


Promoting Mental Health and Suicide Prevention in the Workplace

Presenter: **Nicole Balakos**
06/24/25 – Cleveland, OH
ICD National Conference





**“You can’t
defeat what you
can’t define.”**

Author
Unknown



1 in 5 adults

experience mental illness each year (National
Institute of Mental Health, 2021)

Objectives

- Understanding the impact of substance use and mental health in workplaces
- Explore effective solutions
- Discuss best practices for implementation

The Impact of Mental Health and Substance Use

Statistics

- 20% of U.S. adults live with mental illness
- 8.1% of full-time workers reported substance use in the past month
- 70% of employees report stigma as a barrier to seeking help
 - High demand jobs contribute to worsening mental health and substance use issues



Costs of Ignoring Mental Health

\$193

Billion

Annually may be lost
in earnings due to
mental health issues

30%

Absenteeism

Reported from
agencies with high
mental health
concern levels

20%

Productivity Drop

Has also been
reported from
workplaces with
high mental health
concerns

Why Employers Should Care

**50 % Lower
Turnover
Rates**

From employers with
strong mental health
programs

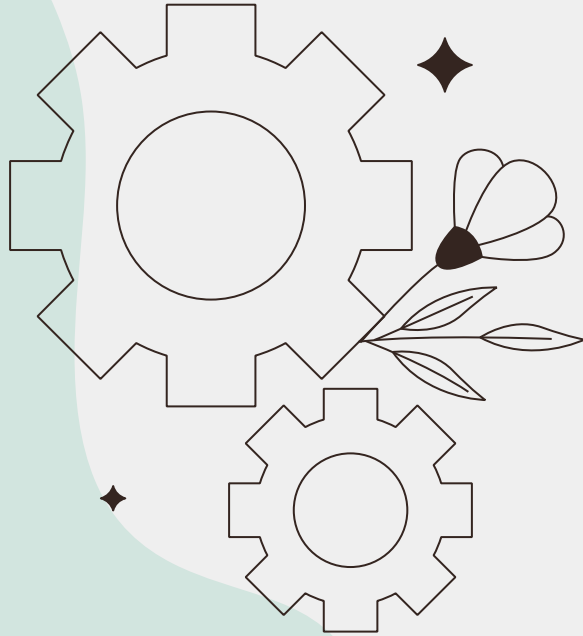
**72%
of
Employees**

Feel their employer
doesn't prioritize
their employees'
mental health like
they should

**89%
of
Employees**

Believe employers
should do more to
support mental
health

Strategies for Change



Language

Use destigmatizing language

Training

Stress First Aid, QPR,
Mental Health First Aid

Actions


Promote resources at orientation and annual trainings, make mental health resources as visible as OSHA and Unemployment notices, have mental health champions, share resources such as 988 posters/magnets.



What is Stress First Aid?

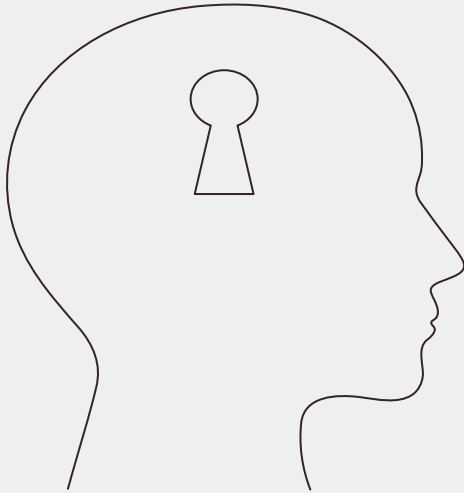
Developed in VA for high stress roles - utilized with first responders

Perfect for training union officials, HR staff and other key personnel in high stress roles



Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR)

Focuses on Suicide Prevention



Equips employees with key skills to recognize warning signs and how to approach someone

What is Mental Health First Aid?

Focuses on how to recognize and respond to mental health issues and crises.

Equips participants to provide help and support until professionals are available.



Building a Supportive Community

The Use of Peer Supporters

"People don't care how much you know until they know how much you care."

Author Unknown



Transforming Workplace Culture

75% of employees

Felt more valued and supported after mental health programs were implemented

20% improved productivity

After implementing mental health programs

Actionable Strategies

Next Steps for Attendees

1. Career Development Programs:

- Determine needs and where to start – select partners and providers

2. Display Resources:

- Order posters, magnets, and materials to promote resources and reduce stigma

3. Conversation Tips:

- Get comfortable being uncomfortable; use destigmatizing and supportive language

4. Awareness and Advocacy

- Become the mental health “EMTs” on site – speak up and speak out about mental health equity and resources



AWARENESS
WELLNESS
THERAPY
BENEFITS
RISK
RESEARCH
GRIEF
STIGMA
WORRIED
RELATIONSHIPS
TRAUMA
IQ
POSTPARTUM
CRISIS
PSYCHOLOGY
SUICIDE
SELF HARM
POST-TRAMATIC STRESS
DEPRESSION
MENTAL
HEALTH
PSYCHOLOGICAL
CLINICAL
ANEXORIA
UNHAPPY
BIPOLAR
STRESS
OPTIMIST
GRIEF
ANXIETY
PHOBIA
GENETIC
ATTITUDE
TREATMENT
EMOTIONS
DRUGS
COGNITIVE

