

EmployeeCare News

Issue 2, 2021



Combating COVID-19 with Resilience Dealing with Depression Post COVID-19



2020 was a year of lessons. Thanks to COVID-19, one of the biggest lessons was that we need to strengthen our awareness of mental health and coping mechanisms. The pandemic continues to cause widespread uncertainty. It has been a little over a year now, and we still are facing a high rate of mental health disparities. COVID-19 has caused an increase among various statistics, such as unemployment, suicide, depression, divorce, anxiety, and death, to name a few. As the reported numbers of COVID-positive cases and deaths begin to decline, we still must address the mental health stressors the pandemic has caused for our nation.

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic has become a risk factor for suicide. Per the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), suicide is defined as death caused by self-directed injurious behavior with intent to die because of the behavior. A suicide attempt is a non-fatal, self-directed, potentially injurious behavior with intent to die because of the behavior. A suicide attempt might not result in injury. Suicidal ideation refers to thinking about, considering, or planning suicide.

It has been reported that to date, the pandemic has generated numerous risk factors for suicide:

- Forced isolation and reduction of social contacts;
- A state of collective alert, accentuated by the absence of definitive therapies;
- Economic problems;
- Fear of being infected or infecting other people;
- Risk of stigma for COVID-positive individuals;
- Increase in hospitalizations and deaths, without permission to visit patients in the hospital, conduct funeral ceremonies, or see the bodies;

- Risk of intradomestic violence during quarantine;
- Risk of alcohol or drug abuse during isolation;
- Reduction of access to treatment for psychiatric or long-term patients with other non-COVID-19 pathologies; and
- Possible posttraumatic stress disorder for health care professionals (Aquila et al., 2020).

COVID-19 therefore is creating severe stress in the population from a health, economic, political, and social point of view, causing a radical change in everyone's daily life. (Aquila et al., 2020).

5 Warning Signs of Suicide

1. Self-harm
2. Extreme depression
3. Uncharacteristic mood swings
4. Withdrawing
5. Tying up loose ends

5 Warning Signs of Depression

1. A shift in sleep patterns
2. Excessive anxiety and irritability
3. Frequent feelings of hopelessness and helplessness paired with uncontrollable bouts of tears
4. A lack of interest in activities and hobbies that once were exciting
5. Isolation

EmployeeCare

Keeping you informed from EmployeeCare, your employee assistance program, a benefit extended by your organization to all employees and their household members. Some exceptions related to the terms of each individual company contract may apply.

3170 Kettering Blvd.
Building B
Dayton, OH 45439

We have satellite offices in Eaton, Springboro, Troy, Greenville, and at Miami Valley Hospital South.

8 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mon. - Thurs.
8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Fri.

All counselors provide evening appointment times.

(937) 208-6626 or
(800) 628-9343
(24-hour, toll free)

Services Include:

- Voluntary, confidential assessments. Short-term counseling and referral services for employees and household members covering a wide range of issues. Services are free and number of accesses unlimited.
- Substance abuse and wellness education groups
- In-service for sexual harassment, diversity, violence in the workplace
- Workplace wellness
- 24-hour crisis phone service
- Substance abuse trainings that meet state and Bureau of Worker Compensation requirements for drug free workplaces

We all must do our part individually to benefit collectively and to help reform the mental health social construct. Taking advantage of mental health trainings and seminars via work or on personal time is essential. Mental Health First Aid is a great resource, especially during the pandemic.

Just as CPR helps you assist an individual having a heart attack, Mental Health First Aid helps you assist someone who is experiencing a mental health or substance use-related crisis. In the Mental Health First Aid course, you will learn risk factors and warning signs for mental health and addiction concerns, strategies for how to help someone in both crisis and non-crisis situations, and where to turn for help.

Below is an acronym, (ALGEE), that is used as a five-step action plan to help intervene with those needing mental health assistance. Mental Health First Aid teaches about recovery and resiliency – the belief that individuals experiencing these challenges can and do get better and use their strengths to stay well (mentalhealthfirstaid.org).

ALGEE:

Assess for risk of suicide or harm

Listen nonjudgmentally

Give reassurance and information

Encourage appropriate professional help

Encourage self-help and other support strategies

References:

Aquila, I., Sacco, M. A., Ricci, C., Gratteri, S., Montebianco Abenavoli, L., Oliva, A., & Ricci, P. (2020). The Role of the COVID-19 Pandemic as a Risk Factor for Suicide: What Is Its Impact on the Public Mental Health State Today? *Psychological Trauma: Theory, Research, Practice & Policy*, 12, S120–S122. <https://doi-org.ezp.waldenulibrary.org/10.1037/tra0000616>



If you are in crisis call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline

(800) 273-TALK (8255) Toll Free
24 hours a day, seven days a week

The service is available to anyone. All calls are confidential.



Need counseling?

Call EmployeeCare at **(937) 208-6626** or
(800) 628-9343



For more information

Visit **SuicidePreventionLifeline.org** or
MentalHealthFirstAid.org