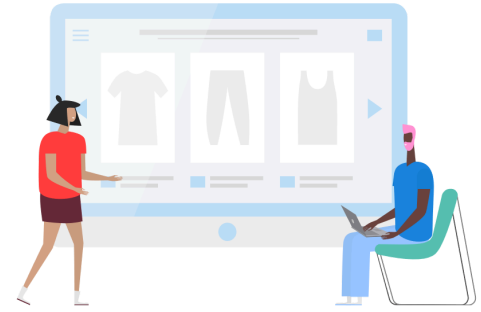


Key Skills for Supporting Mental Health at Work



Mental health is a diverse spectrum of experiences. We're all on it.

Mental health challenges are increasingly the norm.

- **1 in 5 people** will manage a mental health condition each year,^{1a} and up to 83% in their lifetime.^{1b}
- **61%** of full-time U.S. workers reported at least one mental health symptom in the past year—most commonly depression (33%), burnout (27%), and anxiety (27%).²
- **6 in 10** full-time U.S. workers rated their overall mental health between 7 to 10 out of 10.²

Mental health is a product of many factors and intersects with our identities and experience.

- Mental health is a product of our **biology, psychology, and social environment**—and more.³
- Gen Z, Millennials, caregivers, LGBTQ+, transgender, Black, and Latinx respondents all tend to be:²
 - More likely to experience mental health symptoms.
 - More likely to say that work or the workplace environment negatively impacted their mental health.
 - Less likely to report feeling supported by their employer.
- Our experience of mental health is impacted by broader systems in society and by **the stigma we experience**, both of which are influenced by our **identities and communities**.

Stigma can make it difficult to talk about or seek help.

- **8 in 10** employees say shame and fear prevent them from getting treatment.⁴
- **34% of** employees feel comfortable talking about their mental health to their colleagues or manager.²
- **40%** of conversations about mental health at work were described as neutral or unsupportive.²

Unsupported mental health is bad for both employees and companies.

- **65%** of full-time U.S. employees' productivity was affected by mental health in some way in 2023.²
- **1 trillion USD lost globally** in productivity due to depression and anxiety alone.⁵

Investment in mental health pays off.

- **Those who feel supported by their employer with their mental health overall were:**²
 - 3.5x more likely to experience **no** symptoms and half as likely to say symptoms lasted 5 - 12 months.
 - A third as likely to say their **workplace had a negative impact** on their mental health.
 - 4.6x more likely to be **comfortable talking to their manager** about their mental health.
 - 4.7x more likely to **trust** their company and its leaders.
- **80% of people can live symptom-free** with the right treatment.⁶
- Investment in mental health training and awareness programs **yields 5:1 and 6:1 ROI** (U.S., U.K., Canada).⁷
- Companies with higher workplace wellbeing scores see higher profits and returns.⁸

Note: Always seek the advice of a physician or other qualified health provider with any questions you may have regarding a medical or mental health condition. The contents of this document are provided for informational purposes only and do not constitute medical advice.

Mental Health Action Plan

Complete this exercise to be more aware of and proactive about supporting your mental health.

SIGNS TO LOOK OUT FOR -OR- COMMON STRESSORS / SITUATIONS

"I should proactively care for my mental health when I notice..." E.g., "I start missing small to-do's."

| ADAPTATION OR SELF-CARE STRATEGY | PROACTIVE - or - REACTIVE | SOLUTION - or - RELIEF |
|--|---------------------------------|------------------------------|
| <i>Example: Taking a mental health day</i> | <i>Reactive</i> | <i>Relief</i> |
| | | |
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Proactive - A tool you can use before, or to prevent, a mental health challenge. **Reactive** - A tool you can use in response to a challenge. **Solution** - A tool that helps solve the underlying cause of a mental health challenge. **Relief** - A tool that helps you cope with a challenge.

FORMAL MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORTS I'D LIKE TO EXPLORE | Example: Therapy or coaching.

