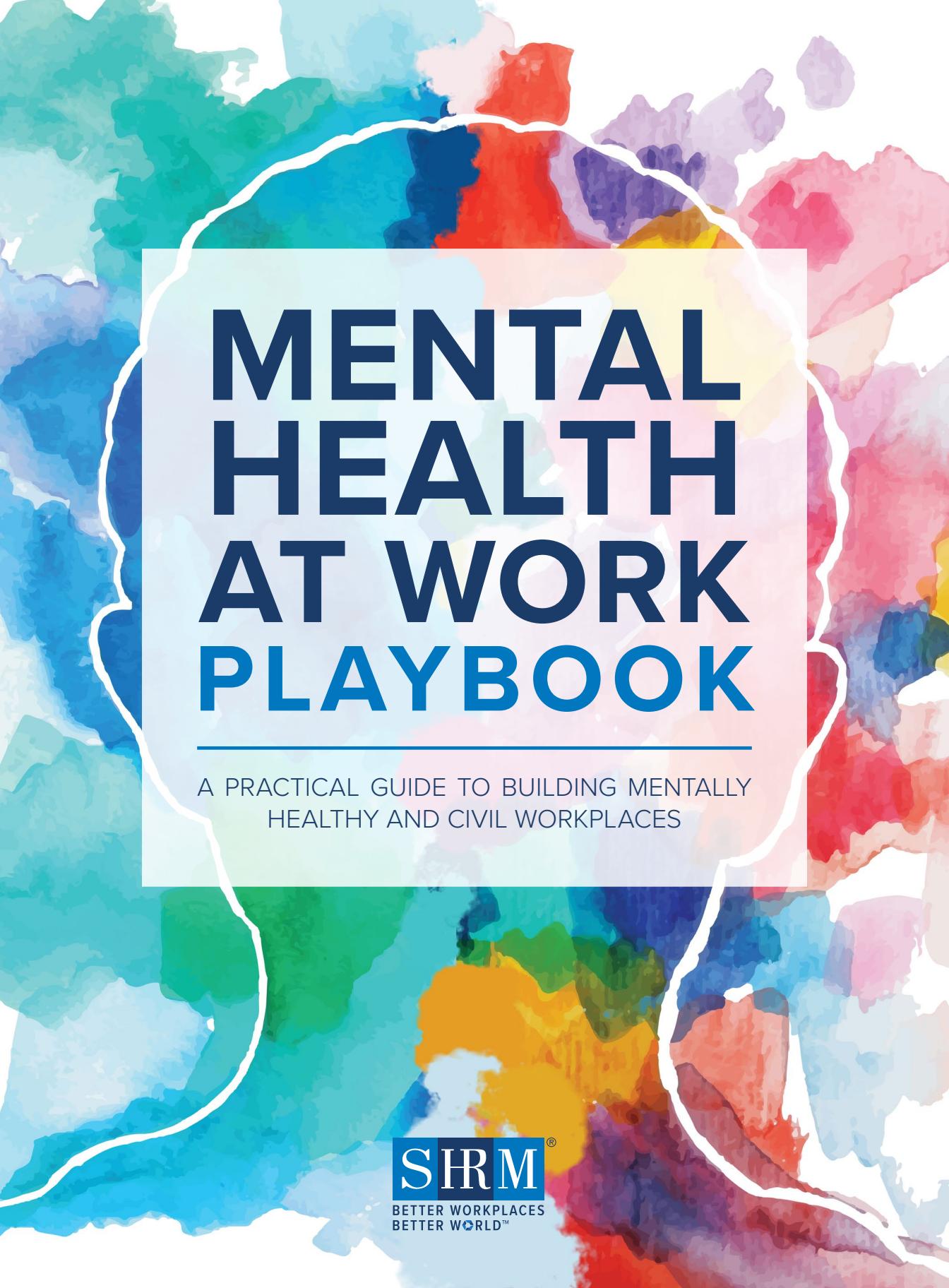




MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK PLAYBOOK

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO BUILDING MENTALLY
HEALTHY AND CIVIL WORKPLACES

ARE YOU OKAY?

Prioritizing Mental Health at Work

Today, U.S. workers' optimism remains near a record low, and nearly half said the state of the economy has a negative impact on their mental health.¹ This reality jeopardizes long-term individual well-being and achievement.