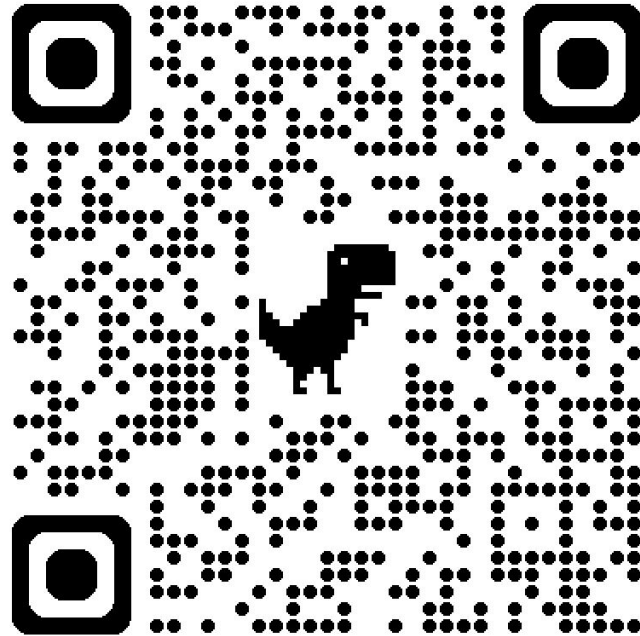


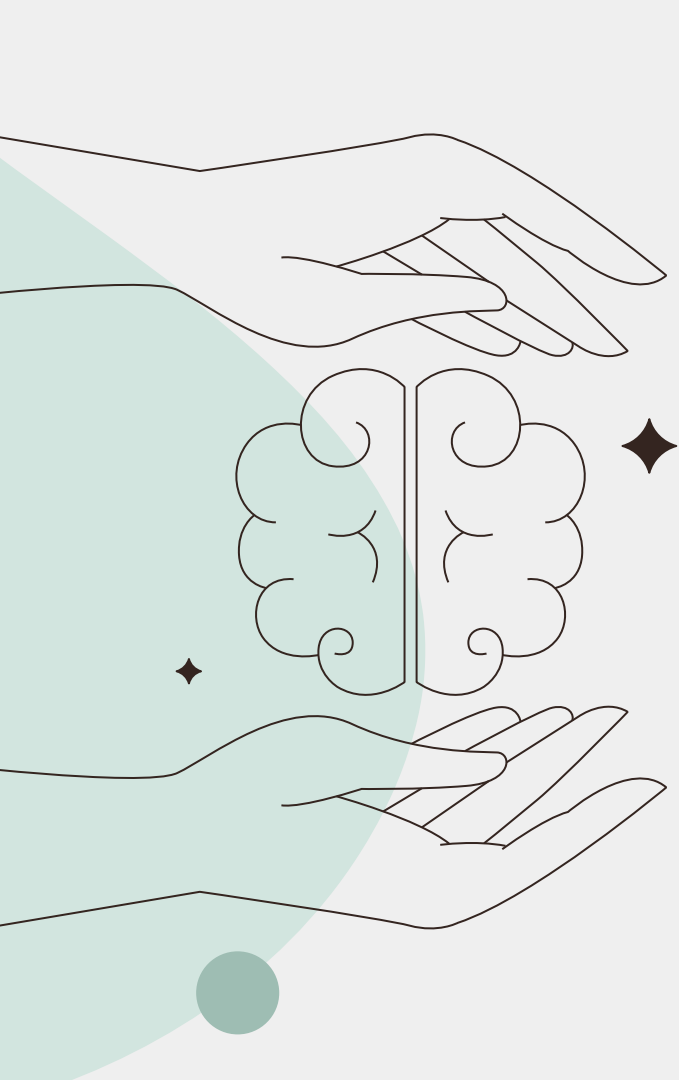


Questions & Discussion



Alternative resources





Thanks!

CREDITS: This presentation template was created by [Slidesgo](#), and includes icons by [Flaticon](#) and infographics & images by [Freepik](#)



References

1. National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH). (2021). Mental Illness. Retrieved from <https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness.shtml>
2. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). (2021). National Survey on Drug Use and Health. Retrieved from <https://www.samhsa.gov/data/>
3. Schmitz, A., & Roesler, U. (2019). Stigma and Mental Health in the Workplace. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*.
4. National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). (2021). Mental Health by the Numbers. Retrieved from <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>
5. World Health Organization (WHO). (2021). Mental Health in the Workplace. Retrieved from https://www.who.int/mental_health/in_the_workplace
6. Harter, J., Schmidt, F., & Hayes, T. (2020). Business-unit-level relationship between employee satisfaction, employee engagement, and business outcomes: A meta-analysis. *Journal of Applied Psychology*.
7. Google. (2019). The Importance of Mental Health in the Workplace. Retrieved from <https://rework.withgoogle.com/blog/the-importance-of-mental-health-in-the-workplace/>
8. Johnson & Johnson. (2020). Mental Health and Well-being Initiatives. Retrieved from <https://www.jnj.com/our-commitment-to-mental-health>
9. American Psychological Association (APA). (2020). Stress in America: Stress and the Pandemic. Retrieved from <https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2020/report>
10. Mental Health Commission of Canada. (2019). Mental Health at Work: The Role of Language. Retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealthcommission.ca>
11. BMC Public Health. (2018). The Impact of Employee Assistance Programs on Employee Well-being.
12. U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs. (2020). Stress First Aid. Retrieved from <https://www.mentalhealth.va.gov>
13. Kitchener, B., & Jorm, A. (2006). Mental Health First Aid Training in Australia: A Randomized Controlled Trial. *BMC Psychiatry*.
14. QPR Institute. (2021). QPR Training Outcomes. Retrieved from <https://qprinstitute.com>