



Support for Job Seekers with Mental Health Challenges



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What is Mental Health?



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What is Mental Health?

Mental Health is a state of mental well-being that enables people to cope with the stresses of life, to realize their abilities, to learn well and work well, and to contribute to their communities ([WHO,2022, pg 2](#)).

According to [mentalhealth.gov](https://www.mentalhealth.gov), “mental health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. It affects how we think, feel, and act. It also helps determine how we handle stress, relate to others, and make choices.” Thus, Mental *Health*...involves effective functioning in daily activities resulting in:

- Productive activities (work, school, caregiving).
- Healthy relationships.
- Ability to adapt to change and cope with adversity.

What is Mental Health?

Mental health conditions, such as depression, post-traumatic stress disorder, bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, and substance use disorders, are conditions which impact our thoughts, feelings/emotions/moods, and our behaviors. Mental health conditions involve significant changes in each of these areas which cause distress and/or challenges functioning in social, work or family activities (Psychiatry.org).

While we all have mental health, we don't all have a mental health condition. However, mental health conditions are common:

- 1 in 5 U.S. adults experience a mental health condition each year
- 1 in 20 U.S. adults experience serious mental health condition each year
- 1 in 6 U.S. youth aged 6-17 experience a mental health condition each year
- Substance use disorders affect 20 million Americans age 12 and over

Mental Health in the Workplace



The World Health Organization ⁽²⁰²²⁾ reports globally, as of 2019,

- 301 million people living with anxiety
- 280 million people living with depression
- 64 million people living with schizophrenia or bipolar disorder
- 703,000 people die by suicide each year



Mental Health in the Workplace



Social Determinants

1. Work
2. Psychosocial risks
3. Society level events



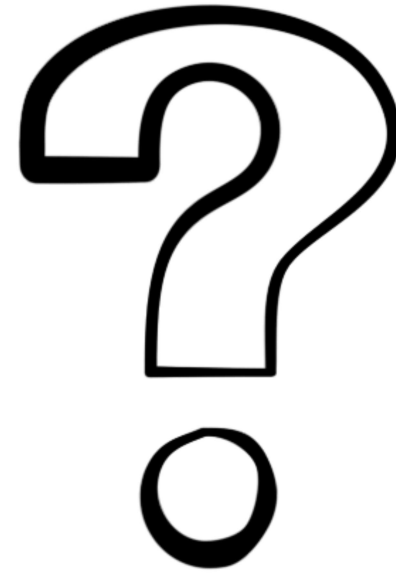
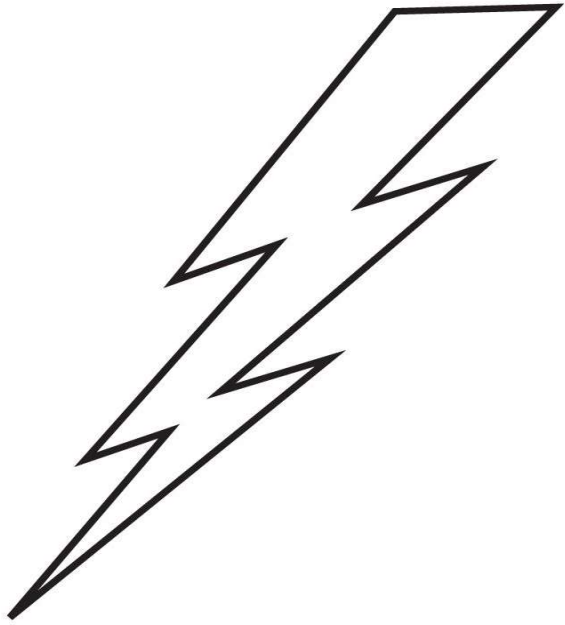
Mental Health in the Workplace



