ONE MIND
At Work

A Manager's Checklist for Mentally Healthy Workplaces

World Mental Health Day (October 10) is a reminder that mental health isn't just a personal issue, it's essential to creating a healthy, productive workplace. For many employees, the most influential factor shaping their experience of mental health at work isn't the benefit package or even the executive team — it's their manager. Managers set expectations, model behaviors, and influence whether people feel safe to speak up when they're struggling. Managers are the bridge between organizational strategy and the realities of team life. Whether employees feel overextended, supported, or valued often depends on how their manager shows up day to day.

Why It Matters

- Research shows that three out of four people experiencing mental health symptoms turn to self-care first, often without guidance or support. Managers who normalize and encourage use of mental health benefits and resources help close this gap.
- 75% of organizations with comprehensive manager support for workforce mental health saw employee satisfaction rise last year — more than double the rate of organizations without manager support.
- Managers are often the difference between an initiative that looks good on paper and one that actually improves employees' lives. 63% of managers encourage employees to use mental health benefits, but fewer than 1 in 3 make the organization's mental health efforts feel personally meaningful to their teams.
- In organizations with strong manager support, employee satisfaction was more than twice as likely to increase in the last year compared to those lacking support.
- A supportive manager doesn't need to be a mental health expert. Simply demonstrating openness, flexibility, care, and healthy boundaries sets a powerful example and reduces stigma.

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Self-Audit for Managers

Use this five-question audit to reflect on your own practices. A single "no" is an opportunity to strengthen your approach:

- ☐ **Visibility** — Have I highlighted our mental health resources (EAP, apps, PTO, peer networks) to my team in the past month?
- ☐ **Encouragement** — Do I explicitly tell employees it's acceptable, and encouraged, to use these resources without stigma?
- ☐ **Flexibility** — Have I offered flexibility (in schedules, workloads, or deadlines) when employees show signs of stress or burnout?
- ☐ **Feedback Loops** — Do I ask team members for honest input on workload and well-being, and adjust plans accordingly?
- ☐ **Role Modeling** — Am I demonstrating the behaviors I want to see, taking breaks, setting boundaries, using PTO, and being transparent about challenges?

The Manager's Checklist

Use this quick list to evaluate your own practices and identify one or two small changes you can make this month:

- ✓ **Allow Time** — Encourage and make space in the workday for well-being activities, like webinars, team check-ins, or stress management sessions.
- ✓ **Encourage Use of Benefits** — Proactively remind employees about mental health benefits and resources available to them. Emphasize that there is no stigma in using them.
- ✓ **Open Dialogue** — Regularly check in with team members about workload, stress, and support needs. Ask, listen, and follow through.
- ✓ **Recognize Participation** — Celebrate employees who engage with mental health initiatives, peer-support activities, or efforts to build a positive team culture.
- ✓ **Model Healthy Behaviors** — Show that balance is possible. Take breaks, use PTO days, and avoid sending emails while on vacation. Your actions give employees permission to do the same.

Managers shape whether employees see mental health as "safe" to prioritize.
This World Mental Health Day, identify one question from the audit where your answer isn't a clear "yes." Commit to addressing it in the next 30 days. Small improvements from individual managers can create meaningful, lasting change across an entire organization.

One Mind at Work is a global coalition dedicated to transforming workforce mental health as a catalyst for change — improving lives at work and creating ripple effects that strengthen families, communities, and society as a whole. Drawing on deep expertise and evidence-based practices, we equip and empower organizations to embed mental health and well-being into their culture and strategy. Our membership includes organizations across industries, geographies, and sizes, from Fortune 50 companies to mission-driven nonprofits, united in their commitment to building workplaces where people can thrive and organizations can succeed.