



Mental Health in the Public Media Workplace

Summary & Takeaways



Mind Share Partners is a nonprofit changing the culture of workplace mental health so that both employees and organizations can thrive.

Learn about our advocacy, training, consulting, and free resources.

www.mindsharepartners.org

Part I: Navigating Conversations

ICARE: Navigating Conversations About Mental Health

Set Intentions

Reflect

- How am I showing up to this conversation?
How am I being open, curious, and compassionate?
- What are my assumptions about this situation?
- Remember that mental health is a spectrum, and a product of many factors.

Plan ahead

- What are my goals from this conversation?
- What language do I want to use?
- What power dynamics may have an impact?
- Who or what might be helpful resources in preparation for this conversation?

Be Curious. Pair an observation statement with an open-ended question.

Example observation statements:

- "I noticed you've been online really late this week."
- "Work and life have really blurred together recently."
- "You've seemed quieter lately."
- "I saw the news earlier today..."

Example questions:

- "How is this week going?"
- "How are you given everything that's going on?"
- "How can I support you?"
- "I wanted to check in and see how you're doing."

Affirm, Listen, and Validate

- **Be attentive. Listen** more than you talk.
- **Give thanks.** E.g., "Thanks for sharing that with me."
- **Affirm their experiences.**
 - "Wow, that does sound like a lot to handle."
 - "It's understandable that you'd feel that way."
- **Restate, clarify, prompt to share more.**
 - "So it sounds like... did I get that right?"
 - "What I think I'm hearing you say is... Can you tell me more about that?"

- **Communicate intent. :**
 - "I don't know what to say, but I want you to know that I hear you and want to support you."
 - "This is 100% not about performance. I just want to know how you're doing."
- **Share if it would be helpful.**
 - "When my father passed away last year, I had a really hard time focusing at work. I can only imagine what you are experiencing must also be really difficult."
 - "I've felt burnt out before. It can be really hard."

Explore Resources

- **Be mindful about solutions.** Remember to listen. Don't immediately try to fix the problem.
- **Avoid assumptions** about what you think is best for the other person.
- **Share resources** and your experience if relevant. E.g. "I called our EAP when I was going through a hard time last year. Are you familiar with that resource?"
- **Re-center the other person.** E.g., "What do you think would be most helpful?"

- **Explore adaptations** to create healthy, sustainable, and inclusive ways of working.
- **Offer support sustainably.** Be mindful of your involvement in the types and level of support. Take care of yourself, too.
- **Partner with HR.** *This should be the first step when responding to possible harm to self or others.* E.g.:
 - "I am going to reach out confidentially to HR so we can offer you the best support possible."
 - "Let's call HR together to see how they can help."

End with Next Steps

- **Offer gratitude.** Appreciation increases safety and the likelihood they will share again in the future.
- **Restate next steps.** E.g., "To make sure we're aligned, it sounds like you're considering..."

- **Set a concrete time to follow up.**
 - "Let's talk again once you've had a chance to check out some resources."
 - "I'll add another check-in to our calendars next week to see how you're doing."

Part II: Healthy Work Habits & Accommodations

My Working Styles Worksheet | Next Check-In: _____

My Strengths (e.g., things I am good at; things I like doing professionally)

My Goals and Growth Opportunities (e.g., career and learning goals for working here; how I am hoping to grow)

My Social Preferences (e.g., how I like to receive feedback, get recognition, be supported, or connect with colleagues)

My Working Style

What gives me energy and motivation?

What drains my energy or motivation?

--	--

What is important for me to prioritize outside of work? (e.g., child care; therapy appointments)

When working with me, it's helpful when... (e.g., To-do's are emailed; there's a clear deadline)

--	--

Examples of Accommodations for Mental Health

Explore lists of accommodations for mental health at the [Job Accommodation Network >](#)

Examples of Healthy Work Habits

This is a non-exhaustive list of examples to work sustainably. Use this list to spark ideas, try them out, and brainstorm with your team. Continue to test and iterate over time, as projects and teams change, etc.