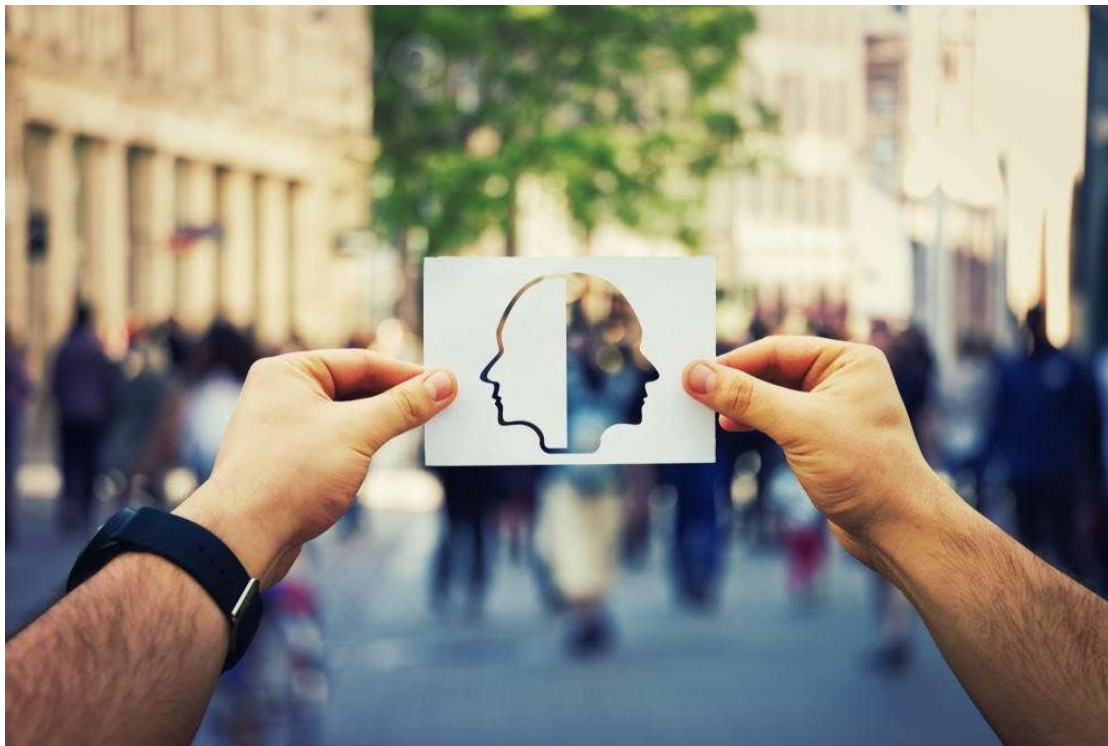
1. Prevent risks to employee/client/participant mental health at work
 - a. Identifying risks and introduce interventions to modify, mitigate or remove
 - b. Involve workers in decisions about work-life prioritization, protect from discrimination and bullying, clear understanding of unacceptable behavior in workplace
2. Protect and Promote
 - a. Build up the capacity of managers/case workers to provide support
 - b. Introduce trainings, how to recognize and respond to emotional distress, how to facilitate help-seeking and improve interpersonal skills
 - c. Be aware of mental health literacy, awareness and reduce stigma



2 Types of Trauma



Trauma is in the eye of the beholder



Every behavior meets a need...



But there may not be words to express the need



Misconceptions of Trauma Behaviors



- Fear
- Anger
- Withdrawal
- Trouble concentrating
- Absenteeism
- Acting-out
- Avoidance
- A sense of “being on alert”
- Irritability
- Change in academic performance
- Increased activity level
- Substance abuse
- Over- or under-reacting to situations
- Heightened difficulty with authority
- Emotional numbness

“Fight” Example

Behavior

Misconception

Need

Anger

Disrespectful

Stability



Mental Health in the Workplace



3. Support workers to access, participate and thrive

- a. Explore reasonable accommodation options
- b. Support access to ongoing clinical care
- c. Coordinate with supportive roles (health, social, employment services)

4. Enable an environment for change

- a. Leadership
- b. Integration
- c. Participation



Trigger Warning



Suicide Prevention

Your “role,” can involve watching for direct and indirect signs of suicidality and severe distress.

Direct signs are when someone comes to you or you hear someone say they feel like hurting or killing themselves.

Indirect signs are more subtle — the early warning signs that someone is worsening. For instance, they might make negative statements like, “life is not worth it anymore,” or “I am useless”, “no one will miss me”, “I wish I could go to sleep and never wake up.” They may try to gather the means for self-harm, like saving up pills or acquiring a weapon.