To help your thinking, consider a specific time when you were struggling at work:

- What were the early **signs** you were struggling? *E.g., starting to feel overwhelmed*
- What would have been helpful **in that moment**? *E.g., taking a mental health day*
- What **proactive routines or strategies** could be implemented earlier that would help?
E.g., blocking work time

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What a Mentally Healthy Workplace Looks Like

Mentally-healthy behaviors at scale. Mental health factored into decision-making.

| People and Practices | | | Accountability |
|----------------------|---|--|--|
| Systems | Leaders visibly and vulnerably support mental health. | Managers proactively support mental health and know how to respond to mental health challenges. | Employees know about available resources, feel safe to use them, and serve as allies for mental health. |
| | Daily practices support good mental health and are reinforced across the organization. | | Approach is aligned with company mission and values. |
| | Policies are inclusive and explicit in naming and supporting mental health goals. | | Mental health is measured for impact with employee voice. |
| | Benefits are high-quality, well-understood, and accessible. | | Leaders own mental health strategy and results. |
| | Communications are comprehensive, coordinated and consistent in building awareness and driving action. | | Implementation team has sufficient resources and cross-functional input and buy-in. |

Checklist | The Ecosystem of a Mentally Healthy Workplace

To put the framework into practice, consider these 10 questions for your own organization.

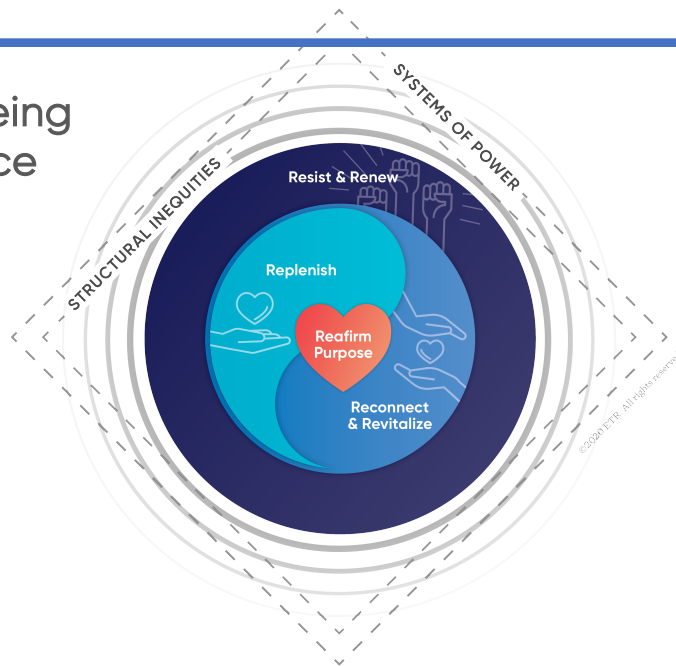
- ☐ Do **leaders** set the tone by visibly supporting mental health through stories and actions? Do they make decisions and invest resources that enable employee well-being?
- ☐ Do **managers** check-in on their team, create psychological safety, and foster healthy work practices?
- ☐ Are **employees** comfortable talking about mental health at work and/or seeking support if they want to?
- ☐ Do **work practices** across the organization support employee well-being?
- ☐ Is mental health incorporated throughout the **talent lifecycle** (hiring, onboarding, development, performance, compensation)?
- ☐ Do **benefits and policies** cover a wide range of mental health experiences and meet the needs of individuals of all identities, cultures, and family structures?
- ☐ Is there **consistent communication** about mental health (including both resources and stories) coming from multiple sources?
- ☐ Is the approach to mental health and wellbeing **connected to the company's purpose**, mission, or values?
- ☐ Is there **clear ownership** and sufficient resources?
- ☐ Are programs **measured for impact** and based on employee perspective?

Based on your answers, consider what your strengths are as an organization and your areas of opportunities. Where is one place you can think about making a difference? To continue your workplace mental health journey:

- [Request a conversation](#) to explore how Mind Share Partners can support your specific organizational needs
- [Subscribe](#) to Mind Share Partner's monthly newsletter for ongoing resources and insights (click the blue "Subscribe to our newsletter" button)

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ETR Well-Being & Resilience Model



Reaffirm

Purpose: *the intent of my work. Purpose represents what I value and what I hope to achieve.* Having clarity of purpose is critical for maintaining well-being. If our sense of purpose is not clear, or if we live out of alignment with what we value, we become vulnerable to burnout and compassion fatigue.

