



Mental Health Awareness at Work

One in three adults in the U.S. now have a diagnosed mental health condition, reflecting a 7-percentage point increase from 2019. According to the American Psychological Association's 2024 "Stress in America" survey, 39% of U.S. adults reported having a diagnosed mental health condition, up from 32% in 2019. Additionally, 28% rated their average stress between eight and ten on a scale of one to ten, indicating high levels of stress. Furthermore, 44% of U.S. adults have experienced high levels of psychological distress at least once since the early stages of the coronavirus outbreak, with younger adults aged 18 to 29 reporting the highest levels of distress. (Source: [APA Stress in America Report](#))

Mental health and substance use conditions affect people in the workplace. The BU Faculty & Staff Assistance Office (FSAO) offers the following tips and resources for supporting your own and your colleagues' mental health at work.

Tip 1: Support your own mental health

- Set boundaries to create work/life balance
- Practice self-care
- Advocate for yourself around work norms
- Ask for help when needed
- Take time off when needed

Tip 2: Be a Proactive Ally

- Show vulnerability
- Model mentally healthy behavior
- Acknowledge current events
- Cultivate inclusivity
- Normalize and advocate for positive mental health language

Tip 3: Know the Resources

[BU Faculty & Staff Assistance Office](#)

[BU Employee Wellness](#)

[BU Health Plans \(see coverage for Mental Health & Drug and Alcohol Treatment\)](#)

[BU Benefits Paid Family and Medical Leave](#)

[BU Equal Opportunity Office Reasonable Accommodations](#)

Tip 4: Know What to Look For

Below are some warning signs that someone is grappling with a mental health or substance use issue:

- Change in behavior, demeanor, appearance, or performance
- Tardiness/absenteeism
- Mistakes, missed deadlines
- Forgetfulness
- Indecisiveness
- Apathy
- Hyper-performance
- Social withdrawal
- Neglected appearance
- Emotional displays (irritability, agitation, tearfulness)
- Agitation/aggression
- Illogical thinking
- Bizarre or unusual behavior

Tip 5: Intervene When You Identify Warning Signs

Reach out to express concern and show support. Initiate the conversation in private.

- “I’ve noticed you’ve been online really late and really early lately. How are you doing?”
- “I’ve been reading about x event in the news. I’m wondering how you’re doing.”
- “You’ve seemed quieter lately. Is everything o.k.?”
- Pause and listen. Don’t jump in with solutions or your own experiences.
- Validate with reflective listening: “That sounds really overwhelming.”
- Give thanks: “I appreciate your trusting me enough to share that with me.”
- Affirm their experiences: “That sounds like a lot for one person to handle.”
- Share your own experience *if it would be helpful*. “I went through a rough time last year. I found it very helpful to talk a counselor.”
- Don’t try to ‘fix’ the problem.
- Offer support: “You’re not alone.” “I’m here to listen.”
- Share resources: “Do you know about the Faculty & Staff Assistance Office (or PFML or EOO/Accommodations)?”
- Seek confidential consultation from the FSAO’s professional counselors for help with planning how to initiate a conversation, assessing level of risk/concern, and considering what additional steps you might take.

Communication and Active Listening Guidance

BU Ombuds Office [Communication and Conflict Management](#)

BU Terrier eDevelopment [Listening Even When it’s Difficult to Listen](#)

[Using Active Listening in Workplace Situations](#)

Informational Resources

- [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#)
- [National Institute of Mental Health](#)
- [CDC Mental Health](#)
- [HelpGuide](#)
- [How to Talk About Your Mental Health with Your Employer](#). Harvard Business Review. July 30, 2021.
- [PsychHub YouTube channel](#)

Crisis Resources

- [Speaking of Suicide Resources](#)
- **Samaritans** <https://samaritanshope.org/> 1-877-870-HOPE (4673) Call or text.
- **Crisis Text Line** <http://www.crisistextline.org/> Text HOME to 741741
- **National Suicide Prevention Lifeline** <https://suicidepreventionlifeline.org/>
Suicide & Crisis Lifeline dial or text 988
1-800-273-TALK (8255) (English) 1-888-628-9454 (Spanish)
1-800-799-4889 (For Deaf + Hard of Hearing)
- **Trans Lifeline** <https://translifeline.org/hotline/> (877) 565-8860
- **The Trevor Project (for LGBTQ youth)** <https://www.thetrevorproject.org/> 1-866-488-7386
- **Veterans Crisis Line** <https://www.veteranscrisisline.net/> 1-800-273-8255

Substance Use Disorders

- [FSAO Substance Use Resources](#) (including anonymous self-screening tool)
- NIH [Rethinking Drinking](#)