If you work, you know. You're being asked to reduce turnover, boost performance, and protect culture — all while burnout, stress, and mental health challenges are on the rise.

Employee well-being is no longer a nice-to-have, it's a business imperative. When your people aren't well, your bottom line suffers. But when they feel supported, they show up stronger, stay longer, and perform better.

This guide empowers your organization to implement impactful new processes by truly listening to the voice of the employee. Backed by actionable insights and strategic recommendations, it equips HR professionals, employees, and leaders to take meaningful ownership and drive lasting change.

The question isn't *if* your organization should invest in mental health — it's whether you're equipped to lead the charge.

DID YOU KNOW?

Nearly 2 in 3 U.S. workers (65%) reported that their organization says it cares about employee mental health, SHRM data shows; however, 45% of those workers also reported that their organization's actions say otherwise.²

This playbook is your organization's action plan. It's built to help you meet the moment — with practical strategies, tools, and talking points to make mental health a visible, credible priority in your workplace. Whether you're rolling out new policies, building buy-in with leadership, or navigating tough conversations, this guide will help you take action to protect your people and your business.

¹Source: April 2025 Current Events Pulse survey, SHRM, 2025.

²Source: February 2025 Current Events Pulse survey, SHRM, 2025.

The Business Case for Wellness at Work

Mental health and well-being are no longer just personal concerns — they are business imperatives. Economic uncertainty, social challenges, and political tensions have heightened workplace stress, leading to significant consequences for both employees and organizations. Untreated mental health conditions cost the global economy **\$1 trillion in lost productivity each year**, according to the World Health Organization.³ In the U.S. alone, workplace stress results in **nearly \$300 billion in annual losses** due to absenteeism, reduced performance, and turnover.⁴

Investing in mental health is both an ethical responsibility and a strategic advantage. When employees feel supported, they are more engaged, productive, and committed to their work. Prioritizing mental well-being fosters stronger team dynamics, improves retention, and cultivates a culture of civility and respect.

The data is clear: When employees thrive, businesses do, too.

1 in 3 employees would trade higher pay for better mental health benefits.⁵

94% of HR professionals said mental health resources improve overall employee health.⁶

88% of HR leaders believe offering mental health resources can increase productivity and proactive programs can reduce health care costs significantly.

84% of workers faced at least one mental health challenge in the past year.⁷

³Source: *Mental Health at Work*, World Health Organization, 2024.

⁴Source: 2024 Wellness Barometer survey, BrightPlan, 2024.

⁵Source: February 2025 Current Events Pulse survey, SHRM, 2025.

⁶Source: *Mental Health in America: A 2022 Workplace Report*, SHRM, 2022.

⁷Source: *2021 Mental Health at Work Report*, Mind Share Partners, 2021.



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1. DEMYSTIFYING MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

Work shapes our daily lives in profound ways. It influences how we feel, how we relate to others, and even how we view ourselves. As such, mental health in the workplace is essential. When employers support mental well-being, the effects ripple outward, benefiting both the individual and the organization.

Every worker deserves a safe and healthy work environment that bolsters, rather than undermines, mental health. A healthy work environment reduces stress and promotes well-being by offering:

- A sense of confidence, purpose, and achievement.
- Opportunities to build positive relationships and create community.
- A platform for structured routines and balance.

By addressing mental health at work, we're preparing for a future in which work, workers, and workplaces can thrive together in a rapidly changing world.



WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES

Automation Anxiety

A 2023 American Psychological Association survey found that the increased popularity and integration of artificial intelligence is concerning to many employees and has increased their stress over job security and potential role replacement.⁸

Employees reported feeling pressure to adapt to rapid technological changes. Many said they experience “technostress” and lack confidence in their ability to effectively use new technologies, often due to insufficient employer-sponsored training.

Technostress is anxiety, tension, or distress that occurs when a person is overwhelmed by new technology, feeling as if they are unable to adapt and use it in a productive way.

Political Unrest and Incivility

Heightened political tensions — both before and after an election — can strain workplace relationships and make it harder for employees to collaborate productively.

