

Mental Health Action Day

Employer Brief - in partnership with the Health Action Alliance

We are launching the largest day of action on mental health in history, with the goal of driving people to support their own and others' mental health.

Background

In the wake of COVID-19, millions of people have uncovered new mental health issues and millions more have had their existing challenges exacerbated. We must take steps now to meet the needs of our communities and identify opportunities to build long-term resilience.

Though more people than ever are comfortable discussing mental health, finding effective resources and knowing how to get help remains a challenge. Study after study shows that one of the hardest things to do is take the first action: whether it's reaching out to a friend, researching peer support groups, sitting down on a therapist's couch or calling a support line.

Many people fall through the cracks in the space between awareness and action – particularly those who have been marginalized or underserved by existing institutions.

By driving attention to free and easily-accessible resources, we can reinforce that everyone has mental health, and it is time we all take care of our emotional wellbeing in the same way we tend to our physical health, **before** we reach a moment of crisis.

Mental Health Action Day

Our mission is to inspire people to talk about their lived experience, destigmatize issues not always discussed openly, and galvanize a movement to drive significant cultural, political and policy changes -- **Mental Health Action Day will lift the conversation from awareness to action** and provide the tangible tools we all need to take that first step for ourselves, for our loved ones, and for our community.

An unprecedented challenge requires an out of the box approach. **We are calling for coordinated action among media brands, local and national nonprofit organizations, technology companies, influential individuals and anyone who understands the importance of mental health -- to rally together in support of taking the first step to get help.**

Now is the time to invest in our mental health and the wellbeing of those we love.

What

Mental Health Action Day

When

Thursday, May 20, 2021
during Mental Health Awareness Month

Who

People taking action on mental health for the first time

Where

We will activate online, on television, and in the streets

Why

Because empowering people to take action on their mental health will have a longstanding and profound impact

Visit

mentalhealthactionday.org

Mental Health in the Workplace

Mental Health Action Day, May 20, 2021 (#MentalHealthAction), is a nationwide opportunity to turn awareness about mental health into action, helping people learn more about the resources that exist to help Americans care for their mental health. Mental health conditions cost employers more than \$100 billion and 217 million lost workdays each year.

The stress of the pandemic and the personal losses and health effects many employees have experienced have made this crisis acute. 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,

When asked how concerned employers were about their employees' mental health or wellness needs during the COVID-19 pandemic, 85% responded that they were somewhat or very concerned.

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 Goal

-  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 150+ companies and organizations to help drive Americans to mental health resources.

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.

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.

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.

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.

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

- [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 Resources 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 or illness.



Make it Official

If you are interested in signing on as a Mental Health Action Day Partner, please fill out this partner form.

BECOME A PARTNER