

# Insight

An e-newsletter for leaders from your Advocate Aurora Employee Assistance Program

## Promote workplace mental health through open communication and connection

### May is Mental Health Awareness Month.

Company leaders can play a vital role in promoting mental health awareness in their workplace, by eliminating any stigma or taboo around this issue. Having open and honest dialogue is key. If leaders recognize mental health concerns shown by an employee, here's how to demonstrate that you **CARE**:

**Create a Culture of Caring:** focus on building trust and ensuring psychological safety, so employees feel free to share their concerns.

**Ask & Actively Listen:** Reach out to employees as soon as you have initial concerns. Talk in a confidential space. Active listening involves restating or paraphrasing their comments and then saying, "Is that correct?" Respond with care and empathy. Let employees know that you're there to support them.

Ask open-ended questions such as:

- I value you as a member of our team, and I'm worried because I've seen... *(add your own observation/concern)*.
- Is there something I can do to help?

IT'S okay  
= not to =  
be okay

**Refer to Resources:** Share information about available mental health resources, behavioral health insurance benefits, or community support programs such as Mental Health America. Remind employees they have 24/7 free, confidential access to the Advocate Aurora Employee Assistance Program by calling 800-236-3231.

**Extend the Connection:** Establish a plan to continue the conversation in a way that feels comfortable to the employee.

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For assistance please contact the  
Advocate Aurora Employee Assistance Program: 1-800-236-3231



Advocate Health Care



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## Suicide awareness can enhance workplace safety

What steps can be taken in the workplace to hopefully lessen the chance of someone committing suicide? Workplace leaders are not expected to personally handle complex mental health challenges. However, they can bring mental health conversations to the forefront and notice when employees are struggling with behavioral health issues.



When it comes to workplace safety, most people think of physical safety, such as preventing falls, wearing safety glasses or inspecting equipment. However, mental health status should also be considered when evaluating employees' safety and well-being.

### Potential “red flag” issues leaders might observe

Consider talking with your employee, if you regularly observe patterns of:

- Anger
- Apathy
- Chronic anxiety
- Decreased productivity
- Depression
- Difficulty concentrating
- Fatigue or reporting poor sleep
- Feeling hopeless
- Complaints of headaches
- Increased negative thinking
- Irritability or short temper
- Lack of concentration and focus
- Lethargic and/or lack of energy
- Loss of joy in life
- Low morale
- Sadness, hopelessness
- Giving away their belongings
- Social withdrawal
- Thoughts of bringing harm to self or others

## Global impact of suicide

On a global scale, the **World Health Organization (WHO)** reports that approximately 800,00 people take their lives each year. Globally, suicide is one of the top 20 leading causes of death. The WHO also estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy \$1 trillion annually in lost productivity. The WHO says that for every \$1 spent caring for people with mental health issues, \$4 is returned to the economy. Addressing mental health issues in the workplace simply makes good business sense.

## Your EAP is here to help

We all benefit by having flexible, supportive workplaces that promote good mental health for all employees. Leaders shouldn't forget about their remote workers. Since remote workers are more isolated physically, they might feel disconnected to their work colleagues, their supervisor or mental health resources. This could potentially increase anxiety, depression or other problems. Companies should provide the same mental health resources and ongoing support for their remote workforce.

**If you would like more information about these topics, please contact your Advocate Aurora EAP account executive.**



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