Workers attributed workplace incivility to differing political opinions more often than any other factor, 2025 SHRM research found. Incivility collectively costs U.S. organizations more than \$2 billion a day in lost productivity and absenteeism.⁹ Political disagreements in the workplace can create stress, hinder open communication, and disrupt teamwork, leading to feelings of demotivation and disengagement.

General Stress

Few jobs are free from stress, but almost 1 in 3 employees (30%) said their job often makes them feel stressed, while 26% often feel “overwhelmed” by their job, according to SHRM research.¹⁰ Key drivers of stress include workload, pay and compensation, type of work, bad management, and understaffing.¹¹

⁸Source: 2023 Work in America Survey, American Psychological Association, September 2023.

⁹Source: Q1 2025 Civility Index, SHRM, March 2025.

¹⁰Source: Does Your Company Help or Hurt Employees' Mental Health?, SHRM, May 2024.

¹¹Source: Improve Mental Health Support to Strengthen Your Workforce, SHRM, May 2024.

Financial Worries

Personal financial concerns can cause employees to worry about their company’s financial health as well as their own job security.

Factors such as inflation, stock market volatility, high housing costs, child care expenses, health care costs, and wage stagnation are leading workers to feel increased anxiety about their broader financial future and a sense of instability in their career. A 2024 study by the American Staffing Association and The Harris Poll found that 53% of workers feel their paychecks aren’t keeping up with inflation.¹²

Low income correlates with poor mental health among working-age adults, according to a 2022 study published in *The Lancet*.¹³ Employees have reported losing an average of more than seven hours of productivity a week due to financial stress, costing U.S. employers a combined \$183 billion each year.¹⁴

SHRM Resource

Quiz: [How Much Do You Understand About Financially Stressed Employees? >](#)

Get a Pulse on Mental Health in Your Workplace

Every organization is unique. Going directly to the source — your employees — to understand how best to best tackle mental health can provide valuable insights and help people feel supported.

- **Conduct regular surveys:** Implement anonymous engagement surveys integrating questions on company culture and the mental health of your employees. Include specific questions about employees’ experiences, stress levels, and perceptions. Regularly hold conversations with employees to gather real-time feedback.
- **Identify problem areas:** Use survey results to pinpoint departments or teams where burnout, stress, and anxiety may be at dangerous levels. This will help you target training and interventions where they are most needed.

¹² Source: 53% of U.S. Workers Feel Their Paycheck Is Not Keeping Up with Inflation, American Staffing Association, February 2024.

¹³ Source: How Do Income Changes Impact on Mental Health and Wellbeing for Working-Age Adults? A Systematic Review and Meta-Analysis, *The Lancet*, 2022.

¹⁴ Source: 2024 Wellness Barometer Survey, BrightPlan, 2024.



2. LINKING CIVILITY AND MENTAL HEALTH

Civility means treating others with respect, courtesy, and kindness, even when you disagree. It’s not just about polite behavior — it’s about fostering an environment in which every employee feels valued, heard, and included. In a civil workplace, colleagues engage in positive interactions, resolve conflicts constructively, and encourage each other’s growth.

Why Civility Matters for Mental Health

A culture of civility is essential for supporting employees’ mental well-being. Here’s why:



It increases psychological safety: Employees in civil workplaces feel safer expressing themselves and sharing ideas without fear of ridicule or exclusion.



It reduces stress: Civility minimizes workplace stress by promoting healthy, respectful communication and behaviors that reduce anxiety and frustration.



It fosters engagement: Employees who feel respected are more motivated, engaged, and productive.

How Incivility Damages Mental Health

When civility breaks down, mental health suffers. Here’s how incivility impacts well-being:

- **It increases bullying:** Employees experiencing bullying are more likely to face burnout and health problems.
- **It leads to discrimination:** Being discriminated against leads to feelings of isolation, frustration, and low self-esteem, which can escalate into mental health crises.
- **It creates a sense of exclusion:** When employees feel left out or ignored, it causes emotional distress, contributes to a sense of alienation, and increases the likelihood of anxiety and depression.

SHRM Resources

Toolkit: [Managing Difficult Employees and Disruptive Behaviors >](#)

Podcast Episode: [Conflict Resolution Strategies Every Organization Needs >](#)



Civility Is an Urgent Workplace Issue

SHRM research has shown that:¹⁵

208M U.S. workers collectively experience more than 208 million acts of incivility per day.

