

BUILDING THE CASE FOR WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH

Sample Case for Support Letter to Leadership

Purpose

The employees of [Organization] seek permission, support, and an annual budget of [proposed amount] to establish and grow a mental health employee resource group (ERG) [or designate a mental health ambassador] to improve our workforce's mental health and well-being.

Background

Mental health conditions are the leading cause of disability in the workplace and result in \$200 billion in lost productivity each year in the U.S. alone.¹ Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) have traditionally been the primary resource for mental health services in the workplace, but on average, less than 5% of employees use these services.² [Organization] can estimate its cost of mental health conditions in the workplace using the American Psychological Association Foundation's [Mental Health Cost Calculators](#).

One in 5 employees will experience a mental health condition each year,³ but provided with the appropriate support, all employees can benefit from a psychologically safe workplace. Employers who value and prioritize mental health can see its positive impact on employee retention, engagement, and health care costs. For every dollar invested into scaled-up treatment for common mental health conditions, there is a \$4 return on investment in improved health and productivity.⁴

Proposed Activities

The [Organization]'s mental health ERG [or designated mental health ambassador] seek(s) to improve the workforce's mental health and well-being by participating in one or more of the following proposed activities:

- Serve as the liaison between staff and leadership to identify employee needs, communicate feedback to leadership, and provide input on policy or programs changes that impact well-being;
- Educate our workforce about mental health and [Organization]'s available resources; and
- Participate in MHA's [Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health](#) national employer certification program to benchmark and celebrate our workplace mental health efforts.

Leadership Support

Research shows that leaders that adopt an engaging leadership style, and understand their employees as well as their clients, will drive engagement and productivity.⁵ Leadership can demonstrate its commitment to a mentally healthy workplace by providing the following guidance and resources, including but not limited to:

- Sponsoring or participating in the mental health ERG or designating a mental health ambassador;
- Allocating a specific number of work hours for ERG members to attend to the group's activities;
- Providing a budget to cover the expenses of hosting wellness events, sharing digital and printable public education materials, or offering mental health training and workshops;
- Establishing a clear and accessible procedure by which the ERG can provide feedback to upper management about findings or suggestions; and
- Routinely following up about changes that can or will be made based on feedback from the ERG.

Organizational Impact

Both employers and employees receive a host of benefits from a workplace that supports mental health. Employees are happier, more productive, and more loyal. Employers attract and retain employees and, ultimately, improve overall operations. By supporting a mental health ERG [or designating a mental health ambassador], [Organization]'s leadership can demonstrate its commitment to its workforce and aspire to be a leader in the growing workplace mental health movement.