



A Brief History of Stigma: Stigma Reduction Toolkit Workplace Mental Health Advocacy

To support mental health in the workplace and employees with mental illness, employers need positive attitudes along with information and tools for action. While explicit negative attitudes are difficult to work with, knowing one's rights as an employee and having information and tools for action readily available can help with navigating workplaces where attitudes are less extreme.

Promoting Mentally Healthy Workplaces

The stress of a psychologically unhealthy workplace can worsen mental health, particularly for people who are already dealing with mental illness. Creating psychologically healthy workplaces is good for both employers and employees. Employers may have no idea how to go about this on their own, but there are loads of resources that can help.

- [Building Stronger Teams](#): Supporting Effective Team Leaders
- Center for Workplace Mental Health (US): [The Working Well Toolkit](#): resources for employers to support mental health in the workplace
- European Network for Workplace Health Promotion: [A Guide to Employers to Promote Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
- [Mental Health at Work](#) (UK)
- Mental Health Commission of Canada:
 - [A Practical Toolkit to Help Employers Build an Inclusive Workplace](#)
 - [Implementing the Standard for Psychological Health and Safety in the Workplace](#)
- Mental Health Foundation (UK): [Managing Mental Health in the Workplace](#)

- Mind (UK):
 - [How to Implement the Thriving at Work Mental Health Standards in Your Workplace](#)
 - [People Managers' Guide to Mental Health](#)
- [Plan for Resilience](#): Workplace Edition
- [Psychological Health and Safety](#): An Action Guide for Employers
- [See Me Scotland](#) workplace mental health resources
- [Workplace Mental Health](#): employer guide from the Mood Disorder Society of Canada
- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) (Canada): a wide range of workplace mental health resources for employers and employees

These assessment tools can help leaders to evaluate how they're currently doing:

- [Guarding Minds @ Work](#) (Canada): tools to conduct an assessment of psychosocial workplace health
- [Psychologically Safe Leader Assessment](#)

There are also resources available to support employers in challenging stigma, including:

- [MakeItOK](#) anti-stigma campaign for organizations
- NAMI [StigmaFree Companies](#)

Dealing with Mental Health Issues in the Workplace

Creating psychologically healthy workplaces is good for all employees, but employers also need to be able to handle employees who have a mental illness.

A good place for employers (and employees advocating for healthier workplaces) to start is Mental Health First Aid. Having first aid attendants is a model that employers are already familiar with and can build upon in a relatively easy and inexpensive manner. Here are links for several countries: [US](#) | [Canada](#) | [UK](#) | [Australia](#)

Employers also need resources to prepare them to deal with issues that may arise related to employee mental illness. These sites can help:

- Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation: [Employer resources](#) for integrating people with disabilities into the workplace
- Center for Workplace Mental Health (US): [Right Direction](#): resources for employers for depression in the workplace
- Mental Health First Aid England: [MHFA Line Managers' Resource](#)
- Mind (UK): [How to Support Staff Who Are Experiencing a Mental Health Problem](#)
- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) (Canada): employee mental health issues

Workplace Training

For employers who are interested in attending training in handling mental health issues at work, these resources may be of use:

- [Active Minds @ Work](#) workplace training

- Center for Workplace Mental Health (US): [Notice.Talk.Act At Work](#): e-learning module for employers on handling employee mental health issues
- [Mind](#) (UK): e-learning courses
- See Me Scotland: [See Me in Work e-learning](#)
- [The Mental Health Project](#) (Australia): workplace mental health e-learning courses

Accommodations & Return to Work

The exact details will depend on where you live, but people with mental illness-related disabilities usually have the same entitlement to reasonable accommodations as people with physical illnesses. However, employers are often a lot less familiar with what such accommodations might look like for people with mental illness than they are with accommodations for people with physical illness.

As an employee, it's important to know your rights, and know what kinds of accommodations are typically used for people with mental illness. Keep in mind that an accommodation is not a privilege; it's a right. Being prepared yourself and having concrete information available for the employer to work from can help to maximize your chances of success.

