Supporting Employee Mental Health
Actions for Supervisors
Thank You to Our SAFER Sponsors

NSC is grateful to the following lead sponsors for their generous support of the SAFER effort:

Thank you to our partner sponsor:

FirstGroup
Center for Workplace Mental Health

Darcy Gruttadaro, J.D., Director
Workplacementalhealth.org
The world is changing ... and

Mental health is taking center stage.
Extremely Challenging Times

COVID-19 Pandemic
Racial & Social Justice Protests
Economic Downturn
Sustained Fear & Stress
Collective Grief & Loss
Social Distancing & Isolation
Extreme Disruption

A trifecta
Surge in Depression & Anxiety

Anxiety and depression symptoms have more than tripled since 2019, with black Americans shouldering the heaviest burden.

Percent screening positive for anxiety or depression.

### Anxiety
- **Black**: 34%
- **Latino**: 32%
- **All U.S.**: 31%
- **White**: 29%
- **Asian**: 28%

### Depression
- **Black**: 30%
- **Latino**: 26%
- **All U.S.**: 25%
- **White**: 24%
- **Asian**: 22%

Washington Post
US Census data
6.12.2020
Latest Census Data ...

Surge in mental health and substance misuse conditions will overtax an already fragile system.

Models show projected rise in rates of suicides and overdoses.
Two New Guides Released ...

WorkplaceMentalHealth.org

Work Remotely During COVID-19:
Your Mental Health & Well-Being

The Coronavirus (COVID-19) is presenting new and unique major challenges. We are navigating uncharted waters with this virus making it important to find new ways to work and interact while also taking care of our mental health and well-being.

Many are teleworking full-time for the first time, isolated from co-workers, friends and family. Our daily living routines are disrupted causing added anxiety, stress and strain physically, mentally, and financially. It is completely natural for this disruption and uncertainty to lead to anxiety and stress. Now more than ever, we all must take care of our mental health and well-being. As we protect ourselves against potential exposure to the Coronavirus, keep in mind that social distancing does not mean social isolation. This resource provides practical tips on taking care of our mental health and well-being.

Released in June

A TOP PRIORITY:
Employee Mental Health & Wellbeing
During & Beyond Covid-19

Employers recognize their workforce as a highly valuable resource. Over the past year, with employees of all sizes and representing diverse industries began to focus more effectively addressing workplace mental health. No longer was it an "afterthought," but a business imperative.

With the Covid-19 pandemic, our nation is experiencing a surge in people experiencing signs of depression, anxiety, and other serious mental health distress. Recent data from the U.S. Census Bureau shows nearly a doubling of people experiencing signs of depression.

Over 200K page views!
What can employers do?
LEAD ... in a changing world

Leadership
Reassure, normalize, show empathy, make MH visible!

Effective Communication
Routine, listen, be available, be a trusted source

Adapt to Change
Policies, practices, expectations, style, flexibility

Double down on Access
Prevention, support, EAP, MH & SUD care
Strengthen Prevention

- Share signs of common MH conditions
- Promote early and easy access to care
- Share stress management strategies
- Promote resiliency
- Form Employee Resource Groups
- Promote meditation & mindfulness
Improving Access to Services & Supports

EAP: what does the data show?
Digital Options?
Onsite care?
Health plan?

- **Tele Mental Health**: sustain momentum
- The **Collaborative Care Model**: PC on front lines.

Infographics and The Path Forward: [http://workplacementalhealth.org/Employer-Resources](http://workplacementalhealth.org/Employer-Resources)
Contact Information

Darcy Gruttadaro, Director
Center for Workplace Mental Health
Ph: 202-559-3140
Email: dgruttadaro@psych.org
@darcygrutt

Visit: www.workplacementalhealth.org
Karen Johnson, MSW, LCSW
Trauma-Informed Lens Consulting
Continuum of Stress

**POSITIVE STRESS**
Mild/moderate and short-lived stress response necessary for healthy development

**TOLERABLE STRESS**
More severe stress response but limited in duration which allows for recovery

**TOXIC STRESS**
Extreme, frequent, or extended activation of the body’s stress response without the buffering presence of a supportive adult

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Social-emotional buffering, parental resilience, early detection, and/or effective intervention

Intense, prolonged, repeated and unaddressed

ACEs Connection Presentation, 2018
Hierarchy of Brain Development

- Cortex
  - Abstract Thought
  - Concrete Thought
  - Affiliation
  - “Attachment”
  - Sexual Behavior
- Limbic
  - Emotional Reactivity
  - Motor Regulation
  - “Arousal”
- Midbrain
  - Appetite/Satiety
- Brainstem
  - Sleep
  - Blood Pressure
  - Heart Rate
  - Temperature

Perry, B. and Szalavitz, M. 2006, 2017
Activation of the Stress Response System

Calm/Alert
Alarm
Fear
Terror

Perry, B. and Szalavitz, M. 2006, 2017
The basic strategy for quieting our lower brain

“Regulation is the ability to monitor and control our behavior, emotions and thoughts, altering them in accordance with the demands of the situation.” J.L. Cook/G.Cook

“Regulation give us the ability to put time and thought between a feeling and an action.” Bruce D. Perry
3 Strategies for Regulation

#1 – Top Down

- Journaling
- Self-compassion
- Mindfulness
- Reflection
- Healthy boundaries
- Clear expectations
- Gratitude practices
- Cultural humility
- Problem solving
- Pause between stimulus & action

Perry, B. 2020
3 Strategies for Regulation
#2 - Bottom Up

- Focused breathing
- Grounding exercises
- Regulated day
- Calming spaces
- Sensory and calming tools
- Exercise and movement
- Music
- Visual calming exercises
- Alternative workstations

Perry, B. 2020
3 Strategies for Regulation
#3 - In Relationship with Others

- Peer support groups
- Mentor and buddy systems
- Huddles
- Vulnerability exercises
- Empathy exercises
- Group movement exercises
- Celebrations
- Recognition activities
- Crucial conversations

Perry, B. 2020
Regulate, Relate, Reason
Safety

• Create a positive culture that prioritizes physical, emotional and psychological safety for every individual
• Model vulnerability
• Practice regulation
• Practice self-compassion

Neff, K., Self-compassion
Johnson, K. March 2020
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. 2014
Workforce Resilience Model

Johnson, K., and Black, P. 2020
Remember
You are doing the best you can and it is enough.
References


• Neff, K. Self-compassion, retrieved from https://self-compassion.org.


• Stevens, J. (2018). ACEs Connection Presentation.
Thank you for your time!

Karen Johnson
Trauma-Informed Lens Consulting
https://traumainformedlens.net/
262-391-0403
Mental Health Resources

- Stress and Mental Health Playbook
- Mental Health Issue Brief
- Managing Employee Stress and Anxiety (and accompanying webinar)
- More resources at nsc.org/mentalhealth
SAFER Reminders

- Risk Assessment Workshops
  - Future Dates: September 21, October 6, November 10
- Organizational Vulnerability Assessment Tool
- Employee Perception Surveys
- COVID and Technology Webinar Series
Thank you!

nsc.org/SAFER
safer@nsc.org

Rachael Cooper
rachael.cooper@nsc.org