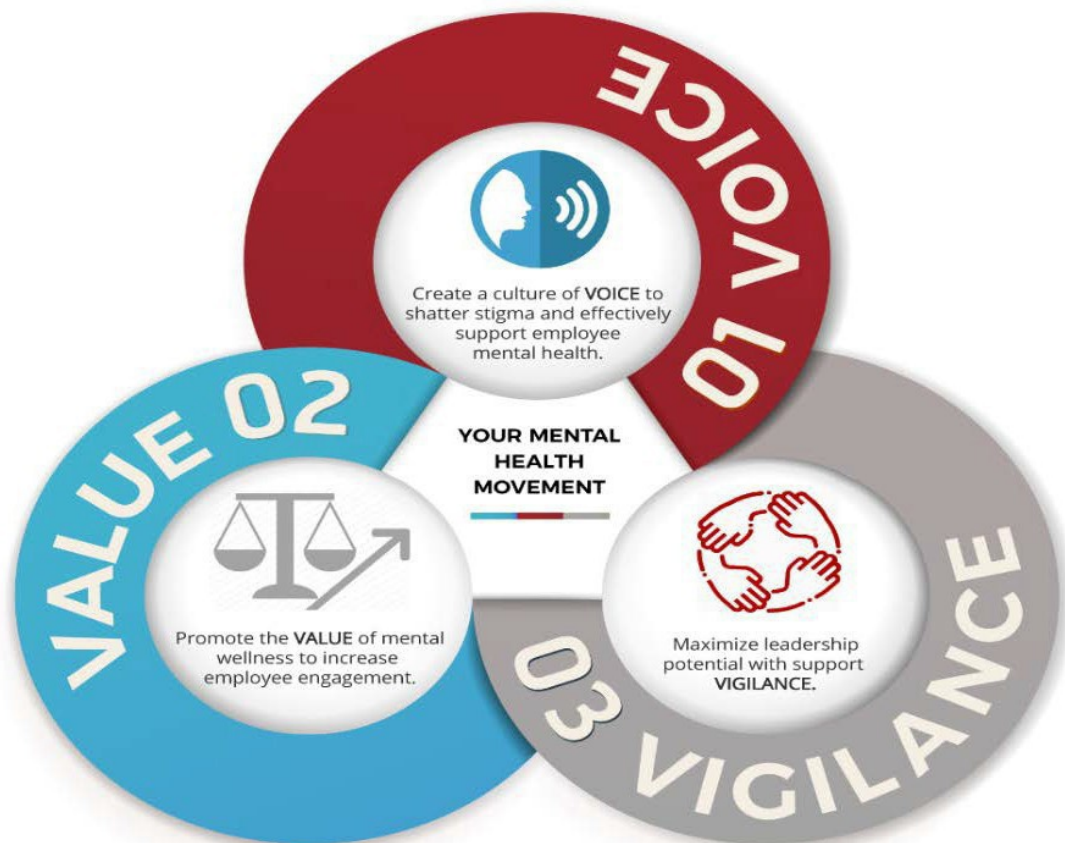


Leading Resilient Teams

How to Support Your Employees' Mental Health & Safety

With Mettie Spiess, CWP, A World Without Suicide Training & Consulting

You play a critical role in supporting employee mental well-being. Congratulations on taking these simple but critical steps to create a stigma-FREE culture within your team!



JOIN THE WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH MOVEMENT!

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Step 1: Create a Stigma-FREE Culture of VOICE

Individual Strategies:



Department Strategies:

General Notes:

Kick-Start Questions:

What VOICE strategy will I use immediately to support my team and reduce mental health stigma?

