

How to be a Mental Health Ally in Your Personal and Work-Life

Hi everyone. Thank you so much for coming. I'm glad that you are taking time out of your day on how to be a mental health. I'm glad that you are taking time out of your day on how to be a mental health. I have been a licensed clinical social worker since 2008. I have also been working in the field of employee assistance program since 2010. I did first start out as a clinical counselor and I am. Currently working as a senior workplace support consultant at Magellan healthcare. I did want to let you guys know that I do very much. I do want to allow you the embrace program and the EAP benefits. Because I do feel like it offers support for those struggling and unsure how to. I do want to go ahead and get started with how to be a mental health ally in your personal. And work life in your personal life and your work life. So let's go ahead and get started. I do want to go over our objectives because I would like to go ahead and meet those. The first objective is to define what it means to be a mental. We will start out with some definitions just so we can make sure we're starting from this in place. We are also going to talk about how to learn, learn how to help someone who is struggling, you know, some of those signs. And certainly some resources. We're also going to discuss how to. Foster a positive environment. So let's get started on those objects. So I thought I would start out, you know, with some definitions. And the first definition is, you know, what is mental health And so mental health is a state of mental well-being. It enables people to cope with the stress of life, realize their abilities. learn well, work well, and contribute to their community. And then what is mental health Well, mental health is a condition involving significant changes. In thinking, function, and or behavior. distress and or problems in problems in functioning in social work or family. And you know, mental health can be a lot like physical health in that it can be on a spectrum, you know, like if you get a small cut. You know your mental health, your physical health is only, you know, minorly impacted. And just like mental health, you know, you can have some negative. Emotions and still recover quite nicely from those. And so I did want to talk about a little bit about mental health in the as a whole and give you just a few statistics. I do see a question about bipolar disorder. I do want to let you know that we are not going to be getting into any specific diagnosis. We are just doing a general overview. How to be a mental health ally. We're just going to be doing some general things to look for. We certainly do, you know, would like you to get more information on that. So I did want to let you know that one in five US adults experiences. Mental health illness each year. So that really does mean that someone in your personal life or work life is very likely dealing with a mental health. this sometime this year. So it's not an uncommon experience. And some of those work related and personal related stressors. Can be. And I wanted to take a second just to go over. Some of those some of those have lost the word. But depression can look like. And this is just something to notice. We are not saying that folks are dealing with depression, but they might be experiencing some symptoms of depression. And that could look like. You know, maybe feeling some guilt, homelessness, noticing changes in sleep. like excessive sleep or waking up really early. You also can notice things like, you know, maybe you're noticing that you're more often than usual. And some anxiety symptoms that you might notice. You know, would be maybe some upset stomach. Maybe feeling light-headed, dizzy, certainly feeling restless. And certainly having some heart thumping. But I do see you. Your microphone has been turned on. I do see a really good question when a person has mental health. I always have it. And that answer is it's really kind of like physical health. You can be experiencing a you can be experiencing a traumatic event or a sad event that does impact your mental health. And that would be a sign that you need more support. And it doesn't always end up being that you have a life. There are other folks that do deal with some genetic factors, some trauma factors, and so that can lead them to potentially struggle. With more chronic mental illness, but just because you are experiencing some symptoms, it doesn't always mean it's going to be a chronic concern. So you may also notice some physical symptoms. Like some shoulder pain, back neck, and like we mentioned before, stomach. You know, changes in behavior