Warning signs- Talking as if saying going away forever, giving away prized possessions, withdrawing from friends and normal activities, increase in substance use

Suicide Prevention

Talk about it:

1. You will not make someone suicidal by saying the word “suicide”
2. Using a calm and serious tone may be reassuring to someone who is thinking of suicide.. Focus on being understanding, caring and nonjudgmental, saying something like:
 - *“You are not alone. I’m here for you”*
 - *“I may not be able to understand exactly how you feel, but I care about you and want to help”*
3. You should ask about a specific plan. How will they do it? When? Inquire about the specifics.

Suicide Prevention

What Not To Do

- Don't promise secrecy. Say instead: *"I care about you too much to keep this kind of secret. You need help and I'm here to help you get it."*
- Don't debate the value of living or argue that suicide is right or wrong
- Don't ask in a way that indicates you want "No" for an answer.
 - Such as "You're not thinking about suicide, are you?"
- Don't try to handle the situation alone
- Don't try to single-handedly resolve the situation

What Not to Say

- "We all go through tough times like these. You'll be fine."
- "It's all in your head. Just snap out of it."

Suicide Prevention

Keep them safe by reducing a suicidal persons access to highly lethal items or places.

Firearms:

- Discuss how many, storage options, who has access

Medications:

- Dispose of substances or medications safely
- Lock up medication

Environment

- Identify any additional risks at location (pens/pencils, coat hooks, furniture)

Suicide Prevention

Keep them safe by being there:

- This is a time to listen and learn what a person is thinking or feeling
- Stay with the person until help arrives or person is no longer in crisis

Help them connect:

- Call 988 or text 741741
- Contact a trusted individual (family, friend, spiritual advisor)
- Contact a mental health professional
- Develop a safety plan

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Suicide Prevention

Stay Connected

- Stay in touch after crisis or discharge from care
- Follow up when you say you will
- Review safety plan as necessary

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Suicide Prevention



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Action Steps for Helping Someone in Emotional Pain



ASK

“Are you thinking about killing yourself?”



KEEP THEM SAFE

Reduce access to lethal items or places.



BE THERE

Listen carefully and acknowledge their feelings.



HELP THEM CONNECT

Call or text the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline number (988).



STAY CONNECTED

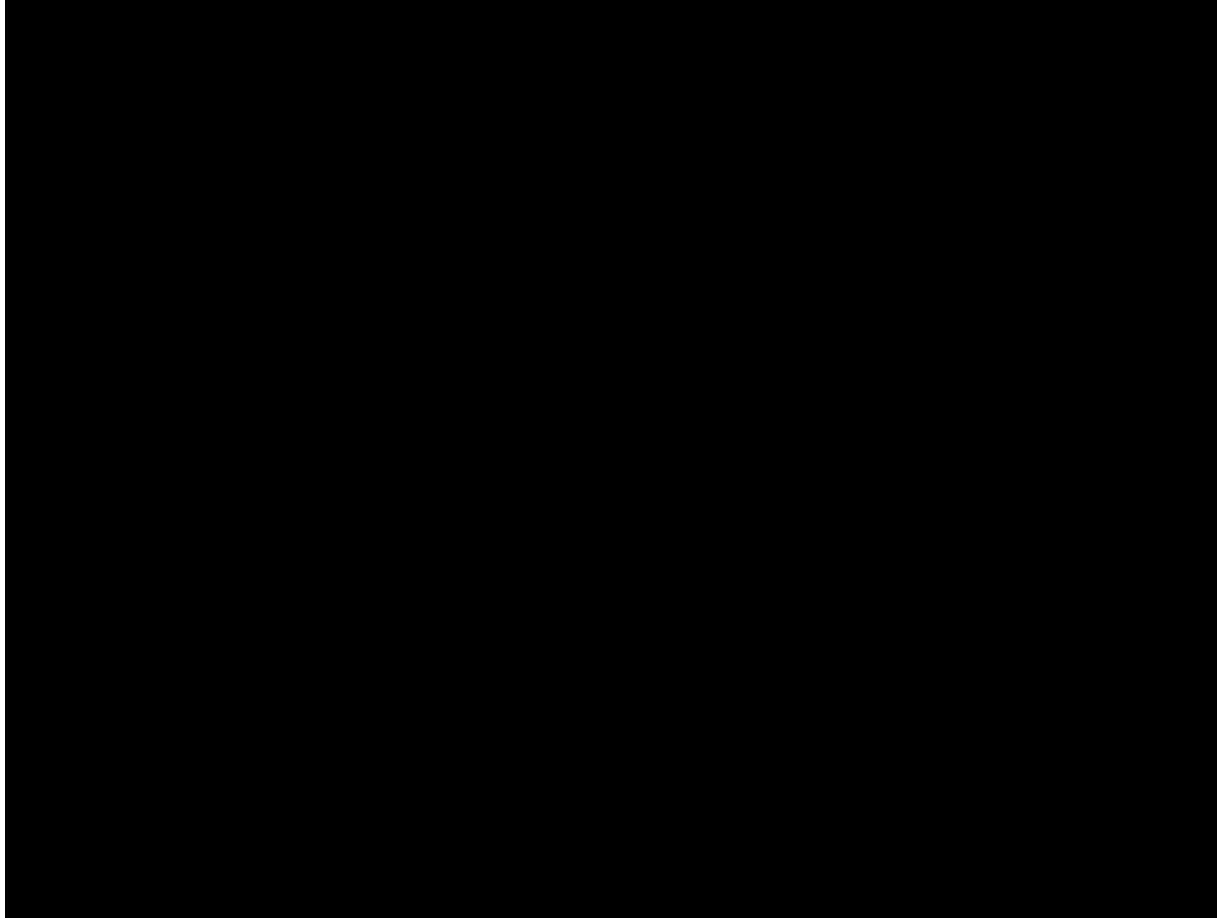
Follow up and stay in touch after a crisis.