58% of daily acts of incivility occur in the workplace.

65% of U.S. workers say that incivility at work causes unnecessary stress.

26% of workers said they would likely leave their job in 2025 due to incivility.

Incivility is a cycle.

Workers who experience incivility in their everyday lives are twice as likely to commit uncivil acts as workers who do not.

¹⁵ Source: Civility Index, SHRM, 2024-2025.



Steps for Fostering Civility and Mental Health

1. Establish Clear Expectations

Ensure employees understand the importance of civility and respect by:

- Creating policies regarding expectations for behavior and communication.
- Leading by example and demonstrating respectful conduct at all levels.

2. Provide Training and Development

Equip employees with the skills to engage respectfully and effectively by:

- Encouraging open dialogue through communication workshops, civility workshops, and webinars.
- Using SHRM tools such as the 5 Steps for Encouraging Civil Conversations at Work guide and Cards Against Incivility toolkit to equip your employees to handle disagreements respectfully.

3. Create Safe Reporting Mechanisms

Give employees the tools to report uncivil behavior without fear of retaliation by:

- Implementing anonymous reporting systems for bullying and harassment.
- Ensuring prompt and effective resolution of issues.

4. Encourage Mental Health Awareness

Promote a proactive approach to mental well-being by:

- Regularly checking in with employees on their mental health.
- Maintaining open dialogue about stress and mental health struggles.

5. Recognize and Reward Positive Behavior

Make civility a part of your organizational culture by:

- Recognizing employees who model respectful behavior.
- Including civility as a key factor in performance reviews and reward systems.

How Civility Prevents Mental Health Crises

When respect, inclusivity, and kindness are prioritized, employees experience fewer mental health challenges. An approach to well-being rooted in civility:

- **Reduces isolation:** Inclusive practices help ensure that everyone feels like part of the team, reducing feelings of loneliness that can contribute to anxiety and depression.
- **Encourages support:** A respectful environment fosters relationships so that employees feel comfortable seeking help when needed.
- **Promotes resilience:** Employees who are treated with kindness and dignity are better equipped to cope with work stress and personal challenges.

A vast majority **(94%) of U.S. workers** agreed that a civil workplace culture is essential for the mental well-being of employees.

Nearly **half of workers (45%)** reported receiving considerable or great support from their managers in moving past incidents of incivility. Those who receive low support (replying “not at all” or “to a small extent”) were nearly **48% more likely** to be looking for another job than those who receive high support (replying “to a considerable extent” or “to a great extent”).¹⁶

By actively cultivating a civil workplace, HR can help prevent mental health crises and foster a thriving, engaged workforce. Act today to ensure that respect, kindness, and inclusivity are at the core of your organization’s culture.

¹⁶ Source: Q2 2025 Civility Index, SHRM, May 2025.



Visit [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org) to access these SHRM members-only resources:

[SHRM Civility Starter Kit](#)

The SHRM Civility Starter Kit contains the latest SHRM Civility Index and new tools for fostering civil conversations. Use it as your guide to cultivate a more civil and productive workplace.

Toolkit: [Creating a Mental-Health-Friendly Workplace >](#)

Toolkit: [Managing Workplace Conflict >](#)

Sample Policy: [Inclusion Code of Conduct >](#)

Article: [How Employers Can Empower Inclusion Through Mental Health Support >](#)

3. FOSTERING A WELLNESS-FIRST WORKPLACE CULTURE

Creating a healthy, productive work environment is essential for both employee well-being and organizational success. As an HR professional, implementing practical strategies that prioritize mental health can help employees thrive. Here's how to take action:

1 Develop Mental Health Support Resources

Providing employees with access to mental health resources is critical for fostering well-being. Options for support include:

- **Employee assistance programs (EAPs):** EAPs can help employees navigate stress and mental health issues, improving overall well-being and productivity.
Sample Policy: [EAP Policy for Employees and Family Members >](#)
Toolkit: [Managing Employee Assistance Programs >](#)
- **Counseling services:** Ensuring access to mental health professionals through onsite or virtual services increases accessibility and removes barriers to seeking help.
- **Wellness programs:** Promote mental health by providing wellness programs focused on stress reduction, exercise, and mindfulness.

