

WORK WELL INITIATIVE



JOIN US
as we reduce the stigma
surrounding mental illness
and promote
mental health awareness
in the workplace.

Led by the County of San Diego Behavioral Health Services and in partnership with Corporation for Supportive Housing, the San Diego Workforce Partnership developed a county-wide strategic plan to increase employment for those with lived experience of mental illness.

Mental illnesses affect millions of Americans, yet remain among the most misunderstood of all medical conditions. You might be surprised to hear that 1 in 4 people will experience a mental illness in any given year. Think about your parents, siblings, friends and co-workers—chances are at least one of them is affected by mental illness.

Adults who are in recovery from mental illnesses have overcome tremendous barriers and personal struggles, making them some of the most resilient, highly motivated and hardest working employees you can hire.

A SUCCESS STORY

A 51-year-old woman suffering from depression, anxiety and self-esteem issues sought help from County Behavioral Health Services. She had not been employed for over 10 years and had great difficulties with her communication skills. She began working with staff, who helped her develop a targeted résumé and began teaching her effective communication skills by using motivational interviewing techniques and providing observational feedback.

After a period of job coaching and a 10-day on-the-job training program, she attended a recruitment event and was hired part-time as a customer service representative at Lindbergh Field, where she enjoys talking with travelers and working with a boss who understands her background and values her as an employee. Well on her way to self-sufficiency, she is grateful for the supportive employment services the staff provided, especially the recovery discussions about her mental health and the soft skills training she received.

MYTH FACT

MYTH: Mental illness doesn't affect my workplace.

FACT: An estimated 1 in 4 Americans is currently living with a diagnosable mental health condition. In any given year, nearly 7% of full-time employees and over 9% of part-time employees suffer from depression.

MYTH: My employees already get the help they need.

FACT: Only 1 in 3 employees diagnosed with a mental illness receive treatment for their condition in any given year. The stigma and discrimination associated with mental illness prevents employees from disclosing their illnesses, or from seeking any type of assistance, even when employers offer generous benefits and an Employee Assistance Program.

MYTH: My employees' mental health isn't my problem.

FACT: Employee depression is linked to lower productivity, higher absenteeism, greater health care costs and increased use of short-term disability leave, costing employers \$44 billion per year.

MYTH: Individuals who have mental illnesses don't want to work.

FACT: Research shows that 60-70% of individuals who have a serious mental illness want to work. However, fewer than 15% of these individuals are employed.

MYTH: Individuals who have a mental illness can't succeed in a work environment.

FACT: Of employers who have employed a person with a mental illness, 74% describe their experience as positive or very positive.

HOW YOU CAN HELP

BE A PART OF AN INITIATIVE TO REDUCE THE STIGMA AGAINST MENTAL ILLNESS AND TO INCREASE EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL SAN DIEGANS.

- **Join the San Diego Workforce Partnership's Work Well Committee and be part of the discussion on reducing the stigma around mental illness and ways to talk positively about mental health in the workplace.**
- **Donate 90 minutes of your time to talk to and encourage job seekers with mental illness who are receiving supportive services and taking positive steps to manage their mental health in order to get back to work.**
- **Share the steps your organization has taken to create a mental health-friendly workplace and be a champion for this important issue.**

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