Individuals

- **Reflect on your mental health**, internalized stigma, work norms, and stressors.
- **Rest and Restore**
 - E.g., Take small breaks during the day
 - E.g., Take a breath and integrate mindfulness during the day
 - E.g., Unplug and rest, particularly after intense periods of work
 - E.g., Go for a walk or take a break from looking at a screen
 - E.g., Pursue hobbies and desired avocations outside of work
- **Formalize boundaries.**
 - E.g., Set clear start and end times
 - E.g., Block time for uninterrupted, concentration and deep work
 - E.g., Turned off notifications
 - E.g., Schedule emails or communications to arrive when others are working
- **Working Styles**
 - E.g., Clarify what communication channels to use and norms for responsiveness
 - E.g., Clarify deadlines
 - E.g., Prioritize and de-prioritize tasks in collaboration with your manager and team
 - E.g., Build in time to plan and organize
 - E.g., Use effective meeting hygiene practices (e.g., goals, agendas, and next steps)
 - E.g., Identify and share the type of work you like doing and learn about others' preferences
- **Social Support**
 - E.g., Proactively build relationships with colleagues
 - E.g., Utilize check-ins with your manager
- **Take care of your wellbeing**, using exercise, sleep, nutrition, and stress management.

Managers & Teams

- **Managers, ask yourself:**
 - How can we enable and empower our team members?
 - How can we remove barriers and burdens?
 - How can we scale or formalize healthy practices?
- **Discuss ways your team can enhance** how you work together more sustainably and productively
- **Be transparent** about decisions that impact people's work or way of working.
- **Align on communication norms** (hours, platform, time zones, responsiveness)
- **Create opportunities to connect.**
- **Give appreciation**, recognition, validation.
- **Balance autonomy with structure.**
When possible, give clear expectations for outcomes but with freedom of process.

Team Adaptations Worksheet

Complete this exercise as a team to discuss challenges, identify bright spots, and create healthy team norms.

	Bright Spot or Challenge	Solution or Adaptation (to solve challenges or grow bright spot)	Ways to Hold Myself Accountable
	E.g., It's hard to disconnect. We feel like we're "always on." E.g., We are good about not emailing people on vacation.	E.g., Proactively discuss communication norms for "offline hours." E.g., Create a policy for off-hour emails and normalize scheduling emails.	E.g., Set calendar reminders for breaks. E.g., Discuss work norms in quarterly team check-ins.
#1			
#2			
#3			
#4			
#5			
#6			
#7			

Part III: Advocating for Mental Health

Start with self.

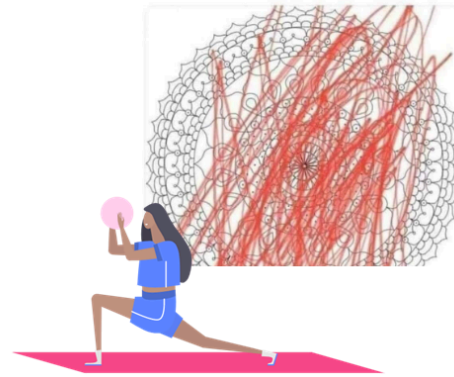
- **Say “mental health.”**

Talk about it in...

- ‘Check-ins and conversations
- Planning team capacity and projects
- Engagement surveys
- Entry and exit conversations
- Performance evaluations

- **Prioritize your wellbeing.**

I have started coloring to manage my stress and anxiety.



Be an ally.

- **Check-in with others.**

- **Model healthy work practices.**

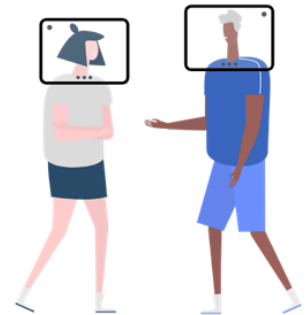
E.g., Visible calendar holds for focus time.

- **Enable and protect others’ wants and needs around work.**

- E.g., Schedule non-urgent emails for work hours.
- E.g., Invite input around process, communications, and timeline.

- **Join the conversation.**

- E.g., Attend these events!
- E.g., Join in on mental health campaigns and initiatives.



Build community & capacity.

- **Explore working styles as a team.**

- **Join / create groups that foster conversation, give people voice, and create better cultures (of work).**

- Employee resource groups
- Slack channels
- Greater Public!
- Other worker-driven groups



Fact Sheet: Mental Health at Work

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

Mental health challenges are common.

- **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

Mental health is influenced by many factors, including our work environment, identities, and experiences.

- Mental health is a product of our **biology, psychology, and social environment**—including work.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.
- **Finances** and **work itself** were the top negative impacts to workers' mental health.²

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

Not supporting mental health at work 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

Investing 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.**⁷
- Companies with higher workplace wellbeing scores see higher **profits and returns.**⁸
- 92% of workers said it is very (57%) or somewhat (35%) important to them to work for an organization that values their emotional and psychological well-being.⁹