The "Dos" & "Don'ts" of Stigma-FREE Communication

<p>Do:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discuss the support that is available to employees (i.e. EAP, lifeline, hope textline, etc.). • Use the term <i>"died by suicide"</i> if an employee takes their own life. • When referring to a person with a medical condition say they <i>"live with _____"</i> instead of <i>"they are _____"</i>. • Allow the person to open up about what they are struggling with without providing judgment. • If a team member discloses that they are struggling with no suicidal intent, respond with: <i>"Thank you for your bravery in telling me (repeat statement). You are an important part of this team. Let's connect you with EAP to get you the support that you need" or "I am so sorry that you are struggling. How can I help?"</i> <p>NOTE: We will discuss responses for employees who disclose suicidal intent starting on page 6.</p>
<p>Do Not:</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say <i>"You were just kidding when you said you were going to kill yourself, right?"</i> • Use terms like <i>"crazy", "nuts", "druggie", etc.</i> • Say <i>"Don't you think you're being selfish?"</i> or <i>"You are just saying that for attention so you can get off work."</i> • Say <i>"No comment"</i> to employee who inquire about a team member after an on-site crisis. • Disclose the manner in which an employee died by/attempted suicide or any medical diagnosis you are made aware of with your team. • Say <i>"You need to take your medication."</i> or <i>"You need to be medicated."</i> • Use the term <i>"committed suicide"</i> • Diagnose the person (i.e. <i>"I think you're depressed."</i> or <i>"With your mood swings, I think you might be bipolar."</i>) <p>NOTE: Leave any diagnosis to a medical professional. As a leader, you can best support your team members by listening, acknowledging their struggle, and offering support resources that best meets their needs.</p>

Step 2: VALUE Employee Mental Health

Individual Strategies:

Department Strategies:

General Notes:

Support Resources for Your Team:

National Suicide Crisis Lifeline: (800) 273-TALK (8255)

Text HOPELINE: Text HOME to 741741

National Alliance on Mental Illness: NAMI.org

Digital Learning Library: Corporate.MettieSpiess.com

***“Daring leaders who live into their VALUES
are never silent about the hard things.”***

~Brene Brown

Step 3: Support VIGILANCE

***TAKE A BREAK FROM NOTE TAKING (YAY)!**

Risk Factors & Warning Signs	
Situational Factors:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chronic disease, disabilities, or pain disorders • Being an assault/abuse survivor • Loss of any major relationship (break-up or loss of friendship) • Feeling embarrassed or humiliated in front of peers • Death of a friend or family member, especially if by suicide • Sudden loss of freedom/fear of punishment • Major financial stress • Incarceration • Toxic work or personal relationships • Unemployment
Behavioral Warning Signs:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impulsivity/increased risk taking • Self-destructive acts (i.e., cutting, taking drugs, abusing alcohol) • Decline in job performance • Extreme perfectionism and/or overly obsessing about daily details • Changes in appearance (i.e. significant weight loss or weight gain, disheveled appearance particularly if the associate is normally very put together, etc.) • Giving away prized possessions • Being depressed or withdrawn for two or more weeks • Saying goodbyes/putting affairs in order • Dramatic mood swings or unprovoked outbursts of anger • Exhaustion and/or chronic sleep deprivation • Noticeable and ongoing forgetfulness or inability to concentrate
Verbal Clues:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “No one would care if I’m gone.” • “I just want out.” • “They’ll be sorry when I am gone.” • Ask what would happen to their benefits if they would die suddenly • Talking about death, dying, or suicide
Suicidal Mindsets:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Feeling like a burden • Feeling of not belonging • Feeling hopeless or futureless

Responding to & Supporting an Employee in Crisis

Step #1. Question

Calmly ask a question to gain insight into the person's frame of mind and to assess if they are a danger to themselves/anyone else. Below are examples of indirect and direct questions. Use the approach you are most comfortable with and that you think is appropriate for the specific situation.

- **Indirect Example:** "I've noticed you haven't been yourself. Are you okay?"
- **Direct Example:** "Are you considering suicide?" OR "Are you considering harming yourself?"