Toolkit: [Designing and Managing Wellness Programs >](#)

How-To Guide: [How to Establish and Design a Wellness Program >](#)

DID YOU KNOW?

An analysis by the National Safety Council and NORC at the University of Chicago found that organizations that invest in mental health support see a significant return, with a \$4 return for every \$1 spent.¹⁷

67% of employees are unaware or confused about mental health benefits.

50% don't feel comfortable asking their employee for mental health benefits.¹⁸

Best Practices for Wellness and Benefits Program Success:

- **Encourage their use:** Actively promote your wellness benefits through regular communication to make sure employees know how to access services and feel comfortable using them. Highlight the confidentiality and wide range of support available, such as counseling, financial, and legal assistance.
- **Leadership support and engagement:** Ensure that leadership champions your wellness programs by modeling and encouraging use. When leaders prioritize well-being and openly support your efforts, it sets a positive example and fosters an organizational culture of care.

¹⁷ Source: Employer Cost Calculator, National Safety Council and NORC at the University of Chicago, May 2021.

¹⁸ Source: *A Guide to Advanced Mental Health Benefits at Work*, SHRM, 2024.



2 Create Clear Guidelines for Handling Mental Health Disclosures

It's essential to handle mental health disclosures with care and sensitivity. Ensure your approach is both supportive and confidential.

- **Confidentiality:** Maintaining strict confidentiality when an employee discloses a mental health condition fosters trust and encourages employees to seek help.
- **Sensitivity training:** Equip HR and management with the skills to handle disclosures with empathy and professionalism.
- **Clear protocols:** Implement clear procedures for handling mental health disclosures, providing a consistent approach across the organization.

Steps to Strengthen Your Response

- **Standardize the response workflow** with a formal policy and enforceable checklist that all employees can access.
- **Create confidential reporting channels** unique to your organization's internal communications methods.
- **Establish a designated point of contact** to ensure consistency and reduce variability in manager responses.
- **Prepare a list of resources** to present when discussing outcomes, including employees' needs and immediate safety concerns.

3 Encourage Workplace Practices That Promote Mental Well-Being

Create a work environment that supports mental health and reduces stress through:

- **Work/life integration:** Offer flexible working hours and work options that are appropriate for your business. Encourage employees to disconnect during their personal time.
- **Stress management:** Provide workshops or access to resources such as meditation, mindfulness, or stress-relief techniques.
- **Regular breaks:** Promote the importance of taking breaks throughout the day to refresh and reduce burnout.

SHRM Resources

[SHRM Civility Starter Kit >](#)

Article: [Burnout Isn't Personal — It's Cultural. Here's How Leaders Can Intervene >](#)

Podcast Episode: [Burnout: Symptoms, Recovery, and Prevention >](#)



4 Implement Anti-Bullying and Anti-Harassment Policies

Creating a civil workplace is key to protecting mental health. Ensure that you actively discourage bullying and harassment with strategies including:

- **Anti-bullying policies:** Define and enforce policies against workplace bullying. Employees should feel safe reporting any incidents without fear of retaliation.
- **Anti-harassment policies:** Include zero-tolerance policies for discrimination and harassment. Provide clear reporting channels and take swift action when necessary.
- **Training for all employees:** Conduct regular training to help employees recognize and address incivility, bullying, and harassment.

Visit [SHRM.org](https://www.shrm.org) to access these SHRM members-only resources:

Toolkit: [Managing Employee Assistance Programs >](#)

Article: [Preventing Workplace Bullying >](#)

Sample Policy: [Anti-Harassment Policy and Complaint Procedure >](#)

Sample Policy: [Workplace Bullying Policy >](#)

5 Utilize Employee Surveys and Feedback Mechanisms

Regular surveys provide insights into employees' mental health and the workplace environment:

- **Engagement surveys:** Use surveys to assess mental well-being and identify areas for improvement. Questions should include stress levels, burnout, and work/life integration.
- **Feedback mechanisms:** Set up anonymous channels for employees to voice concerns and provide feedback on workplace mental health initiatives.

