

# FUTURE OF BENEFITS STUDY

Majority of employers recognize employee mental health as a significant workplace issue and report stigma associated with mental illness prevents treatment.

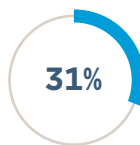
The Hartford's 2021 Future of Benefits Study surveyed U.S. workers and human resource benefit decision-makers in February 2021 and provides new insights into the state of mental health in the workplace. The national study revealed employers consider employee mental health as a significant workplace issue but are not in sync with employees around company culture and mental well-being.

## MENTAL HEALTH IS A WORKPLACE ISSUE



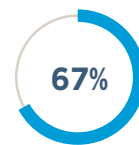
70% of U.S. employers recognized that employee mental health is a significant workplace issue - up from 59% in June 2020

## MENTAL HEALTH HAS A FINANCIAL IMPACT



31% of U.S. employers said the strain on employee mental health is having a severe or significant financial impact on their company, an 11-point increase from March 2020

## EMPLOYER READINESS



67% of U.S. employers said they feel prepared to deal with employee mental health issues, up from 64% in June 2020

## MENTAL HEALTH DIVIDE

The Hartford's national study revealed a continued divide between employers and employees on mental health in the workplace:



**79%**

of employers said they have an **open and inclusive environment** that encourages a dialogue about mental health, but only 52% of U.S. workers agree



**80%**

of employers said their company culture has been **more accepting of mental health challenges** in the past year, compared to 59% of U.S. workers



**80%**

of employers said **employees' mental health affects their productivity**, compared to 48% of U.S. workers



**77%**

of employers said leadership at their company **encourages conversations about mental health**, compared to 56% of U.S. workers

## FLEXIBILITY

Employees at their company have flexibility in their schedules for mental health help



## PRIVACY CONCERNS

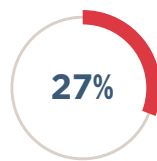
Have privacy concerns about sharing mental health information with my employer/co-workers



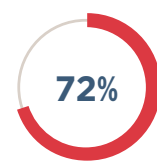
## MENTAL HEALTH VULNERABILITIES



of HR professionals now say they are experiencing significant workplace issues with substance misuse or addiction by employees, up from 36% in March 2020



of employees overall said they struggle with depression or anxiety most days or a few times a week, up from 20% in March 2020



of U.S. employers said burnout is a significant issue at their workplace

## MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

Mental health topics in the workplace will become less stigmatized as a result of the pandemic



**THE NATIONAL ALLIANCE ON MENTAL ILLNESS (NAMI) RECOMMENDS THREE ACTIONS TO BREAK DOWN STIGMA:**

**1. Learn the facts about mental health conditions.**



**Mental health conditions** are medical conditions that can impact a person's thinking, feeling or mood and may affect his or her ability to relate to others and function on a daily basis. They are common and treatable.

**72%**  
of employers report stigma associated with mental illness prevents employees from seeking help

**2. Use respectful, person first language to talk about mental health conditions.**



PERSON-FIRST LANGUAGE	NORMALIZING LANGUAGE	COLLOQUIAL LANGUAGE	LANGUAGE AROUND SUICIDE
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Person First means using language to recognize a person's experience with mental health as only part of them as a person, and not the whole.

**Productive Phrases**

- "A person living with schizophrenia."
- "My brother living with OCD."
- "She is a person recovering from addiction."

**Counterproductive Phrases**

- "A schizophrenic."
- "My OCD brother."
- "She is an addict."

Normalizing what one is going through and not minimizing or judging their experience with mental health can help people open up more regularly and feel less alone.

**Productive Phrases**

- "It's understandable to be feeling down with everything going on."
- "What you're going through is challenging."

**Counterproductive Phrases**

- "Depression is not a bad illness to have."
- "Some people have it way worse."
- "Why can't you just chill out?"

Words and phrases that are second-nature to us (slang or colloquial expressions) may be rooted in problematic assumptions, which can hurt those around us.

**Productive Phrases**

- "I'm having trouble focusing."
- "The weather is fluctuating a lot today."
- "I like things done in a particular way."
- "That's unreal."

**Counterproductive Phrases**

- "I have such ADD right now."
- "This weather is bipolar."
- "I'm so OCD about this kind of stuff."
- "That's crazy/insane."

As one of the most taboo topics, it's helpful to have the right language when talking about suicide. Research shows that talking about and explicitly asking about suicide can greatly reduce the risk of someone dying by suicide.

**Productive Phrases**

- "Died by suicide."
- "Ended their own life."
- "Attempted suicide."
- "That was so hard" (avoid mentioning suicide casually).

**Counterproductive Phrases**

- "Committed suicide."
- "Successful suicide."
- "Unsuccessful suicide."
- "OMG I wanted to kill myself, that was so hard."

**3. If you think someone is having trouble, refer them to NAMI or mental health programs and resources at your organization.**



**Potential warning signs**

- ➔ Changes in work performance
- ➔ Frequent absences or tardiness
- ➔ Becoming withdrawn or uncommunicative
- ➔ Confused thinking or problems concentrating/learning
- ➔ Prolonged or strong feelings of irritability or anger
- ➔ Difficulty understanding others

## EMPLOYERS CAN CREATE SUPPORTIVE WORKPLACES



73%  
of employers said managers have the appropriate training to assist employees who are seeking mental health support

- ➔ Educate managers and employees on mental health
- ➔ Offer flexibility in scheduling, which can make a big difference for an employee with a mental health condition
- ➔ Provide an Employee Assistance Program
- ➔ Foster a dialogue about mental health
- ➔ Communicate often about mental health benefits for employees and their families



**NAMI HELPLINE** - Find out what support is available in your community: (M-F 10 a.m to 8 p.m. ET) call **800-950-NAMI (6264)** or email [info@nami.org](mailto:info@nami.org)

**CRISIS TEXT LINE** - Connect to a trained crisis counselor 24/7 by texting NAMI to **741-741**

**NATIONAL SUICIDE PREVENTION LIFELINE** - Get immediate help for you or someone you know: **800-273-TALK (8255)**



### Methodology

The Hartford's 2021 Future of Benefits Study was fielded from Jan. 11 - Feb. 19, 2021 and included 617 employers and 1,005 employees. The previous two waves of the research were fielded in 2020. The first wave was fielded from Feb. 27 - March 13, 2020, just before the pandemic escalated in the United States, and included 761 employers and 1,503 employees.

The second wave was fielded from June 15 - June 30, 2020 and included 567 employers and 1,038 employees. The employers surveyed were HR professionals who manage/decide employee benefits and employees surveyed were actively employed. The margin of error is employer +/- 4% and employee +/-3% at a 95% confidence level.