NOTE: After you ask this important question, allow the person to answer without interrupting them, and do your best not to panic as they answer. The person who is in distress will feed off your reaction. **If you panic the situation can escalate quickly.**

Step #2. Acknowledge Their Bravery & Pain

If the person opens about what they are struggling with, it's important to acknowledge their bravery and that their struggle is real.

- **Example:** "Thank you for trusting me and being so brave to tell me _____. I am so sorry you are in this pain."

Step #3. Reassure Your Support

Your team members need to know they are not alone in their fight to get well. Reassuring your support will help put the associate at ease while you go through the steps and reduce their risk for suicide.

- **Example:** "You are not alone in this fight. I can help direct you to support."

Step #4. Persuade the Associate to Accept Help

Individuals who accept help are less likely to attempt suicide and tend to recover more quickly than individuals who feel forced into getting help/treatment.

- **Example:** "Are you open to speaking with ____insert appropriate support resource here__?"

NOTE: Many employees will say “yes” when you ask the above question however some may say “no” due to fear and/or because they are not thinking clearly. If the associate answers “no”, listen to their resistance and continue to step 5.

Step #5. Meet Resistance with Truth *(This Step is Only Needed if the Person Denies Help)*

If they say, for example: “No. I will not call ___ because everyone on my team will find out and think I am crazy.” OR “No. I do not have money for treatment.” Listen to their fear and provide perspective.

- **Example:** You can say, “There is no cost to utilize ___ services, and it is confidential. You are an important part of our team, and I do not want to see anything happen to you. Let’s make this call to see what our next best step is to get you the help that you need.”

NOTE: This step is important to de-escalate crisis situations and transition the person from a crisis focused mindset to a recovery focused mindset.

Step #6. Refer to a Support Resource

- **Example when there is no self-harm intent:** “This is the.... (Hand the employee the available support resource that best meets their need) they can support you through this. Reaching out for help isn’t weak. It is the bravest thing you can do.”
- **If an employee discloses that they are suicidal** but they are not in immediate danger, bring the person to a private office so the person can connect to your EAP or other crisis service.
- **If there is imminent danger or the person has a weapon call 911 immediately.**

NOTE: This support resource is not to give or replace any medical, legal, or psychiatric intervention that is needed. Steps 1, 4, and 6 represent Dr. Paul Quinnett's QPR method.

Awareness to ACTION

Instructions and script for the **first person in crisis**

PLEASE READ:

For a lot of reasons, you have been feeling overwhelmed at work and at home. You have not slept a full night for the past month because you wake up with racing thoughts and anxiety about where your life is going. Your work performance has always been important to you but lately you've stopped caring.

You feel you like things will never get better and wonder if everyone would be better off if you weren't around. You've begun to think about how you would end your life.

START:

You are now talking with your coworker and say, "I don't think I can go on. I just want out."

Leader 1: Follow the six support steps that start on Page 6 (Responding & Supporting a Coworker in Crisis)

*******SWITCH ROLES*******

Instructions and script for the **second person in crisis**

PLEASE READ:

For the past month, you've been exhausted and irritable most of the time. This morning you lost your temper and almost hit your child. You've been depressed before, especially when a family member died a year ago. Now a relationship that meant a lot to you has ended, and you are feeling isolated and alone. Recently, you have been wishing the struggle of living would just end and that you could go to sleep and never wake up.

START:

You are now talking with a coworker and say, "Nothing I do makes a difference. I am just a number here and no one would care if I was gone."

Leader 2: Follow the six support steps that start on Page 6 (Responding & Supporting a Coworker in Crisis)

YOUR TEAM STIGMA-FREE DISCUSSION & ACTION GUIDE

Mental Health Misconceptions, Stigmas, or Challenges That Currently Exist Within my Team:

What Resources and Trainings are Available to Support My Team/ Department?:

Action Steps to Reduce Stigma and Achieve Your Top Two Priorities Within the Next 90 Days:

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____
