

## Opportunities to Enhance Employee Mental Well-being

As the pandemic lingers, now more than ever organizations must protect the mental well-being of employees. This one-pager is a collection of ideas and best practices that organizations can use to support the mental well-being of their workforce.

### Organization -Generated Opportunities

- Convene a group of interested team members from many parts of the organization to brainstorm what might be helpful and to implement ideas
- Build on Trauma-Informed Care principles:
  - Safety – physical, emotional, psychological, social safety
  - Trustworthiness and transparency – above board, straightforward communication
  - Peer support – ask for and offer help
  - Collaboration and mutuality – level power differences, make sure to value everyone
  - Empowerment, voice, and choice – recognize, encourage, build on everyone’s strengths
  - Cultural, historical, gender lens – recognize role of these in trauma; cultivate cultural awareness
- Engage and equip trained team members, such as those in pastoral care, social work, and nursing, to be helpful in identifying resources for staff
- Consider offering some of these types of options:
  - A de-stress room with quiet music and cards that suggest ways to take 5-minute breaks (picture yourself in a favorite place, remember a favorite meal, phone a friend, play a game of solitaire, make a gratitude list, etc.)
  - Short snippets of mindfulness training and institute Mindfulness Moments throughout each day
  - Use of onsite place of worship for prayer and shared grieving
  - Team member peer support groups
  - Group texts with reminders about self-care, encouragement, appreciation from leadership
  - Posters with information about resources for domestic violence, addiction treatment, hotlines, financial counseling, mental health counseling, food distribution sites, childcare, etc.
  - Regular conversations about the importance of self-care and the organization’s support and concern for employees
  - Find ways to normalize the emotions people may be experiencing as a result of the prolonged pandemic, e.g., circulating relevant articles in the HR newsletter, posting on a bulletin board, using phrases such as, “like all of us, you may be feeling stressed” or “like me, you be experiencing ‘X.’” Make it clear that “we are all in this together.”
  - Activities that cultivate a spirit of fun and camaraderie, e.g., “themed” days, special food, giveaways, etc.

- Provide supports that ease team member burdens, e.g., having staff laundry done onsite, providing groceries or grocery delivery, assisting with transportation, establishing onsite childcare.
- Think creatively about how the workplace may be able to assist employees whose children will be in school virtually, for example, residents or volunteers could assist students with particular subjects
- Call-in conversations before or after work to celebrate and vent

### **Employee Assistance Programs**

- Post clear information about the EAP, including email information, phone numbers and web links to ensure team members are aware of the program
- Talk with the EAP to see what they offer and use what they have, including:
  - Group sessions – in person or virtually to promote critical incident stress debriefing and peer sharing and support with safe facilitation
  - Trauma-specific work
  - Specialties in addiction, depression, family issues, trauma, counselors who understand aging services, knowledge of specific cultures
  - Courses on well-being and healthy behaviors
  - Telehealth counseling
- Provide testimonials (carefully) on how using the EAP has helped individuals and families
- Consider supplementing these resources if possible

### **Local Community Resources**

- Partner or check in with some of your local organizations
  - Get in touch with groups such as NAMI chapters (National Alliance on Mental Illness), state Mental Health Associations, Community Mental Health Centers, local health systems, Federally Qualified Health Centers, psychology and social work practitioners, domestic violence centers and hotlines, addiction treatment programs
  - Ask if they offer individual and group sessions or packaged educational programs
  - Talk with them to find out what is available and market that to team members

### **Grief Counseling Resources on LeadingAge Website**

- LeadingAge members are working to help their residents, patients, and families navigate what will be difficult and, in some cases, sudden, decisions about their own or a loved one's health status and how that impacts care and treatment choices during the crisis. [Here are trusted resources offering tools, tips, advice, and best practices focused on COVID-19.](#)

[Mental Well-being Resources on LeadingAge.org](#)