
- Text: 1-800-799-4889
- Go to the nearest emergency room



CONCLUSION

All employees, no matter the industry, at one time or another may live with or experience mental illness. It is important for employees who see or are living with or experiencing mental illness to reach out. Reaching out can be as simple as offering support or helping those affected seek treatment. Mental illness can be managed and treated.