National Institute
of Mental Health

nimh.nih.gov/suicideprevention

Compassion Fatigue VS. Burnout VS. Vicarious Trauma



Compassion Fatigue VS. Burnout VS. Vicarious Trauma

Burnout

-Physical and emotional exhaustion when you have low job satisfaction, feel powerless, overwhelmed

Compassion Fatigue

-Profound emotional and physical erosion when you are unable to refuel and regenerate

Vicarious (secondary) Trauma

-Profound shift in world views/fundamental beliefs when repeatedly working with individuals who experience trauma

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Vicarious Trauma

What is Vicarious Trauma?

- Work-related exposure to trauma
- Inevitable occupational challenge
- Negative impacts can be prevented/avoided or managed

Vicarious Traumatization

- Overly involved with or avoidance of victim/survivor
- Hypervigilance and fear for own safety: the world no longer feel safe and people cant be trusted
- Intrusive thoughts and images, or nightmares from victims' stories

Vicarious Trauma Risk Factors

Personal:

- Trauma history
- Pre-existing psychological disorder
- Young age
- Isolation, inadequate support system
- Loss in last 12 months

Professional:

- Lack of quality supervision
- High percentage of trauma survivors in caseload
- Little experience
- Worker/organization mismatch
- Lack of professional support system
- Inadequate orientation and training for role

Bonach & Heckert, 2012; Slattery & Goodman, 2009; Bell, Kulkarni, et al, 2003; Cornille & Meyers, 1999

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Compassion Fatigue VS. Burnout VS. Vicarious Trauma



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Self-Care

Resilience is the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress —such as family and relationship problems, serious health problems, or workplace and financial stressors.

It means “bouncing back” from difficult experiences.

-American Psychological Association

Self-Care

Physical

- Regular medical care
- Eat healthy
- Sleep regularly
- Routine physical activity

Psychological

- Take time for self reflection
- Therapy
- Meditation
- Journaling

Emotional

- Cry
- Cuddle with a pet
- Get involved in the community
- Laugh

Spiritual

- Practice Forgiveness
- Spend time in nature
- Yoga

Personal

- Set goals
- Spend time with loved ones
- Take the **Lunch Break**
- Learn to say **NO**
- Take mental health holidays
- Set Boundaries

Breathwork



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2
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Sensory Grounding



