

## Human Resource Executive Worksite Strategies for Depression Management

Organizations are encouraged to consider different strategies to address depression and other chronic mental health conditions in the work place. The following questions are designed to assist you with a self-assessment of your organization. Does our organization..... (Check all that apply)

	<p>Regularly provide information about mental health issues and employee benefits to reduce the stigma sometimes associated with seeking help for mental health problems? <i>Rationale: Stigma results from lack of understanding and misperceptions. Education increases awareness and moves people closer to seeking help.</i></p>
	<p>Provide access to valid mental health screening tools? <i>Rationale: While there are not biological markers for depression similar to blood pressure or cholesterol screenings for heart disease, there are screening questionnaires that help raise awareness about symptoms of depression. Making these available on websites or at health fairs will expand awareness as well.</i></p>
	<p>Give employees easy access to mental health support and care, e.g., through a no-cost Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? <i>Rationale: Cost, travel, and time are frequently reported as barriers to seeking care. EAP's help reduce such barriers.</i></p>
	<p>Provide high quality outpatient and inpatient coverage for mental health treatment when needed? As well as easily-understood descriptions of how to access care? <i>Rationale: Confusion about coverage is another common barrier. Consider that you may need to communicate in several different ways to employees, including a telephone contact to protect privacy.</i></p>
	<p>Cover effective prescription medications for mental health conditions at a level that encourages their appropriate regular use? <i>Rationale: Anti-depressant medications take several weeks to reach effectiveness and may be needed for extended periods. Enhancing coverage may reduce cost barriers, increase adherence to medications, and reduce overall costs, including absenteeism and presenteeism (working at low efficiency).</i></p>
	<p>Encourage mental health and stress management through a comprehensive wellness and health promotion program? <i>Rationale: Wellness programs can be an entry point for many people with chronic health problems complicated by depression. Wellness professionals often help move people toward readiness to take action on health issues.</i></p>
	<p>Provide training to managers in conflict resolution and management skills to reduce excessive workplace stress? Provide training in identifying job performance problems related to mental health issues? <i>Rationale: Episodes of excessive stress can become triggers for people at risk for depression. Management training may help reduce workplace conflicts, improve interpersonal communication, and enhance group goal setting. Training can also help managers recognize how mental health issues can interfere with work performance and set reasonable limits and expectations for improvement.</i></p>
	<p>Track disability claims for mental health conditions and provide case management services to facilitate timely return-to-work? <i>Rationale: Depression can reduce one's motivation levels and problem solving abilities. People with depression may be seeing more than one professional and taking multiple medications. Case managers can help steer people through the often confusing maze of care and pave the way to a smooth return to work.</i></p>



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