SHRM Resource

Article: [9 Mental Health Questions for Your Employee Engagement Surveys >](#)



6 Modeling Civility and Prioritizing Mental Health

Leaders are the driving force behind workplace culture. It's essential for leadership to model civility and prioritize mental health:

- **Lead by example:** Leaders should demonstrate respectful behavior and prioritize their own mental health, setting the tone for the rest of the organization.
- **Promote mental health:** Encourage open discussions about mental health, showing employees that it's OK to seek support.
- **Make a visible commitment:** Leaders who participate in wellness initiatives show that mental health is a priority for the entire organization.

By incorporating these strategies, HR professionals can create a supportive environment in which employees feel safe and empowered to prioritize their mental health. These actions lead to better well-being, higher engagement, and a healthier work culture for all.



Back to the Basics

Organizations often try to address workers' mental health through **offering unique benefits and resources**, yet:¹⁹

67%

of workers are **unaware or only somewhat aware** of the mental health resources their organization provides.

55%

More than half of workers said their organization **offers too few resources** to support their mental health.

50%

of workers **do not feel comfortable** using or asking for the mental health resources their organization provides.

36%

More than 1 in 3 workers said they would **likely leave their current job** if offered a new job with significantly better mental health benefits.

The **benefits** that the most workers said would best support their mental health are:



43%

Paid time off



39%

Mental health days



33%

Flexible schedules

¹⁹ Source: The State of Employee Mental Health in 2024 Research Series, SHRM, 2024.

4. HOW TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH CHALLENGES IN THE WORKPLACE

Empathy over Perfection: How to Have Constructive and Compassionate Conversations

Navigating mental health conversations with employees can be daunting, but it doesn't have to be. The goal isn't to fix the issue in one conversation — it's to show understanding, build trust, and provide support. Here's how to approach it:

- **Be open and nonjudgmental:** Let the employee know you're there to listen, not to judge. Ask open-ended questions that invite dialogue, such as "How have you been feeling lately?" or "What can I do to help support you during this time?"
- **Listen more, talk less:** When an employee opens up, avoid jumping into problem-solving mode right away. Give them the space to share without interrupting, showing empathy through listening.
- **Create an actionable plan:** After listening, work with the employee to develop a plan that provides support — whether that's an adjusted workload, access to mental health resources, or a flexible work schedule. Be transparent about what you can offer and set clear expectations.

SHRM Resource

Article: [When Employees Tell You They're Burned Out >](#)

Crisis Response Plans: Be Ready for Mental Health Emergencies

No one wants to think about a mental health crisis, but having a response plan in place is vital for protecting your employees' safety and well-being.

- **Know the signs:** Train HR and management to recognize possible signs of mental health crises in order to act quickly and appropriately.
- **Create a clear plan:** Establish a crisis response plan that includes whom to contact, steps to take, and how to manage the situation without escalating it further. Ensure that managers and employees know how to seek help, whether through internal resources or external emergency services.
- **Offer post-crisis support:** After a mental health emergency, ensure that employees receive follow-up support — including counseling, time off, or adjustments to their workload — to aid in their recovery and return to work.

"If we want our people to thrive, we must treat mental health as essential. Supporting well-being isn't just good leadership — it's the foundation of a resilient, high-performing workforce."



— **Marjorie Morrison**
SHRM Executive in Residence
for Mental Health

5. TRACKING PROGRESS: MEASURING MENTAL HEALTH SUCCESS AND IMPACT

What Are We Really Measuring? Key Metrics

Measuring the success of mental health and civility initiatives is critical to understanding whether your efforts are having a meaningful impact. But what exactly should you track?

- **Employee well-being:** Measure stress levels, burnout rates, and overall mental health using regular surveys. Track improvements over time to gauge the effectiveness of mental health resources.
- **Productivity and engagement:** Track productivity metrics and engagement scores to see how mental health support impacts performance. A mentally healthy workforce is likely to correlate with increased productivity and engagement.
- **Absenteeism and retention:** Keep an eye on absenteeism rates and employee turnover. A healthier work environment should lead to fewer sick days and higher retention, especially when civility and mental health are prioritized.

SHRM Resource

Toolkit: [Managing Employee Attendance >](#)

Survey and Assessment Tools: How to Gather Meaningful Feedback

Getting direct feedback from employees is the most accurate way to measure success. Here's how you can do it.

