

**Mental Health First Aid and  
R U OK?: Overview for the Workplace  
SupportLinc Employee Assistance  
Program (EAP)**

**Penn State Health**



# Disclaimer

The general views, thoughts and opinions expressed in this presentation are expressly those of the presenter. The presentation is intended to provide general tips, advice and coping skills, and may not entirely pertain to your circumstance or you as an individual in a professional or clinical capacity. For specific advice on your unique situation, please reach out to a licensed financial or clinical professional for a confidential, one-on-one consult. CuraLinc Healthcare and the presenter are not held responsible or liable for any consequences or damages due to an individual taking action based on the information presented herein.

# Objectives

## This training is designed to help you:

- Become aware of the prevalence of mental health concerns
- Identify common signs and symptoms
- Understand how to help someone with a mental health concern
- Learn hands-on skills that you can apply in real life situations
- Discuss the importance of stress management

# Perceptions

- Mental health
- Mental illness
- Depression
- Anxiety
- Stress



# Mental health statistics

- 1 in 5 adults in the U.S. experiences a mental illness every year
- Approximately 1 in 20 adults in the U.S. experiences a serious mental illness in a given year that substantially interferes with at least one major life activity
- 1.1% of adults in the U.S. live with schizophrenia
- 2.8% of adults in the U.S. live with bipolar disorder
- 7.8% of adults in the U.S. had at least one major depressive episode in the past year
- 19.1% of adults in the U.S. experienced an anxiety disorder, such as post traumatic stress disorder, obsessive-compulsive disorder and specific phobias

# Workplace signs and symptoms

## Symptoms of distress

Sleep problems

Lack of concentration

Slowed thoughts

Aches and pains

Forgetfulness

Alcohol/substance abuse

Irritability or tearfulness

Low motivation or morale

## Signs that affect work productivity

- Lower quality work, lateness to work

- Procrastination, more accidents on the job

- Indecision or trouble making decisions

- Trips to the doctor, increased healthcare costs

- Poor quality of work

- Missed deadlines, absenteeism

- Poor relationships with co-workers, boss or clients

- Decreased productivity

# Common signs of risk

## IS PATH WARM?

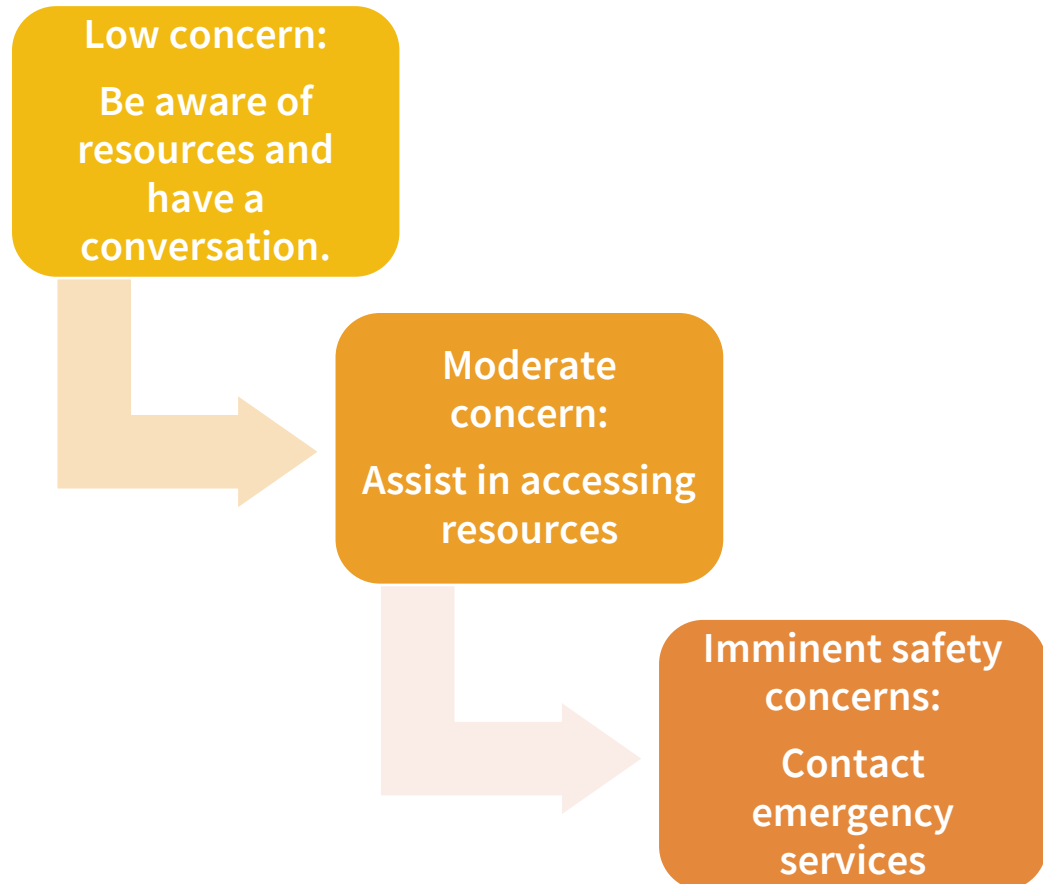
<b>I</b>	Ideation	Talking about wanting to hurt or kill him/herself
<b>S</b>	Substance abuse	Increased substance use (alcohol or drug)
<b>P</b>	Purposelessness	No reason for living; no sense of purpose in life
<b>A</b>	Anxiety	Anxiety, agitation or unable to sleep/sleeping too much
<b>T</b>	Trapped	Feeling trapped (like there's no way out)
<b>H</b>	Hopelessness	Feelings of hopelessness or helplessness
<b>W</b>	Withdrawal	Withdrawal from friends, family and society
<b>A</b>	Anger	Rage, uncontrolled anger or seeking revenge
<b>R</b>	Recklessness	Acting reckless or engaging in risky activities
<b>M</b>	Mood changes	Dramatic mood changes

