



Mental Health: You Are Not Alone

Close to 1 billion people live with a mental health condition, according to the World Health Organization (WHO). Chances are that one of your close colleagues is among them—or that you yourself are. I have seen firsthand how confusing, all-consuming, and devastating mental health conditions can be to colleagues and their family members.

With Mental Health Awareness Month in Canada, India, and the US ending tomorrow, I wonder: Are we doing enough to help our employees and their family members with their mental health?

During the pandemic, many companies strengthened their commitments to employee assistance and counseling programs in response to burnout, isolation, and loneliness. Many leaders spoke publicly for the first time on the importance of mental health.

There is so much more to do. We are less psychologically healthy after the pandemic than before. This is especially true for women, who disproportionately took on additional caring and household responsibilities, and young people, who had fewer opportunities to interact with peers. The prevalence of anxiety and depression, the two most common mental health disorders, rose by 25% during the first year of the pandemic, according to the WHO.

Aside from the incalculable human cost, researchers estimate that 12 billion workdays are lost every year to anxiety and depression alone, at a cost of nearly \$1 trillion. In Canada, the cost of addressing mental health [exceeds \\$220 billion](#) per year, according to a recent BCG report. This includes both direct costs, such as health care spending, and indirect economic costs in the form of absenteeism, quiet quitting, and lower labor participation rates. That's the equivalent of 10% of Canada's GDP.

What can leaders do to support the mental health of their employees?

Speak out. Despite progress, mental health still carries a stigma. If the CEO and other members of the C-suite talk about the importance of mental health regularly, employees are more likely to seek help.

Be a role model and an ally. If you have a mental health condition, consider being a role model, [as BCG's Adam Whybrew has chosen to do](#). If you don't, offer your support, guidance, and compassion to those who do.

Offer resources and programming. Companies should provide support for the full range of mental health experiences and conditions. But these programs will only be as effective as the corporate culture that encourages employees to seek help without fear. Our [AccessAbility@BCG](#) network is one way we are building this culture and awareness at BCG.

Train your managers. Most employees know and trust their bosses. Managers can be the first line of offense in creating a plan to help their people.

Mental Health Awareness Month may be almost over, but we all need to take stock of our mental health and that of others 365 days a year. If you or someone you know needs help, please speak up. You are not alone.



Christoph Schweizer
Chief Executive Officer

Further Reading



Your Workforce Includes People with Disabilities. Does Your People Strategy?

Employers underestimate how many PwD work for them, so they are missing opportunities to improve inclusion and retention. Here's how they can do better.

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The Next Frontier of Workplace Culture

Unchecked workplace stress is fueling a mental health crisis among young Canadians. Fostering resilience and well-being can help businesses address burnout.

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NBA Commissioner Silver Says Players Aren't Immune to Depression

National Basketball Association Commissioner Adam Silver talks about the mental health issues facing the league's players.

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