like, you know, that irritability. More than usual and certainly those anxiety symptoms of restlessness and nervousness. And so to be a mental health ally. Work and at home. Helping those who are struggling with mental health issues. So really, in my opinion, just coming to a webinar like this. To get some, you know, intro information is already starting. Continuing your journey, be a mental health ally. So you've already taken a big step by. I'm really thankful that you're here. Some of the benefits of having a mental health allies in the workplace. And at home would be increased employee engagement because. want to go ahead and work in a place that is engaging with them. When they're engaged, they often will have an increase in productivity. And certainly if you are around people who are valuing you that can increase your loyalty to the workplace. and also at home, you know, being a mental health ally. If you were having those people in your personal life, feel valued and needed. That can increase the closeness and you can have a deeper relationship. With those in your personal life as well as work life. And so, excuse me. So some of the signs that someone is struggling. These are all general and one sign does not mean you have a mental illness. It certainly just means it's something that may require attention to some of the signs could be impulsive behavior or being more irritated than usual and impulsive behavior might be the going on a huge buying spree especially if you can't afford it. Or you know possibly giving away all of your possessions. Or even you know maybe winning a job unexpectedly. It's something that is typically out of character. Also not functioning like your usual self. You know, maybe you've noticed a person in your life or work. Having changes in their dress possibly a hygiene. You know, maybe if someone is feeling certain negative emotions, they might be less interested in maintaining their hygiene. And also then that if. They're general appearance as well. If they're not. Maintaining their usual hygiene and certainly if they're having changes in eating or sleeping. That can be an indication of a. You know, mental health concern that might need more looking at. Especially if maybe, you know, you're noticing a significant reduction. So that there's weight loss involved, maybe sleeping habits that are so significant. You know, work is being missed or school is being missed. I do think that that. I do think that really can demonstrate something to look at. Do you see that Do you see some questions that I would like to get into I see a question on why would back neck and shoulder pain um, potentially correlate with a mental health issue Um, it doesn't always, but it is possible, especially if you are, if you're noticing and increase in anxiety, and it's causing you to tense up. That can lead to potential neck pain. Maybe what is clenched. What is using more energy to be tense rather than being. relaxed and fluid. And if you do notice someone talking about you know feelings of loneliness or despair certainly could be an indication. I think that's a good idea for me to be needing further investigation. It's not always an exact. Match, but there is a these things can also affect children similarly as well. Also, if you are noticing yourself or a co-worker. or someone in your personal life excessively worrying. You know, maybe excessively worrying about a deadline coming up. Excessively worrying about a presentation coming up. know those things can be an indication of needing more support. Also if you're having a trouble concentrating that can be a sign of looking further into what is going on with your mental health, especially if it's maybe, you know, causing you to forget tasks at work or making more mistakes than usual, like say at home and cooking. and also another sign that maybe you will want to look in your substance misuse. And what does substance misuse look like That can be like, you know, maybe on occasion, you know, you come home and have a glass of. And that's it. And maybe you're noticing instead of a couple of times a week. It is, you know, four or five times a week. Or maybe you're noticing it's two and three glasses at a time. That's one way. Another way might be, you know, you're not drinking during the week. But you are drinking on the weekend and let's say you're having two, six packs on on the weekend and then you're missing Monday morning at work. or school. That's another way to, that is another way that substance misuse. Can be identified. And certainly if you. Using substances, especially substances that are. Especially substances that are. That are not legal. That would really be an indication that you might want to look into that. And get some support around that. Yes, I just want to really quick bring up here. I have to just point out that when you talked about the physical effects of stress and the way things manifest that we just got a lot of

knowledge by reading articles. And listening to podcasts would also be helpful. And when you're looking for those articles, you do want to go to a trusted resource. And that would be something like the company's embrace program. Or an organization like NAMI, which is the National Alliance on Mental Illness. They have local chapters all throughout the country and are a great resource for course, you know, for. You and co-workers and certainly for family members as well. You also can get information from the National Institute on Mental Health. That is a great resource and also the SAMHSA website and that is the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services. That can definitely be used by folks in your personal life. Especially if maybe they don't have access to Embrace, they can get support and services. Through SAMHSA, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services, especially if they're maybe needing to get into counseling or they're needing to get maybe an assessment for substance misuse, that would be a great place to start. And so in addition to fostering a positive environment. I think reducing stigma is a big one and how can we do stigma One is to talk only about mental health. Especially because we don't always have to talk about mental health as being. crisis. You know, we are just, we know, we are talking about feelings or things going. It doesn't always have to be crisis. I need help. It can be, you know, maybe I'm feeling a little anxious about this. I'm not coming to the same thing. I'm not coming to the same thing. And again, I do think education is very important. And I do see a comment about saying mental wellness as opposed to mental illness. I definitely agree, I think, you know, talking about mental wellness. Can invite people in to a conversation about. mental health and being conscious of language. Because if you do use language that could be stigmatizing. And it will likely feel some negative emotion, you know, like shame and be more apt to shut down and not. Want to engage in a conversation about what is going on with that. And like I had mentioned previously. There is mentioning the. correlation between mental health and physical health, but also equality. So like if you fall and break your arm you're going to go to the doctor and you're going to get it fixed. You know they're going to do an x-ray. They're probably going to do a cast. And you're going to immediately go get that broken arm fixed. Well if you're noticing some symptoms, some mental health. Symptoms like maybe you're a pain of light and sleeping all the time and ignoring your phone calls from family and friends. You would want to get that address rather than saying, oh, I'm fine. I don't need to do anything different. Really reaching out, I think, is full in fostering that positive environment. And if someone reaches out to you you know, show compassion, you know, let them know that. You know, they are brave for speaking up and you are glad that. You are able to be that listening ear. And be that support. Because when you are showing compassion, you know, you are making people feel seen and heard. And valued. And that's, you know, what it does mean to. The mental health out lot and, you know, choosing that empowerment language. Overtime is going to encourage conversation. And is going to again, you know, be open and open that. That relationship so that. Things can be more supportive and positive in the environment. And being honest about your personal journey and treatment can also foster a positive environment. you certainly don't have to overshare. Or share something that feels uncomfortable. I would encourage you to open that conversation up when appropriate. Because lots of people are are dealing with it. And if we can be a support to each other and honest about what we're dealing with. can really again foster positivity in the environment. And then also, you know, not harboring self-stigma. Because we absolutely can be our own biggest. So I really encourage you to. Not only show compassion for others, compassion for self, because when you can. Be gentle with yourself, then it is much easier to be gentle with others. And sometimes that actually uh Especially if it's something that you're not used to. Especially if you have been self-critical in the past. Another way to foster a positive environment is to promote. What is peer-to-peer engagement and what is peer engagement Those are going to be group classes such as exercise and fitness. Because exercise and fitness can have positive impacts. maintaining healthy mental health and certainly of volunteering. You know that gives you an opportunity to be around people to deepen your relationship and offer some positivity into the environment. Cooking classes can keep you social. And can also support healthy eating. And positive mental health. I really, really like the book club idea. I really

