



Communicating with Employees

In order to create a positive, healthy workplace, organizations must implement changes across all levels. With 83% of employees saying they feel emotionally drained from their work, it is more important than ever to take a proactive approach to strengthen employee mental health.

Workplace communication lays the foundation for employee satisfaction and well-being. Poor communication can hinder employee happiness, while effective communication can amplify it. Of course, communication isn't just about the exchange of ideas and information—it's also about fostering an open, nurturing environment where employees feel safe and supported.

When employees are satisfied with their workplace communications, they're 177% more likely to be holistically well, 156% more likely to feel valued and appreciated, 48% more likely to be resilient, and 38% more likely to feel productive.

POSITIVE COMMUNICATION QUALITIES

Positive, effective workplace communication has the following qualities in common:

- Compassionate, inclusive language
- Transparency
- Predictability
- Clearly defined rules and guidelines
- Open-door policies
- A friendly, approachable tone

REDUCE STIGMA WITH COMMUNICATION

Craft your communication in a way that will help to reduce the perceptions of stigma related to experiencing or seeking help for mental health and other conditions such as substance use disorder. Here are some tips for discussing these topics in a non-stigmatizing way, and may even help to remove the stigma altogether:

- Talk about mental health in a straightforward way.
 - Acknowledge mental health challenges as just another part of life that affects most people at some point, like many physical health issues. Directly discussing the topic rather than tiptoeing around it builds a comfort level and makes it easier to seek support.
- Lead by example
 - As a leader, demonstrate non-stigmatizing behavior and language in your own interactions and communication about mental health. Normalize conversations about mental health by sharing your own challenges. Nine out of ten employees appreciate when their leaders share stories of getting support.
- Use respectful and person-first language.
 - Choose words and phrases that are neutral, respectful, and non-stigmatizing. For example, don't use words like "crazy," "insane," "junkie," or "addict." Avoid labels or stereotypes. Generally, it's good practice to use language that emphasizes the person, not the condition.
- Highlight personal stories.
 - Invite people on your staff or from the community to share their stories of experiencing mental health or substance use challenges and seeking care.

Mental Health and Substance Use at Work

Employer Toolkit

Recovery Friendly



THE TAKEAWAY

Opening the lines of communication between managers and employees makes it easier to tackle potential mental health problems before they get out of hand.

The Mental Health and Substance Use at Work Employer Toolkit has been developed to raise awareness with businesses about how to respond to the risks associated with mental health challenges and substance use disorder. The content is meant for educational purposes only and not for the purpose of providing legal advice or replacing the additional work needed to develop a responsible Recovery Friendly Workplace program. As such, it should not be used as a substitute for consultation with a legal professional, or other competent advisor.

Medical advice and information in this document were approved by The National Safety Council-NSC physicians who advise the Council on our substance use harm initiatives. These doctors are also members of the NSC Physician Speakers Bureau.

NEED HELP?

If you have questions or need help finding materials, please contact admin@huroncountymhas.org.