



Mental Health Action Day Employers Brief

Mental Health Action Day

May 20, 2021
#MentalHealthAction

Mental Health Action Day is a nationwide opportunity to turn awareness into action, helping employers, workers and everyday Americans take steps to educate themselves and improve mental health outcomes for everyone.

Each year, employee mental health conditions cost employers more than [\\$100 billion and 217 million lost workdays](#). The stress of the pandemic and the personal losses and health effects many employees have experienced exacerbate this crisis.

[Recent survey](#) data shows a significant increase in rates of anxiety and depression, especially among essential workers — 62% of frontline health care workers say that worry and stress related to the pandemic has negatively affected their mental health. According to a [survey of employers](#), over 85% of respondents said they were “somewhat concerned” or “very concerned” about their employees’ mental health needs during the pandemic.

By addressing mental health issues in the workplace and investing in mental health care for workers, employers can improve employee health and well-being and increase productivity and employee retention.

Your Role As An Employer

As a [highly trusted source of information](#), employers have a powerful opportunity to help turn awareness about mental health into action on the inaugural **Mental Health Action Day, May 20**.

THE GOALS

Encourage and empower your employees, customers and communities to take action on mental health, including for themselves, for their loved ones or as advocates for systemic changes.

Create a “surround sound” of #MentalHealthAction on this day of action in partnership with more than [450+ companies](#) and organizations to help drive Americans to mental health resources.

BECOME A PARTNER

HOW

Here are some of the ways employers can participate in Mental Health Action Day:

Educate your employees, customers and communities about #MentalHealthAction:

On and leading up to May 20, use your company's platforms and expertise to reach your own employees, consumers and communities with a message about taking #MentalHealthAction. Examples may include:

- Creating digital content on your company website or employee intranet, and for social media, highlighting the **resources** listed below (see also **tips** for communicating about Mental Health Action at the end of the document);
- Developing in-store activations;
- Convening public events, such as wellness activities for employees and customers;
- Running PSAs in your stores or places of business;
- Embedding links on your homepage or in your product sharing insights about mental health and resources.

Embrace Communication about #MentalHealthAction throughout your organization by:

- Asking senior leaders to speak out about their own mental health journey if they feel comfortable. They might wish to share how it has impacted their career and why taking action is critical for personal and professional well-being. This could be a company email, a conversation over Zoom or through a medium authentic to your organization.
- Distributing materials such as mental health benefit tips from your insurance plan, EAP or vendors, or use Mental Health Action Day's one-pagers on mental health for frontline workers.

Encourage employees to consider their own mental health by:

- Blocking off an hour, a half-day or a full-day for employees to take action to support their own mental health. Provide leadership with opportunities to showcase their own actions as an example for members of their team. For example, leaders might share what they plan to do with their time off in a series of blogs on your employee intranet.
- Announcing new mental health benefits or highlighting existing ones, including those available from your company's health insurance plans, Employee Assistance Program (EAP) and other benefits vendors. You may also choose to offer a wellness stipend or other vehicles to support employees as they take action on mental health.
- Hosting an employee wellness event. An engaging speaker or event can help bring employees together and help them better understand mental health and the resources they have at their disposal to help with resilience and more. Ultimately this helps you build a stronger workforce. Your insurance plan, EAP or other benefits vendors will be able to help you identify an expert speaker.

Empower Employee Resource Groups (ERGs):

Reach out to your ERGs to encourage members to participate in Mental Health Action Day. That might include hosting an event, inviting a speaker or using their distribution lists to share resources with employees. For example:

- Veterans Networks
- Women's Networks
- BIPOC Networks
- Parent/Caregiver Networks

SUGGESTED RESOURCES

- Talk to your health insurance provider(s) and highlight information related to your employees' mental health benefits. With the ongoing pandemic, this can be an opportunity to highlight opportunities to use telehealth to connect to mental healthcare professionals too.
- Connect with your Employee Assistance Program and other benefits vendors to learn how to better showcase these resources to employees.
- [How Right Now](#) supported by the CDC Foundation, helps people identify their emotions and find helpful resources
- [Coping 19](#), a website from the CDC, the CDC Foundation and the Ad Council, provides tips, tools and resources for well-being.
- [Supporting a Nation in Crisis from the Well Being Trust and de Beaumont Foundation](#) provides recommendations that can be implemented to address mental health in the immediate and recovery phases of the pandemic.
- The [Health Action Alliance](#) has also put together [Pandemic Stress and Anxiety Resource for Employees and Workers](#), a handout with links to several resources, including those listed above.

TIPS FOR COMMUNICATING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH

CBS This Morning shared an [excellent segment](#) with advice from experts on how to talk about mental health in ways that reduce stigma and invite conversation. Here are a few highlights:

Use language in line with how you describe other medical conditions and don't refer to people by their illness.

Avoid words like "suffering" or "victim," instead emphasize people are living with conditions like depression and anxiety.

Don't refer to mental health conditions as "issues;" they are a condition.

Reach out to your state or local public health department to explore what resources may already exist in your community to support employee mental health. Consider working together to identify ways to strengthen mental health services and support for workers, customers and communities where you operate.