think the book club idea can also foster conversation, especially if one of the characters in the in the book is going through something can really open. that can really open up some discussion around mental health and give people an opportunity connect over it. And again, meditation and mindfulness programs are good. You see someone is suggesting headspace. That is definitely a good app. I have also looked at apps like there's a calm app that I think is also really good, especially the Calm app. I did have things like sleep stories, so if you wanted someone to tell you a story as you fell asleep, I think that um, well do you see some questions about hypnotherapy and self hypnosis I don't, I am familiar with hypnotherapy. I have not learned enough about it to talk about it. I don't have experience. But I've heard that it's been helpful. So it would be something to certainly educate about, but it's not something that I have. A lot of information on. I have heard about. EFT know there are some good resources on the internet about it. And I would certainly recommend looking into EFT. I think. It's emotional freedom tapping. I'm not 100. But yes, I do think that that can be helpful. I do see a question on can eating too much sugar impact your mental health. I think that question would be good for either a dietitian or your primary care physician. But, um, sure it is a possibility. I did want to talk about mental health. First Aid, Mental Health. First Aid is a whole program. We are going to do a brief overview here, but I would highly encourage you. I would highly encourage you to look up. If you look at this QR code, it would take you to the to the website where you can look into doing ... the whole course on mental health first aid. So the first action of mental health first aid. We need to approach them and assess for risk of suicide and harm. If that is present, that really means their hoping is overwhelmed and they're not being very well. And that's when you do want to get support outside of yourself like 988. Listen non-judgmentally. So the more open you can be better, you know, give support and information. You know, whether that's going to a website or getting them connected to a friend or a support group. encourage the person to get appropriate help. And 988 be a great resource for any mental health concern. It doesn't always have to be suicide or risk of harm. It can be for even just something. less serious can be a starting point to get services. The National Alliance on Mental Illness, NAMI, had talked about them before. I want to let you know that they have a peer-to-peer program and a family and friends program. And these, the peer-to-peer, is the eight sessions and the family and friends. It is 90 minutes and you can use the QR code here to get to NAMI. So I thank you so much and my time is up. Thank you so much. Nicole, I know there's a lot of information and you answered questions along the way. We appreciate your comments and your questions and we know that not everyone's questions got answered. I do want to invite you to reach out to your program. So Magellan provides the Embrace program which the EAP is part of that. So you may be familiar with that name or you may be familiar with the EAP. It's all part of your benefit package. And I did put a link in the QA where you can click on that to go in and put your company name in to find your benefit. You may need to put your parent company name. If you can't find your company name, I encourage you to reach out to your leadership. I'm going to get a HR department because that will be where you would get the information on how to reach out to us. If you didn't get your questions answered, please call in. Some of the questions were pretty serious and really personal. So I want to ask you to just call in and ask for a consultation with a licensed professional. They would be able to get more details from you and it would be a better. We appreciate you giving us comments about what your thoughts are in our new lobby because we were able to have some information there for you to have some fun. I guess a new game to play. And also I'm going to put this up here just for the people who are still here. I'm going to move some things out of the way because we didn't have time to answer this. But I want you to just think for yourself. Did you learn anything new today Did it make you feel any more comfortable having a conversation For those of you who were on earlier, we asked this at the very beginning of the session. comfortable are you This is really just a reflection for yourself. This information that you get today can help you so that you now can have a more comfortable conversation. Or is it a starting point for you We know that we have very little time today. Please reach out to your program to get more information. People were asking about mindfulness and different exercises you can do. Your

program website does have some information on meditations and you also some people have an app that's available to them a digital program through neural flow where you can get some of those meditations that are part of your program and at no cost to you. So please feel free also to answer our closing poll. How satisfied are you Very satisfied. Satisfied. Dis satisfied or very dissatisfied. Know that we are not broadcasting any results here so you will not see the responses but I guarantee if you click the radio button in front of your response it will tap. Thank you so very much. Also, they're in the handout. There is a reference handout there today that special. Don't typically have a third handout. I want to pull your attention to that because it does have. I want to take a look at the references and more that Nicole was talking about today. So that's for you to take along with you and to be able to get more education on this topic. Again, thank you so much. This does end our session today. Have a wonderful rest of your day.