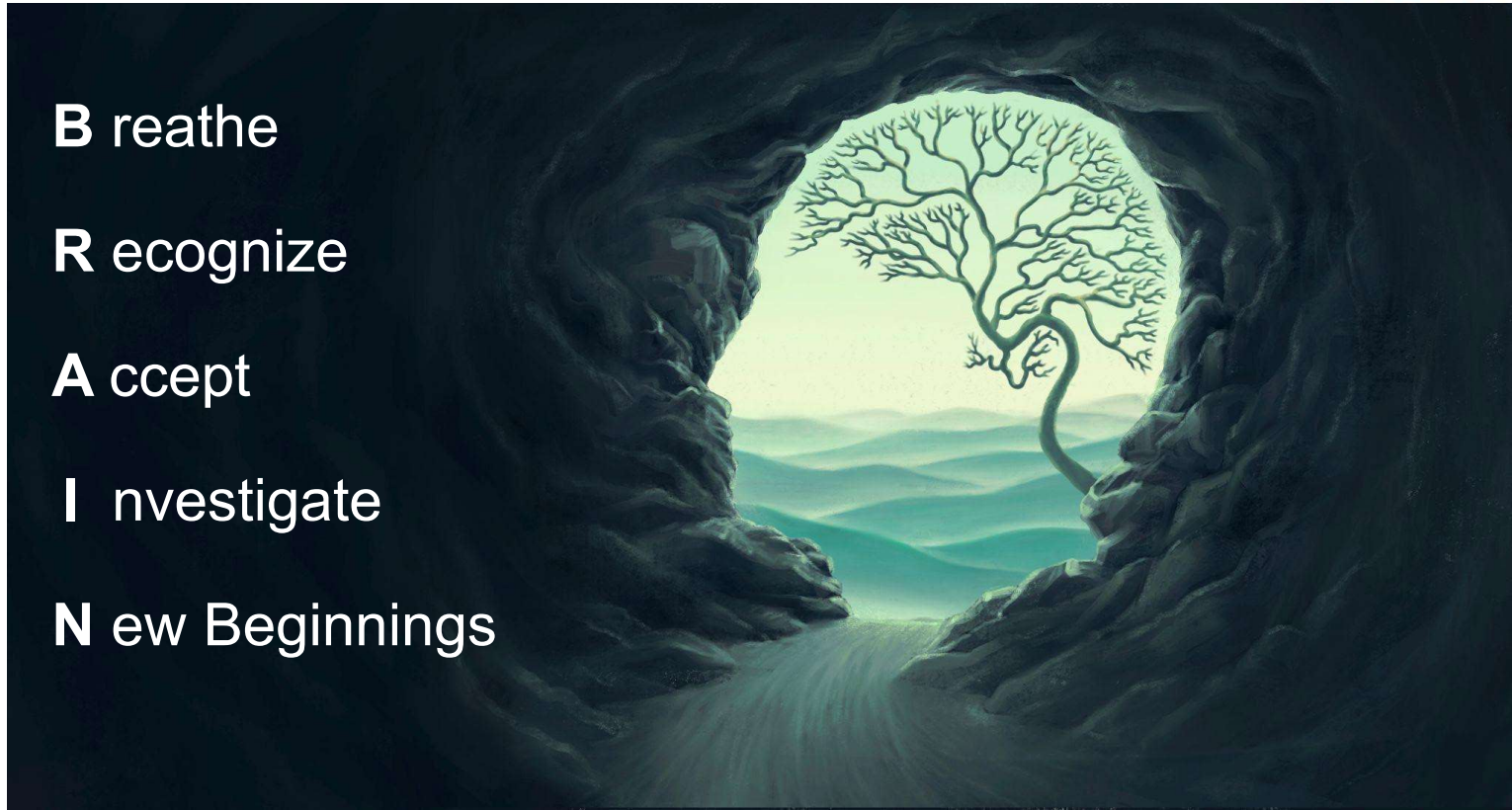
Breathe

Recognize

Acept

Investigate

New Beginnings



Referral and Resources

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Dial or text 988 for 24/7 access to trained crisis counselors who can help people experiencing mental health-related distress.
- **Veterans Crisis Line:** Text 838-255 **OR** dial 988 then press 1 to get 24/7 confidential crisis support. Responders are real people, many of them veterans, who are specially trained to support veterans.
- **The Trevor Project:** Text “Start” to 678-678 **OR** call 866-488-7386 all day, any day to reach trained counselors who can support people under 25 who are in crisis, feeling suicidal or in need of a safe and judgment-free place to talk. The Trevor Project specializes in supporting the LGBTQ+ community.
- **National Sexual Assault Hotline:** Call 800-656-4673 (HOPE) for confidential support services for survivors, regardless of where they are in their recovery.

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Referral and Resources

- Mental Health First Aid-Find training at - <https://www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org/>
- Suicide Prevention Training - <https://qprinstitute.com/>

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WHO guidelines on mental health at work. Geneva: World Health Organization; 2022. Licence: CC BY-NC-SA 3.0 IGO