

# Dealing with Depression at Work

Even in the best of times, the workplace can be a stressful place. While many factors can hurt workers' productivity, employee depression may be among the most common. The first steps towards dealing and overcoming workplace depression is taking it seriously and recognizing tell-tale signs. Here are some tips on what to look for and what to do.

## Causes of Workplace Depression



Unclear guidance at work.



Low morale or low engagement at work.



Bullying at work.



Misalignment between company and personal values.



A poorly fitting role.



Working-parent guilt.



Interpersonal discomfort.



Unreasonable demands from management.



Poor working conditions.



Work/life imbalance.



Financial struggles.

## SYMPTOMS



Persistent sadness, anxiousness, or "empty" moods.



Sleeping too little, early morning awakening, or sleeping too much.



Reduced appetite and/or weight loss, or increased appetite and weight gain.



Loss of interest in activities once enjoyed, such as listening to music or going on walks.



Restlessness and irritability.



Persistent physical symptoms that don't respond to treatment (ex. headaches, chronic pain, or digestive disorders).



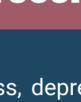
Difficulty concentrating, remembering, or making decisions.



Fatigue or loss of energy.



Feeling guilty, hopeless, or worthless.



Thoughts of suicide or death.

## How Common Is Workplace Depression?

1

After family crises and stress, depression is consistently ranked by therapists and other treatment professionals as the most common workplace problem.

2

One survey reported that 6% of employees experience symptoms of depression in any given year.

3

Major depressive disorders are reported to affect 14.8 million American adults (6.7% of the total) per year.

4

Companies lose an estimated \$44 billion annually as a result of workers suffering from clinical depression.

## How Depressed Employees Appear to Coworkers

Withdrawal from team

Indifferent

Putting things off, missed deadlines, accidents

Seem "scattered" or absentminded

Procrastination, indecisiveness, slowed productivity

Late to work, afternoon fatigue, accidents

Unsure of abilities, lack of confidence

Low motivation

Inappropriate reactions, strained relationships

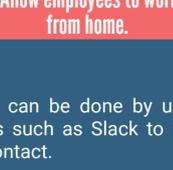
Change in appearance

## How Managers Can Reduce Workplace Depression



Address problems as they arise.

Identify problems that are interfering with work performance and deal with them. This may mean referring the employee to the company's employee-assistance program, to an occupational health department, or to the company's human resources department.



Allow employees to work from home.

This can be done by using apps such as Slack to stay in contact.



Allow a mental-health break.

The terms of these breaks should be organized in a confidential meeting, where employees can stay home from work in order to recuperate.

## How to Tackle Workplace Depression for Yourself or for Coworkers

Help yourself and others.

If you are employed and feel depressed, seek advice. Your company may have resources to help you. If you see a coworker with signs of depression, encourage them to seek help.

Don't be afraid to ask HR or your boss for a day off to improve your mental health.

Take breaks.

Care for your body and mind.

Physical health is important for promoting a healthy mind. Getting a good night's sleep, staying active, and eating well all play a vital role in mental wellbeing.

### Source

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Walter F. Stewart, Geisinger Health Systems

### About DNHF

Do No Harm Foundation is focused on promoting greater awareness of mental health. Do No Harm's mission is to break the current stigma around mental health by raising awareness and providing various hands-on tools to alleviate stress, depression and anxiety.