

Mental Wellness in the Workplace

Family Advocacy Program

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In today's fast-paced and demanding work environment, the mental well-being of employees is of utmost importance. Promoting mental wellness in the workplace not only enhances individual happiness and productivity but also fosters a positive organizational culture. By prioritizing mental wellness in the workplace, we can create a supportive and inclusive environment where employees feel valued, engaged, and empowered to thrive both personally and professionally. Investing in mental health not only benefits individual employees but also contributes to a more resilient and successful mission.

Mental health concerns in the workplace are prevalent, yet the stigma surrounding these issues often prevents employees from seeking the help they need. One of the most significant barriers to seeking help for mental health concerns in the workplace is the fear of judgment or discrimination from colleagues or superiors. Many employees worry that disclosing their struggles will negatively impact their professional reputation or even jeopardize their job security. As a result, they may suffer in silence, leading to increased stress, anxiety, and depression. This reluctance to disclose struggles not only exacerbates mental health concerns but also limits access to vital support and resources. Addressing the stigma surrounding mental health in the workplace is crucial for creating a culture of support.

Mental health issues in the workplace can have ripple effects that extend beyond the professional setting and impact personal relationships, including those within the family. Employees experiencing mental health issues may bring these struggles home with them, leading to increased tension and conflict within their family relationships. This heightened stress can create an environment that is more susceptible to outbursts of anger or violence. A parent may have difficulty managing their emotions and may lash out at their partner or children, escalating conflicts and potentially leading to abusive behavior. Impaired coping mechanisms may lead to unhealthy behaviors as a way to manage emotions or

alleviate distress. This could manifest as substance abuse, domestic violence, or other destructive behaviors that contribute to a toxic family environment.

Mental health issues can impair communication skills, making it difficult for employees to recognize and express their needs or resolve conflicts in a healthy manner. This breakdown in communication can lead to misunderstandings, resentment, and ultimately escalate to verbal or physical abuse. It's important to recognize that mental health challenges do not excuse or justify abusive behavior in any form. Children learn from the behavior modeled by their parents or caregivers. If they witness a parent struggling with mental health issues and resorting to unhealthy coping mechanisms or abusive behavior, they may internalize these patterns and replicate them in their own relationships later in life. Addressing mental health issues proactively, both within the workplace and at home, can help mitigate their impact on family dynamics and reduce the risk of domestic violence, child abuse, or neglect.

An effective approach at work is for managers and supervisors to conduct regular check-ins with employees to assess their workload and identify areas where support may be needed. Managers and supervisors can work with individual team members to prioritize tasks, redistribute workloads when necessary, and set realistic deadlines. Providing adequate resources and training can also empower employees to manage their tasks more efficiently. Fostering a culture of trust and psychological safety is crucial for encouraging open dialogue about workplace stressors.

Here are some effective approaches they can take:

1. **Promote Mental Health Awareness:** Managers and supervisors can educate themselves about mental health issues, including signs and symptoms of common disorders, stigma reduction strategies, and available resources for support and treatment.
2. **Foster a Supportive Environment:** Create a workplace culture that values and supports employees' mental health. Encourage open communication, empathy, and respect among team members, and provide a safe space for employees to discuss their concerns or seek assistance.

3. **Encourage Work-Life Balance:** Promote work-life balance by setting realistic expectations for workload and deadlines, encouraging employees to take breaks and use their vacation time, and discouraging a "workaholic" culture that prioritizes work over well-being.
4. **Offer Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Ensure that employees are aware of and have access to confidential and free counseling services through EAP. EAP provides employees and their families with short-term counseling, referrals to mental health professionals, and resources for managing stress and other mental health concerns.
5. **Regular Check-ins and Supportive Feedback:** Schedule regular one-on-one meetings with employees to check in on their well-being, provide feedback on their performance, and offer support as needed. Use these meetings as an opportunity to discuss workload, stressors, and any challenges they may be facing.
6. **Address Issues Promptly and Proactively:** Take a proactive approach to addressing workplace issues that may impact employees' mental health, such as bullying, harassment, or excessive workload. Respond promptly to complaints or concerns, investigate allegations thoroughly, and take appropriate action to address any issues that arise.

When employees feel comfortable expressing their concerns without fear of judgment or reprisal, they are more likely to seek help and collaborate on finding solutions. Managers can lead by example by actively listening to employee feedback, addressing concerns promptly, and demonstrating empathy and support.

Creating a workforce that positively acknowledges mental health, rather than stigmatizing it, is crucial for the well-being of military and civilian employees. By openly addressing mental health concerns and providing access to resources and support, managers, supervisors, and employees can work together to foster a culture of understanding, compassion, and resilience.

The Family Advocacy Program, Employee Assistance Program, and Military OneSource are valuable resources available to military personnel, their families, and civilian employees. If you have any questions or would like more information, please contact the **Family Advocacy Program at 717-770-7066**.