Seek help when you or someone you know is struggling.

Contact your EAP or the National Suicide Prevention Hotline at **988**.

**Call 911 in an emergency.**

# When to get backup



**Your role:**  
Provide resources.  
Not “assess” or fix.



# Be prepared

- Am I willing to genuinely listen?
- Can I give as much time as needed?
- Do I understand that I can't fix it?
- Do I accept they may not be ready to talk?
- Have I chosen a private place?
- Am I the right person?



# R U OK?

Meaningful connections

Sense of responsibility

Sense of belonging

1. Ask
2. Listen
3. Encourage action
4. Check-in



# Ask “R U OK”?



- You don't seem yourself lately...
- How are you doing?
- How have you been lately?
- What's going on?
- Is there something on your mind?
- Do you want to talk about it?
- **How are you doing, really?**

# Alternatives

## What not to say

## Try instead

“You seem depressed.”

- “You’re not your usual self.”

“Snap out of it.”

- “Do you want to talk about it?”

“Think positive.”

- “It’s always OK to ask for help.”

“I know exactly what you’re going through.”

- “I can see that it’s distressing for you.”

# Listen

- Take what they say seriously
- Don't rush the conversation
- Stay calm
- Don't interrupt
- Encourage them to elaborate
- Don't take their reaction personally



# Encourage action

- How can I help?
- What have you done in the past?
- Where do you think we go from here?
- What would be a good next step?
- What do you need from me?

In the potentially harmful category:

- Putting off the conversation until later in the week
- Suggesting they simply work it out with their manager
- Telling them to “just hang in there”

# Scenario

Michelle has been late to team meetings. When you speak to her about work on the phone, she seems out of it, unable to focus on the topic at hand and frazzled. She then starts crying.

How do you proceed?

# Resources

**Mental health, legal or financial consultation and other resources**

- **Your Employee Assistance Program**  
P: 1-888-881-5462

**Domestic Violence**

- **National Domestic Violence Hotline**  
P: 1-800-799-SAFE (7233)

**Sexual Assault**

- **National Sexual Assault Hotline**  
P: 1-800-656-HOPE (4673)

**Suicide Prevention**

- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline**  
P: 1-800-273-TALK (8255) or 988



# Check-in



- Check back in a few days
- Ask how they're doing
- Ask if they pursued help
- Provide encouragement
- Offer assistance
- Be patient but gently persist

# Managing stress

- Exercise
- Counseling
- Hobby or activity
- Social connection
- Healthy diet
- Quality sleep
- Meaning and purpose



# Interactive toolkits

## Grief and Loss

([www.griefandloss.tools](http://www.griefandloss.tools))

Equip yourself with knowledge, support and the right tools to discover a way to live with grief and move forward.

## Mindfulness

([www.mindfulness.tools](http://www.mindfulness.tools))

Practical tools and exercises for incorporating mindfulness into everyday life.