–My purpose:



Replenish

Personal Practices of Self-Care: *acts of compassion (self-care) directed toward my body, mind, and spirit in order to achieve well-being.* Self-care is important to protect a person's physical and psychological health in the face stressful situations. Personal practices of self-care can help limit the negative impact of elevated and toxic stress, including stigma-related stress, and can enhance and sustain overall well-being. It is critical that we first take care of our whole self in order to care and fight for others. Consider five domains of self-care: Physical, Professional, Emotional, Spiritual, Psychological.¹

–What strategies?

Reconnect and Revitalize

Social Connectedness: *my community of support – family, friends, colleagues, allies – who provide ongoing emotional and practical support (in-person or in digital spaces).* Social connectedness is critical to mental health. In turn, providing emotional support to others also contributes to our well-being. It is important to actively look for and connect (spend time) with your community of support. Their very presence in your life can result in psychological benefits. Let your community members know what support you need from them and, in turn, let them know how you can help them cope and thrive.

–What Strategies?

Resist for Reform

Social Change: *my ability to push back on the causes of elevated and toxic stress by **analyzing** rather than **internalizing**.* From a position of strength, I can analyze (make meaning) of stressors by recognizing and affirming that it may originate from long-standing social systems of power and structural inequities that have nothing to do with me personally, or the group(s) I associate with, or my allyship. By taking this stand, personal agency and resilience can be elevated, making it easier to resist the pressure to internalize stigma-related stress, and therefore avoid the ill effects of internalized oppression. This meaning making allows individuals to cope, overcome, and thrive. Further, this resistance can translate to collective voices and collective action for social change!

–What strategies?

Active Coping, Well-Being & Resilience

—Strategies Checklist—

Elevated and toxic stress levels can have a negative impact on a person's health and well-being. Research tells us that it is important for us to engage in coping strategies related to self-care, social connections and pushing back against toxic and stigma-related stress in order to achieve and maintain well-being. The following checklist includes suggestions that you might consider. Each item may or may not be relevant to your situation – it is up to you. You are encouraged to identify those items that are meaningful and doable for you and, add additional items that feel relevant and useful. *Wishing you well!*

Replenish: Personal Practices for Self-Care

Physical Self Care

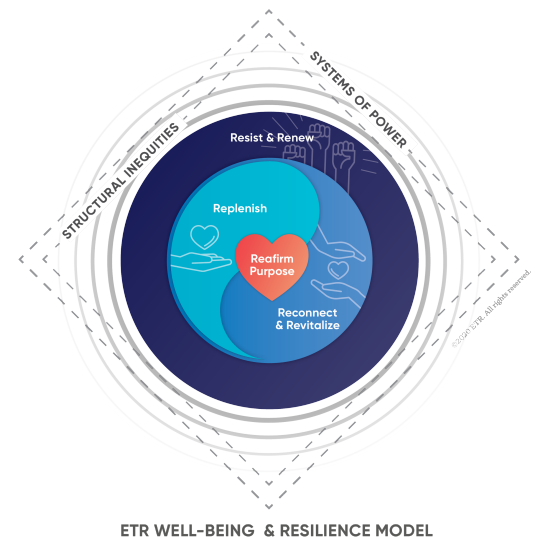
- ☐ Eat regularly (breakfast, lunch, and dinner) and healthily
- ☐ Engage in physical activity that works for you – dance, swim, walk, run, play sports, etc.
- ☐ Get regular/preventive medical care when needed
- ☐ Take time off when you are ill
- ☐ Get enough sleep
- ☐ Take time to be physically intimate (with self or partner)
- ☐ Other:

Psychological Self Care

- ☐ Take time away from technology: cell phones, email, social media, computer
- ☐ Make time for self-reflection: notice inner experience (thoughts, beliefs, attitudes, feelings)
- ☐ Meditate/Use mindfulness strategies to relax and stay centered
- ☐ Do something out of the ordinary that shifts your thinking and focus
- ☐ Engage in a new experience – something you don't ordinarily do
- ☐ Journal
- ☐ Take day trips, mini-vacations, and/or vacations
- ☐ Nurture your curiosity
- ☐ Say **no** to extra responsibilities when you know it will overextend you
- ☐ Set boundaries–protect your body, mind and spirit
- ☐ Other:

