

# Increasing awareness about mental health

A toolkit designed to help increase awareness about mental health among your employees



## Helping raise awareness about mental health among your employees

Dedicate this month to helping your employees become more aware of mental health issues. Mental health is an important part of overall health and well-being. It includes emotional, psychological and social well-being and affects thoughts, feelings and actions. Mental health determines how people handle stress and relate to others and the everyday choices they make. Being mentally healthy can promote productivity and success in work, school, parenting, caregiving and other important aspects of life.

### What's in the toolkit?

In this toolkit, you'll find all the information needed to deliver a successful campaign:

- Campaign objectives
- Suggested campaign timeline
- Campaign kick-off event ideas
- Employee and organizational challenges
- Prize strategy
- Employee evaluation
- Campaign content

## Campaign objectives

- Explain how mental health impacts overall health and well-being
- Dispel common myths about mental health and mental illness
- Identify actions that could improve mental health in communities
- Identify self-care strategies that could improve mental health and well-being in individuals
- Know risk factors for poor mental health
- List symptoms of mental illness in adults, adolescents and children
- Suggest ways to help support optimal mental health among children, adolescents and older adults
- Explain how depression differs from normal stress and anxiety
- Tell how depression is diagnosed
- Suggest strategies to prevent suicide
- Know how to find mental health resources and services
- Identify actions to take to help a troubled co-worker
- Know ways to avoid workplace burnout and deal with a stressful work environment
- Know self-care strategies if you are a caregiver for a person with mental illness
- Understand the benefits of resiliency and how to build it

## Suggested campaign timeline

The total campaign is designed to last four weeks, but can be shortened or extended if desired. See the suggested timeline for distribution of handouts, flyers, emails and additional campaign documents below.

### Awareness handouts and lifestyle flyers

Two types of educational information are provided for use during the campaign. Awareness handouts are intended to provide information about an aspect of mental health and raise self-awareness. The lifestyle flyers are generally more interactive and provide opportunities for employees to apply information about mental health and well-being in their everyday lives – at home and at work. In addition to awareness handouts and lifestyle flyers, we also provide employee and organizational challenge forms and campaign evaluation form to distribute throughout the duration of the wellness campaign, as outlined in the email schedule on the next page.

	Awareness handouts	Lifestyle flyers
<b>Week 1:</b> Start the conversation about mental health	What is mental health and why is it important?	Take charge of your mental health
<b>Week 2:</b> Who is at risk for mental health issues?	N/A	Support for those who are most vulnerable; Adolescent mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic; Adolescent mental health and technology
<b>Week 3:</b> Recognizing depression and other mental conditions	Depression – more than just “the blues”; Common warning signs and symptoms of mental illness	Mental health services
<b>Week 4:</b> Support for mental health and well-being	Help for troubled co-workers	Promoting positive mental health and well-being

## Email campaign

The email campaign, included in this toolkit, is conveniently provided to you in the form of a Word document, making it easy to simply copy and paste the provided subject line and email body to a message to your employees.

**Pre-launch email** – Deploy this email the week before the campaign launch date.

**Week 1 kick-off email** – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 1. This will be the official campaign launch date. In this email, attach the Week 1 awareness handout, lifestyle flyer and employee challenge noted in the table above.

**Week 2 email** – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 2. In this email, attach the Week 2 lifestyle flyers noted in the table above.

**Week 3 email** – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 3. In this email, attach the Week 3 awareness handouts and lifestyle flyer noted in the table above.

**Week 4 email** – Deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 4. In this email, attach the Week 4 awareness handout and lifestyle flyer noted in the table above.

**Week 4 email (optional)** – If you'd like to participate in an organization-wide challenge, deploy this email on Monday morning of Week 4, as a follow-up to the Week 4 email. In this email, attach the organizational challenge.

**Follow-up email** – Deploy this email on the Monday morning following the last week (Week 4) of the campaign. In this email, attach the employee evaluation form.

## Campaign kick-off event

We strongly recommend an onsite or virtual to kick off the campaign. The event can be as big or small as you want, but it's an important opportunity to introduce the campaign theme to employees and to encourage them to participate in the challenge.

If you are unable to arrange a formal kick-off event, we recommend setting up a table in a common area, such as the entrance to the employee cafeteria, for the distribution of materials. Keep materials restocked for the duration of the campaign. Making the campaign materials available online is another option.

### Suggestions for kick-off event:

Announce the program at company-wide or departmental meetings.

- If you have an employee assistance program (EAP) or another program that provides employee advocacy, invite a representative to explain the services provided and how to access them.
- Invite a representative from a local mental health service provider to give a brief presentation about resources available to employees.