Examples of accommodations include:

- Adjust work schedules for greater flexibility
- Allow more frequent breaks
- Allow time off for medical/therapy appointments
- Modifications of the workspace to make it quiet or limit distractions
- Change how instructions are given
- Break large tasks into smaller ones
- Modify supervision style and the way feedback is given
- Allow extra time or orientation to learn new tasks

These organizations have more info:

- ADA National Network (US): [Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace and the ADA](#)
- Australian Human Rights Commission: [Workers with Mental Illness: A Practical Guide for Managers](#): addresses reasonable adjustments and performance concerns
- Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation (US):
 - [Accommodations](#): What might I want to know about accommodations? (for employees)
 - [Reasonable Accommodations](#): info for employers and employees
- Center for Workplace Mental Health (US): [Returning to the Workplace Guide](#)
- Disability Law Center (US): [FAQ: Reasonable Accommodation of Disabilities in Employment](#)
- Job Accommodation Network (US): [Mental Health Conditions](#)
- Mental Health First Aid England: [MHFA Line Managers' Resource](#)
- Mental Health Foundation (NZ): [Managing Mental Health Issues](#)
- Mental Health Works (Canada): [Mental Health in the Workplace: An Accommodation Guide for Managers and Staff](#)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness – NAMI (US): [Succeeding at Work](#)
- U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission: [Depression, PTSD, & Other Mental Health Conditions in the Workplace: Your Legal Rights](#)
- Workplace Strategies for Mental Health (Canada): [Supportive Performance Management](#):

The Case for Investment

For employers considering changes to support workplace mental health, or for employees advocating for such changes, it's good to have financial data to back it up. A number of organizations in different countries have put together a business case to support investing in mental health, which can improve both absenteeism and presenteeism and help employees to be more productive.

Here are some examples:

- American Heart Association CEO Roundtable: [Mental Health: A Workforce Crisis](#)
- Center for Workplace Mental Health (US): [Making the Business Case](#)
- Deloitte UK: [Mental health and employers: Refreshing the case for investment](#)
- European Network for Workplace Health Promotion: [A Guide to the Business Case for Mental Health](#)
- Mental Health Commission of Canada: [A Clear Business Case for Hiring Aspiring Workers](#)
- The Australia Institute Centre for Future Work: [Investing in Better Mental Health in Australian Workplaces](#)

Employee Mental Health

These resources are aimed at helping employees deal with mental health issues in the context of work:

- [Antidepressant Skills @ Work](#): Dealing with Mood Problems in the Workplace
- Canadian Mental Health Association: [Hangin' In There](#): Strategies for Job Retention by Persons with a Psychiatric Disability
- Center for Workplace Mental Health: [Right Direction](#)
- [Mental Health America](#): mental health resources for employees
- Temple University: [A Practical Guide for People with Mental Health Conditions Who Want to Work](#)
- [Working Through It](#) video series
- [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) (Canada): resources for employees

Disclosure Resources

Disclosure can be difficult, and it can also be risky. However, concealment tends to fuel self-stigma and promote stress and hypervigilance. The benefits of selectively disclosing to a few key people may outweigh the risks, and for some people, being entirely open may be the right choice.

These resources may help in your decision-making process:

- [Honest Open Proud](#) manual and workbook
- Time to Change: [Stigma Force Field Analysis](#)

Other Resources

The Boston University Center for Psychiatric Rehabilitation has several resources that may be useful:

- [Barriers to employment](#) for those with severe mental illness fact sheet
- [Let's Talk Employment](#): A Guide for Family Members of Individuals in Mental Health Recovery
- [Supported employment](#) fact sheet

A Brief History of Stigma

A Brief History of Stigma has more information on what mental illness stigma is and what to do about it. You can learn more about the book on [Mental Health @ Home](#).

It's available on [Amazon](#) and [Google Play](#).