Emotional Self Care

- ☐ Accept, love, and appreciate yourself
- ☐ Spend time with others whose company you enjoy – make a plan
- ☐ Stay in touch with important people in your life
- ☐ Identify comforting activities, objects, people, places and seek them out
- ☐ Allow yourself to experience a full range of emotions–happy, sad, angry, frustrated, hopeful, etc. (use the Feeling Wheel to help identify what you are feeling)
- ☐ Look for humor in everyday life – laugh and smile often
- ☐ Play
- ☐ Express outrage through social action, letters, donations, marches, protests
- ☐ Engage in moments of gratitude everyday – what are the things you grateful for?
- ☐ Other:



Spiritual Self Care

- ☐ Make time for reflection about values, meaning, and purpose in my life; practice gratitude
- ☐ Spend time in nature
- ☐ Connect with supportive spiritual community and engage in spiritual practice/ritual
- ☐ Be open to inspiration; develop and cherish optimism and hope
- ☐ Be open to not knowing
- ☐ Meditate/pray/sing
- ☐ Contribute to causes that align with your belief system
- ☐ Enjoy music
- ☐ Other:

Professional

- ☐ Take a daily break from commitments/activities (e.g. lunch)
- ☐ Schedule quiet time to complete tasks
- ☐ Identify projects or tasks that are exciting and rewarding
- ☐ Set limits and boundaries; negotiate your needs (protect body, mind, spirit)
- ☐ Arrange work space so it is comfortable and comforting
- ☐ Identify a area of professional learning that nurtures your spirit
- ☐ Form a peer support group
- ☐ Other:

Reconnect and Revitalize

Social Connections

Relationship Self Care

- ☐ Schedule regular quality time with your partner/spouse, family members, friends etc.
- ☐ Stay in contact with faraway friends and family
- ☐ Make time to thoughtfully reply to personal emails, other social media communications, and written communications
- ☐ Allow others to do things for you
- ☐ Take actions that support and bring joy to others
- ☐ Ask others for help when needed
- ☐ Enlarge your social circle
- ☐ Share your feelings – a fear, hope, a hurt with someone you trust
- ☐ Other:

Community Care

- ☐ Find people who care about your purpose
- ☐ Identify and spend time with your “community/communities” as you define it/them
- ☐ Spend time in friendly, nurturing spaces
- ☐ Create friendly, nurturing spaces for others
- ☐ Invite others in
- ☐ Participate in community activities – attend events, create events
- ☐ Push yourself to reach out when you begin to feel isolated
- ☐ Ask for support
- ☐ Other:

Resist and Renew

Diminishing Threat and Taking Action!

- ☐ Notice what has been accomplished in your important work
- ☐ Appreciate the work you have done to support your purpose and your work community
- ☐ Notice and reach out to others who care about your work; engage allies
- ☐ Accept appreciation from others
- ☐ Find and talk with people in other groups who are dealing with forms of oppression; form partnerships
- ☐ Stigma-related stress:
 - ☐ Remember and fully embrace the fact that stigma-related stress is socially constructed, and not about you personally
 - ☐ Talk with others about stigma-charged messages; dissect the message, learn how stigma works
 - ☐ Flip stigma-related stress into energy to move forward to create change
- ☐ Allow yourself to feel *disappointed, frustrated, sad, angry* when experiencing stressful situations/forms of oppression; but strive to make it productive not destructive; use it for positive change and growth
 - ☐ Seek support from others (consider the suggestions in the “Social Connections” segment of this document)
 - ☐ Take care of yourself (consider the suggestions in the “Personal Practices” section of this document)
 - ☐ Engage in movements for social justice
 - ☐ Engage in movements for political change
 - ☐ Resist for reform
- ☐ Practice mindfulness
- ☐ Other:

Resources:

- *Personal Practices for Self-Care. Adapted from Saakvitne, Pearlman, & Staff of TSI/CAAP (1996). Transforming the pain: A workbook on vicarious traumatization. NY: W.W. Norton.*
- *Some items are excerpted from: Russell. G.M. (2004). Surviving and Thriving in the midst of anti-gay politics. Angles, 7(2).*