- **Employee engagement surveys:** Add questions focused on mental health, stress, and the workplace environment. Use these surveys to track employee sentiment around mental well-being and assess the success of existing programs.
- **Wellness assessments:** Regularly assess the effectiveness of wellness programs, mental health resources, and work/life balance initiatives to inform the development of wellness programs and help you identify areas for improvement.
- **Civility audits:** Regularly assess workplace civility through audits that track behaviors such as bullying, exclusion, and disrespect. This will provide insight into how well your anti-incivility initiatives are working.

SHRM Resources

Sample Forms: [Employee Surveys >](#)

Toolkit: [Managing Employee Surveys >](#)

On-Demand Webinar: [How to Get More Out of Your Employee Engagement Surveys >](#)



Collecting Feedback and Refining Strategies

You'll never know if your mental health and civility initiatives are truly working unless you gather and act on feedback. Here's how:

- **Anonymous feedback channels:** Allow employees to provide feedback on their mental health and workplace environment anonymously to ensure honesty and transparency.
- **One-on-one conversations:** Regularly check in with employees through informal conversations to gauge how they feel about their mental health support and workplace civility. These can offer insights that surveys may not capture.
- **Focus groups:** Bring together small groups of employees to discuss mental health and civility in the workplace. Use these conversations to gather qualitative data and understand the deeper issues affecting your team.

By measuring success and continuously refining your strategies, you can ensure that your workplace remains a supportive, respectful environment that prioritizes both mental health and civility. If you keep your pulse on employee well-being and act when needed, your workplace will thrive



9 Questions You Should Ask About Mental Health

Hearing directly from employees is essential for understanding the impact of your mental health strategies and identifying areas where you can improve.

You can, and should, customize each of these recommended questions so they align with your organization’s needs.

1. How comfortable do you feel talking about your mental health with your manager, HR, and your colleagues?

Creating a work environment in which people feel comfortable discussing their mental health concerns is foundational for any improvement. A shocking 8 in 10 workers reported that shame and stigma keep them from seeking treatment.²⁰

2. Do you understand what resources are available to support your mental health?

Providing benefits doesn’t mean that people are aware of or utilizing them. A 2023 report found that only 50% of employees knew the proper procedure for getting mental health support in their workplace.²¹

3. How easy is it to access your mental health benefits?

The more friction and complications there are around accessing benefits, the less likely they’ll be used. Organizations can work both internally and with their vendors to streamline the process of accessing benefits. Developing a portal on your website that explains all your mental health resources in one easy-to-navigate place could alleviate employee barriers to entry.

4. Have you used mental health benefits or taken time off due to mental health concerns?

A Gallup report found that workers with fair or poor mental health have nearly 12 days of unplanned absences annually, compared with 2.5 days for all other workers.²² If someone did take a mental health day, were they transparent with their manager or HR about their reasons?

²⁰ Source: *Mental Health in the Workplace – and the Cost of Staying Silent*, Kaiser Permanente, November 2022.

²¹ Source: *2023 Mental Health at Work Report*, Mind Share Partners, 2023.

²² Source: *The Economic Cost of Poor Employee Mental Health*, Gallup, December 2022.

5. Have you ever endorsed mental health benefits to a co-worker?

This question examines how satisfied employees are with their mental health benefits, without asking them directly. If an employee has ever recommended a mental health benefit to a co-worker, they clearly believe there’s value in it.

6. How would you describe the work culture here when it comes to supporting mental health?

Use the answers to this question to map out the areas where workplace stress and burnout do the most damage to people’s mental health.

7. To what extent do you believe our leadership prioritizes workplace mental health?

Support for mental health should come from managers and co-workers, including senior leadership. When leaders “talk the talk” on mental health, but their behaviors aren’t aligned with their words, people notice and feel a lack of support.

8. Have you experienced any stigma related to mental health in the workplace?

We know that the biggest obstacle to accessing mental health care is social stigma, so asking about how colleagues have responded to someone’s mental health concerns is important. Has someone failed to take your concerns seriously? Or have they been supportive and encouraged you to seek help? Those moments matter.

9. How can we improve communication around mental health in the organization?

How you communicate about mental health can matter as much as what you communicate.



