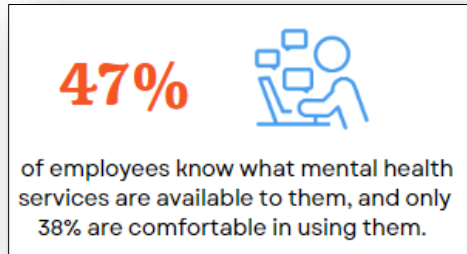


Our Workplaces Play a Significant Role in Our Wellbeing

The Partnership for a Healthier Fairfax (PFHF) is a coalition of community members and organizations that are working together to explore new approaches for addressing critical public health issues. PFHF includes a diverse group of individuals, community organizations, schools, healthcare providers, nonprofits, businesses, faith communities and government agencies and is convened by the Fairfax County Health Department. Every five years the PFHF spearheads the development of the [Fairfax County Community Health Improvement Plan](#) (CHIP), an action-oriented plan created to make the Fairfax community a healthier place to live. The CHIP focuses not only on those who live in the Fairfax community but also those who work here. One priority of the CHIP is to promote social and emotional wellness for all, in particular by

supporting strategies that foster mental health and wellness.

Employers can play a key role by implementing programs to reduce mental health stigma in the workplace and promote employee wellness activities.



As part of CHIP efforts, this resource guide is provided to encourage institutions to serve as safe and supportive environments for mental well-being and play a proactive role in improving the mental health of all individuals. Read through the information and click on the links for additional resources

(please note that all statistics and references have embedded links to the source). Contact the Promoting Behavioral Health Team anytime with questions or for additional support.

Why This Matters

According to [Mental Health America](#) (MHA), 20% (more than 50 million) of US adults experienced a mental illness in 2020 and 5% have seriously considered suicide. The Community Foundation for Northern Virginia recently released a [report](#) on the economic impact of mental health in the workforce.



According to the [World Health Organization](#), mental health support at work helps the capacity of team members to work effectively. In 2019, MHA launched The Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health national certification program. The certification is based on a holistic evaluation of an employer’s practices that affect and protect their employees’ mental health and well-being. The goal of the certification is to uplift [companies that prioritize employee well-being](#) as great places to work.

How Can You Help

Mental Health America recommends that companies develop a mental health strategy that is based on the needs of the company’s workforce.

Connection and Support

Workplaces and organizations can support their employees by becoming advocates for mental wellness. For example: offer a variety of support services and resources, such as a confidential Employee Assistance Program (EAP), mentorship, and peer support. Make reasonable accommodation for employees, such as flexibility to attend therapy during business hours or attend to family obligations. Encourage “pro-social” behavior in the workplace, creating a work culture that promotes belonging and a protective force against discrimination and bias.



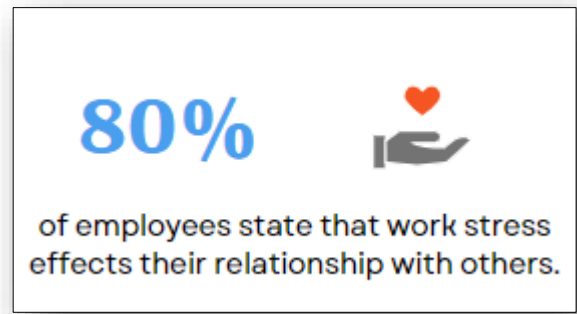
Your Employees Matter

Not only is eliminating physical hazards paramount, but reducing psychological hazards is important as well, so employees feel secure and protected in their working environments. Provide a welcoming, equitable, and inclusive environment. Consider making work events alcohol-free to be more inclusive of employees in recovery. Regularly review, amend, and implement policies and procedures that explicitly outline Codes of Conduct to include harassment/workplace bullying, discrimination, etc. Ensure health insurance plans cover all possible options, including behavioral therapy, addiction and recovery services, and medications like buprenorphine and naltrexone.

Work-Life Harmony

Support a healthy work-life balance, because fatigue decreases productivity and increases the risk of burnout.

Enable opportunities for adequate rest, considering that long hours can put the physical, mental, and emotional health of employees at risk. Keep in mind that recovery requires time for self-care and social support. Encourage employees to take breaks and mental health days, as needed.



Roll with the Changes

Continuously examine and educate on policies and practices to ensure that they are equitable and will reduce disparities and discriminatory practices for all individuals. Regularly educate team members on the what and why of these policies. Provide mental wellness focused trainings, many offered by the Fairfax-Falls Church Community Services Board, such as Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) and Question, Persuade, Refer (QPR) to teach de-stigmatizing language, how to recognize signs and symptoms of a mental health challenge, and appropriate ways to respond. Incorporate culturally sensitive mental health solutions for employees based on barriers to treatment they may face such as institutionalized racism and other forms of discrimination. Regularly assess employees' attitudes toward substance use and mental health and provide training aimed at areas that need improvement.

Getting Started and Sharing the Message

The [Suicide Prevention Alliance of Northern Virginia](#) has flyers and posters available to print and post anywhere employees gather. To support companies as they institute best practices for employee mental health, MHA has created a number of resources, including the [Workplace Mental Health Toolkit](#), a roadmap to creating healthy workplaces. The MHA website also has surveys and other resources that help organizations foster a healthy environment. When the organization is ready, [apply](#) for The Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health national certification. In the meantime, take the survey or complete the MHA checklist to see where your organization stands now, and what steps to take to get started. Potential employees will see the organization's commitment to its team members.



To request this information in an alternate format, call the Fairfax County Health Department at 703-246-2411, TTY 711
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