## Challenges

**Employee challenge:** Make your mental health a priority

Distribute the log for the individual challenge during the first week of the campaign. Employees are encouraged to use the information, strategies and skills introduced over the course of the campaign to take steps to optimize their personal mental health during the next four weeks.

**Organizational challenge (optional):** Spread the word about mental health

Distribute the contact log for the organizational challenge at the end of the campaign. Set a deadline for returning logs. After logs are returned, calculate the number of handouts/flyers that were distributed and report the demographics of the outreach project.

## Prize strategy

While offering prizes for participation in the employee campaign is not required, it can increase participation. Consider individual giveaways for employees who complete the employee challenge. Or, offer a drawing for one or more raffle prizes for employees who complete the challenge. As an alternative, consider offering a prize to employees who complete the evaluation survey. Some ideas for individual prizes that support mental health and well-being could include the following:

- personal journal
- relaxing music
- gift certificate for a massage, manicure, pedicure or other salon service
- aromatic candles
- body lotion
- voucher for a yoga class
- personal time off
- flowers or a plant
- herbal tea

## Employee evaluation

A brief evaluation survey is available to collect feedback, ideas and information from employees who participated in the campaign. Participant feedback will be valuable for planning future campaigns.

## Additional resources

The Center for Workplace Mental Health provides employers with the tools, resources and information needed to promote and support the mental health of employees and their families. The Center engages employers in eliminating stigma, reducing barriers to care, raising broader mental health awareness, improving and implementing mental health programs and designing benefits that improve employee mental health. This work is done through turn-key programs, toolkits, employer case studies, topical resources, publication and more. [workplacementalhealth.org](https://workplacementalhealth.org)

The World Health Organization works with governments across the world to put in place mental health policies, plans and laws that respect human rights and promote access to care as well as to employment, educational and other opportunities. [who.org](https://www.who.org)

## Campaign content

### 1. Start the conversation about mental health

#### What is mental health and why is it important?

- Self-assessment: Test your mental health knowledge
- Supporting mental health and healthy lifestyles

#### Take charge of your mental health

- Self-assessment: Take care of your body
  - Tips for getting a good night's sleep
- Self-assessment: Take care of your mind

#### Employee challenge

- Setting goals for mental health

### 2. Who is at risk for mental health issues?

#### Support for those who are most vulnerable

- Children: What parents, teachers and health professionals can do
- Adolescents: Positive tips for parents of adolescents
- Older adults: How to help older adults

#### Adolescent mental health and the COVID-19 pandemic

- Affect of the pandemic on mental health
- Factors putting youth at risk
- Support for youth mental health during the pandemic and beyond

#### Adolescent mental health and technology

- Teen's social media choices
- Positive implications of technology & social media
- The risk of social media for teens
- Tips for families and teens
- Designing a family media plan

### 3. Recognizing depression and other mental conditions

#### Common warning signs and symptoms of mental illness

- Symptoms of mental illness in adolescents and adults
- Symptoms possibly suggestive of mental illness in children
- Self-assessment: Potential mental illness risk factors

#### Depression – more than just “the blues”

- What positive and negative feelings mean
- Diagnosing depression
- Self assessment: Are you experiencing symptoms of depression?
- Suicide

#### Mental health services

- Talking to a primary care provider
- Activity: Keeping a medications log
- Find a mental health professional
- Receive a diagnosis and treatment plan
- Ask about the cost of services

### 4. Support for mental health and well-being

#### Help for troubled co-workers

- Notice. Talk. Act. method
- Workplace bullying
- Workplace burnout
- Tips for dealing with a stressful work environment

#### Promoting positive mental health and well-being

- Specific ways to help
- Caregiver tips
- Resilience
  - Activity: Plan to build resilience

#### Organizational challenge

- Spread the word about mental health

### 5. Employee evaluation

The information and materials included here as well as in MetLife's Health and Wellness Information Library, including all toolkits, modules, template communications, text, charts, graphics and other materials, (collectively, the "Content") are intended to provide general guidance on health and wellness matters and do not constitute medical advice. While the Content is based on resources that MetLife believes to be well-documented, MetLife cannot vouch for the accuracy of the Content, and you rely on the Content at your own risk. Each person's condition and health circumstances are unique, and therefore the Content may not apply to you. The Content is not a substitute for professional medical advice. You should always consult your licensed health care professional for the diagnosis and treatment of any medical condition and before starting or changing your health regimen, including seeking advice regarding what drugs, diet, exercise routines, physical activities or procedures are appropriate for your particular condition and circumstances.