6. MAKING MENTAL HEALTH A PRIORITY FOR HR PROFESSIONALS

You Can't Pour from an Empty Cup

As an HR professional, you are at the forefront of fostering a positive and supportive work environment for the entire workforce. But as with any other caregiving role, all of that responsibility can be overwhelming, taking a toll on the country's 2.1 million HR leaders.

SHRM Resource

Article: [Why HR Professionals Need Mental Health Support Now More Than Ever >](#)



So, what does that look like for you, and what daily practices can you introduce for better balance?

1. Sleep, eat, and take care.

We talk a lot to our workforces about the importance of getting enough sleep, making sure to eat, and taking care of yourself — and the data backs up why. Sleep deprivation can undermine emotional regulation and put us at greater risk for anxiety; skipping a meal can cause tiredness, mood swings, and a decreased ability to focus; and maintaining good hygiene boosts self-confidence and self-esteem.

2. Set boundaries for yourself at work.

About 40% of HR professionals said they often work hours outside of business hours.²³ Maintaining clear boundaries in your professional life enables you to maintain a healthy work/life balance and prevent burnout. This might mean being firm about arrival and departure times, communicating your ability to engage in off-hours emails or phone calls, or setting expectations around your capacity and ability to accept additional tasks or requests.

3. Combat emotional exhaustion and burnout.

When you burn out, you lose interest, motivation, and passion for your work and can develop a sense of cynicism or detachment, all of which can ultimately affect your performance, productivity, and quality of work, as well as your relationships, health, and happiness.



of HR professionals said they feel pressured to prioritize organizational well-being over their personal well-being.²³

1. **Seek help when you need help.**

You are not alone or unique in needing help. Don't be afraid to reflect internally and acknowledge that by seeking the best support system for yourself, you are caring for not only yourself but also your entire organization.

2. **Engage authentically at work.**

The healthiest workplaces are diverse ecosystems of people with different beliefs, backgrounds, and ideas, all coming together at one table (or desk). Bringing your authentic self to work means being true to yourself and practicing self-compassion when things are challenging or difficult.

3. **Rely on your team.**

How many times have you said to yourself, "It will be faster if I just do this myself"? The most effective leaders delegate effortlessly, and when teams work collaboratively on task management, everyone wins. You have more time to focus on the tasks that you need to prioritize, and your team gets the opportunity to grow.

In response to feeling negative emotions
(depressed, anxious, stressed, overwhelmed, lonely, disengaged)
as a result of their job, HR professionals have:²⁴



7. KEEPING THE CONVERSATION GOING

Workplace mental health isn't a challenge that organizations can solve all at once. It takes continuous work and collaboration with HR leaders, organizational leaders, and all employees to build a safe, supportive culture where employees can thrive.

Accelerating Change in Workplace Mental Health with the SHRM Foundation

The SHRM Foundation is leading the charge toward transformational change by empowering business leadership and HR professionals to eliminate the stigma around employees' mental health.

All workers will benefit from solid policies and practices around workplace mental health. Whether you're a manager, an HR professional, or a CEO, investing in mental health is the right thing to do, for both your employees and your organization.



Explore the [SHRM Foundation's Workplace Mental Health & Wellness page](#) to find:

- The ***Mental Health in Your Workplace Field Guide*** to aid in mental health strategy development and execution.
- The ***Mental Health Starts with HR: 10 Strategies for Protecting and Improving Your Own Mental Health*** explainer with 10 strategies you can implement for you and your teams.
- Research, education, and resources dedicated to empowering you to address mental health and well-being in your workplace.

SHRM is your partner in building and maintaining a thriving workplace through a focus on mental health and civility. Together, we can build a world of work that works for all.

Empower Your Workforce. Break the Stigma.

Lead with confidence with the Workplace Mental Health Ally Certificate.

Developed by SHRM and Psych Hub, this online certificate equips HR professionals and managers with the skills to recognize, support, and improve workplace mental health. It includes:

- Eight expert-led courses on mental health, substance use, suicide prevention, and bias.
- Seven PDCs toward SHRM recertification.
- Evidence-based training with practical tools and resources.



Build a workplace where mental health matters. Get certified today.





SHRM.org