

Employee Assistance Program *Tip Sheet*

Mental Health Awareness: The Power of Sharing Your Story



Sharing our experiences can reduce stigma and remind others they are not alone. In fact, talking about emotional well-being can help create understanding, hope, and healing for you and those around you. It's also important to know when to reach out for support and where to find help if you or someone you know is struggling.

Ways to Share Your Story

- **Keep it personal and simple:** Share what feels meaningful to you with friends and family. There's no "right" way to tell your story.
- **Reflect on what helped:** Talking about coping strategies or support you received can offer hope to others.
- **Choose your audience:** Whether it's one trusted person or a broader platform, share where you feel safe.
- **Honor your boundaries:** You are in control of what, when, and how you share.
- **Be mindful of your well-being:** If sharing feels overwhelming, it's okay to pause or seek support first.

Sharing your story can be empowering but it can also bring up emotions. Being aware of when you might need extra support is an important part of caring for your mental health. Paying attention to changes in how you think, feel, and function can help you take action early.

Signs It May Be Time to Seek Support

It may be time to look into professional help if you are:

- ✓ Feeling overwhelmed, anxious, or down most of the time
- ✓ Experiencing changes in mood, sleep, appetite, personality, or energy
- ✓ Finding it difficult to concentrate or manage daily tasks
- ✓ Pulling away from people or activities you usually enjoy
- ✓ Increasing use of or excessively using alcohol or other substances
- ✓ Thinking about harming yourself or others, or increased risk-taking behaviors (call 988 for immediate support)

Treatment options for mental health often include therapy (such as talk therapy or cognitive behavioral therapy), medication, or a combination of both, depending on individual needs. Additional supports like support groups, lifestyle changes, and stress management techniques can also play an important role in recovery and overall well-being.

Where to Get Help

- **Start with your Employee Assistance Program (EAP):** Your EAP offers confidential support, short-term counseling provided by licensed mental health professionals, and referrals to local resources at no cost to you. It's a simple and convenient first step.
- **Talk to someone you trust:** A friend, family member, or other caring person can help you feel supported.
- **Seek professional mental health support:** Licensed providers such as Clinical Social Workers, Professional Counselors, and Psychologists, are trained to assess concerns, help you understand what you're experiencing, and guide you through treatment options and coping strategies. Psychiatrists are medical doctors who can help assess your concerns and prescribe medication when appropriate.
- **Primary care provider:** A primary care provider can perform an initial mental health screening and refer you to a mental health professional. If you have an appointment with a primary care provider, consider bringing up your mental health concerns and asking for help.
- **Consider a local or online support group:** Connecting with others who have similar experiences can reduce feelings of isolation and provide encouragement, understanding, and practical coping strategies.
- **For immediate support:** Call or text 988 (Suicide & Crisis Lifeline) for 24/7, free, confidential support.

We're Here to Help

Your EAP is available to provide confidential support, guidance, and resources to help you navigate life's challenges. Reaching out is a sign of strength and a positive first step. Our experienced and compassionate counselors are available 24/7 to provide in-the-moment support and connect you with no-cost counseling.

References: National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI): Mental Health Awareness Month. <https://www.nami.org/stay-connected/events/awareness-events/mental-health-awareness-month/>, National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI), Mental Health By the Numbers: <https://www.nami.org/mental-health-by-the-numbers/>

Additional Resources for Support & Information

Your Employee Assistance Program

Available 24/7/365 by calling the toll-free number below. The EAP offers support and linkage to local counselors and support groups.

National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)

www.nami.org
Education, advocacy, and free support groups nationwide.

Mental Health America (MHA)

www.mhanational.org
Mental health screenings, tools, and community-based resources.

Depression and Bipolar Support Alliance (DBSA)

www.dbsalliance.org
Peer-led support groups for depression and bipolar disorder.

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)

www.samhsa.gov
Treatment locator and resources for mental health and substance use support.

Veterans Crisis Line

www.veteranscrisisline.net
Crisis and mental health support tailored for veterans and their families.

24/7/365 PHONE:

1.800.833.3031

WEBSITE:

EAPHelplink.com

CODE:

IOWA