## Meditation

([www.meditate.tools](http://www.meditate.tools))

Easy-to-use collection of resources that includes guided meditations, tip sheets and more.

## Resiliency

([www.resiliency.tools](http://www.resiliency.tools))

Skill development resources to help you ‘bounce back’ from challenging situations.

## Sleep fitness

([www.sleepfitness.tools](http://www.sleepfitness.tools))

Information and resources to help you learn good sleep habits and achieve healthy sleep.

# What is SupportLinc?

The SupportLinc Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a health benefit, separate from your medical insurance, offered by your employer to help you manage life's daily challenges.

SupportLinc can refer you to professional counselors, services and resources that will help you and your eligible family members resolve a broad range of personal and work-related concerns.

# What services are included?

## Work-life benefits



### Legal consultation

Free in-person or telephonic consultation with a licensed attorney

No employment law



### Dependent care referrals

Expert referrals to child and adult/elder care providers, facilities and other resources



### Financial consultation

Expert guidance and consultation from financial professionals



### “Convenience” referrals

Guidance and referrals to a variety of daily living resources: home improvement, entertainment services, pet care, auto repair, wellness, travel, handymen, volunteer opportunities etc.



### Identity theft consultation

Free consultation with an identity theft recovery professionals

Tailored recovery action plan

# Getting started



**Call:** 1-888-881-LINC (5462)



**QR Code:**



**Visit:** [www.supportlinc.com](http://www.supportlinc.com)



**Log in or create account**  
(code: psh)

## SupportLinc

Support for everyday issues. Every day.

# Additional resources

With one in five Americans experiencing a mental health concern each year, it is an excellent opportunity to familiarize yourself with the signs of emotional distress. Recognizing that someone may be struggling is the first step in connecting with them to offer support and additional resources.

The American Psychiatric Association (APA) shares common behavior changes that may indicate you, a co-worker or someone you care about is experiencing a mental or emotional issue.

- **Social withdrawal.** Nearly everyone appreciates “alone time” but when a person begins to isolate themselves regularly and loses interest in others, there may be a concern.
- **Daily functioning.** Not being able to complete work, chores, social activities, hobbies or personal hygiene are more signs and may be coupled with a lack of focus or difficulty participating in conversations.
- **Mood changes.** Rapidly worsening depressed feelings or cycling from extreme “highs” of euphoria to extreme “lows” such as despondence, are symptoms of a mental health issue.
- **Intensity of emotions.** Impulsiveness, regular expressions of despair, loneliness or worries and substance abuse as a way of coping are additional flags.

One or two of these symptoms alone may not be alarming, but if someone is experiencing several of the signs, it may be time to start the conversation about mental health.

Visit the [One in Five Anti-Stigma Campaign](#) for additional resources to talk about mental health concerns, including a short flash course called Start the Conversation, information to help recognize the signs of emotional distress, and a mental health self-assessment.

If you want help coping with some of life’s stressors in your own life, here are some techniques you can use to help reduce stress and boost your emotional wellbeing.

- **Breathe.** Any time you are feeling the weight of difficult emotions, take a few slow, deep breaths. This will trigger your brain to slow your thoughts and help you feel a sense of calm.
- **Move your body.** Taking a walk, running, stretching or even completing a few yoga poses can help reduce stress hormones in your body. Exercise also stimulates the production of brain chemicals that are mood elevators.
- **Use your commute.** Listen to soothing music or getting absorbed in an uplifting podcast can slow your pulse and heart rate, lower blood pressure and decrease stress so you arrive at work or home in a more relaxed state.
- **Start a stress journal.** Writing out your thoughts and feelings can help you process and release difficult emotions. You may also gain new perspective about ways to cope with or even resolve situations.
- **Talk it out.** Reaching out to friends or family for some supportive listening can be a stress buffer, helping you avoid unhealthy coping mechanisms during challenging times.

For further resources, please go to your portal and use the search bar to type in “Mental Health First Aid Basics Flash Course,” “Building Better Mental Health Flash Course” and “Cultural Diversity and Mental Health Flash Course” and “When It’s Time to Seek Support Flash Course.”

# Moving ahead



What did you get out of today's presentation?

Which concepts are working in your life and why?

Who can be a support for you to make change?

Which concepts are *not* working in your life and why?

What 3 ideas are going to be the most helpful for you?

How can you support someone else with change?

What can you do in the next 24 hours to apply these concepts?

What are your biggest barriers for change?