

# Mental Health at Work

At any given time, approximately one in five adults is coping with some form of mental health issue. Common concerns include:


- ▶ Depression
- ▶ Eating disorders
- ▶ Obsessive-compulsive disorder
- ▶ Anxiety or post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD)
- ▶ Bipolar disorder (manic-depressive)
- ▶ Borderline personality disorder (BPD)
- ▶ Schizophrenia

As with a physical illness, a person with a mental health concern may have periods of relatively good health that enable him or her to work without difficulty. At other times, managing a work schedule may be a challenge. These steps may be helpful in ensuring that the person can stay on track:

- ▶ Be aware of indications that a team member is struggling, such as irritability or anger, inability to concentrate, missed deadlines, withdrawal or disengagement, poor decisions, or arguments with co-workers. Other signs include an increased use of sick time or requests to leave early.
- ▶ If a worker is missing deadlines, producing sub-standard work, or behaving inappropriately, address it promptly. Clear performance expectations will help the person set priorities and determine where to focus her or his energy.

- ▶ Should a team member disclose a mental health issue, protect his or her privacy. Do not share any information about the worker's medical situation with team members. If the person's condition becomes public knowledge (for instance, if he or she chooses to reveal it to co-workers), establish clear expectations for respectful behavior. Encourage your team to support their colleague.
- ▶ A diagnosed mental illness is a condition that may require "reasonable accommodation." If an adjustment to the team member's responsibilities or schedule is necessary, either due to medical treatment or as a result of performance difficulties, coordinate with HR to ensure that you are in compliance with company policy and applicable laws.
- ▶ Remain calm if the team member behaves in an unusual or out-of-character way. When a person is undergoing treatment for a mental health condition, medication side effects may result in variable moods or behaviors. Check in with the individual regularly and consult with HR when appropriate. In addition, the LifeMatters Management Consultation Service can provide an objective opinion and suggest effective ways to support the person.
- ▶ Emphasize the importance of good self-care. Encourage your team to maintain their emotional and physical wellbeing by taking scheduled breaks and making appropriate use of vacation time. In addition, remind team members that LifeMatters is available 24/7/365 to provide assistance with any concern.

Call the **LifeMatters®** by Empathia Management Consultation Service toll-free anytime. **1-800-367-7474**

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