



**Mental Health
Awareness Month**

Together in Well-Being

MIND • HEART • BODY • SPIRIT

Mental Health Awareness Toolkit

for

Leaders, Managers, and Supervisors

Table of Contents

Introduction & Background..... 3

Getting Started.....4

- 1. Increase Awareness Through Communication.....5 - 9
 - a. Highlight Mental Health Services
 - b. Share Educational Resources
- 2. Provide Opportunities for Growth Through Workshops and Training.....10 - 11
 - a. Workshops
 - b. Training
- 3. Build a Culture of Connection, Community, & Caring.....12 - 13
 - a. Group Exercise
 - b. Department-Led Well-Being Activities

Additional Support Resources.....13 - 14

References.....15

Introduction

Mental health is a key component of overall well-being, and employers play a vital role in supporting their employees. Positively impacting employee mental health can help attract and retain top talent, boost productivity and performance, foster an inclusive and safe workplace culture, and ultimately reduce healthcare costs. The opportunity to improve workplace mental health exists at all levels of an organization.

Background

Mental health conditions are common, [affecting 1 in 5 adults](#), approximately 59 million individuals, and equate to approximately 20% of City and County and San Francisco employees. [73% of employees](#) report that work-related mental health struggles negatively impact their productivity, and approximately [1/3 of U.S. workers](#) state that work-related stress and burnout are one of their top stressors. Key contributors include excessive workloads, inadequate staffing, and insufficient recognition. [In 2024, 89% of employees](#) across the six countries experienced at least one mental health challenge in the past year, yet only [47% received care](#). Additionally, a recent poll conducted by the [National Alliance on Mental Illness](#) found that just over half of the workforce knows how to access their mental healthcare benefits.

The City and County of San Francisco provide resources to help employees, co-workers, and leaders make a positive difference. Additionally, all city Health Plan providers include mental health and substance abuse benefits that are available to all enrolled employees without going through their primary care physician.

Department Leaders, managers, and supervisors can foster a positive workplace culture by making employee well-being and mental health organizational priorities. Get started today and take action to provide information that raises awareness and improves access to mental health services. Create a supportive workplace culture that can help break down stigma.

Getting Started

Employees look to their leaders for support and to create a culture of caring. By implementing this toolkit, your department can create a workplace environment that normalizes and supports employees' mental health through communication, learning, modeling, and compassion.

This toolkit guides on building a mental health-friendly workplace and helping employees access resources to improve well-being in three key focus areas:

1. Increase Awareness Through Communication
2. Provide Opportunities for Growth Through Workshops and Training
3. Build a Culture of Connection, Community, & Caring

We recommend that your leadership team start with focus area number one above and build upon it over time. Your department can further develop this well-being initiative by developing a strategic plan for long-term impact. For assistance with the implementation of this toolkit, the SFHSS Well-Being Division is available.

Connect with EAP

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers free and confidential services to help employees problem-solve and develop skills to meet life's challenges.

Guidance Resource Consultants are available 24/7 for consultation and referral. Call (628) 652-4600. Visit www.guidanceresources.com, create an account, and enter ID code SFHSS for more resources.

Services Offered:

- **Individual Counseling:** Emotional stress and mental health issues can affect your work performance, personal life, and physical health. Getting help early can make a difference. Confidential FREE counseling is available to all active CCSF, USD, CRT, and CCD employees.
- **Couple Counseling:** Relationship issues can affect your overall sense of well-being and your ability to function well at work and at home. Couple Counseling can help you and your partner understand your relationship better, improve communication or make changes in your relationship.
- **Consultation and Referrals:** If you have a problem and are not sure if counseling is right for you, call and speak to a Guidance Consultant.

Increase Awareness Through Communication

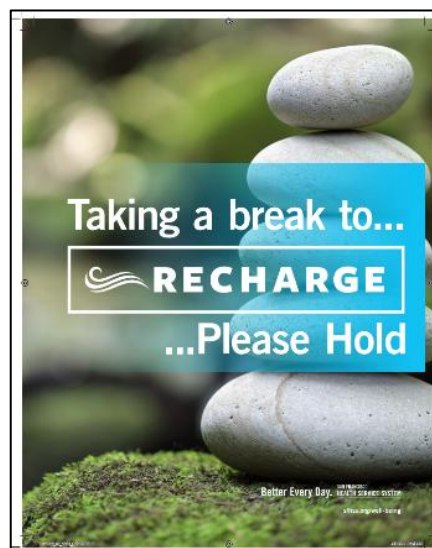
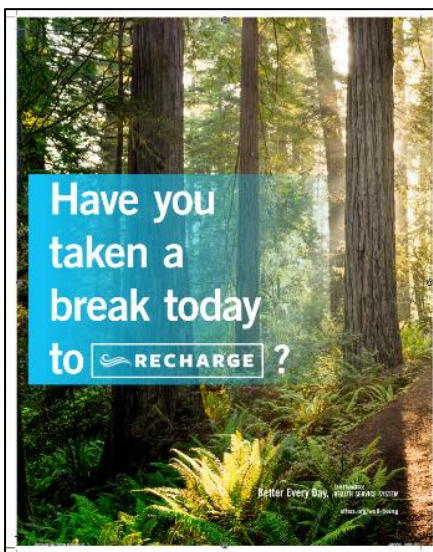
22% of employees at the manager level report that they don't know whether their employer offers mental health benefits. Increasing the visibility and accessibility of these resources helps demonstrate your organization's commitment to supporting employees in being proactive about their well-being. To raise awareness, organizations are encouraged to develop a communication strategy that considers their workforce, identifies the most effective communication platforms, and creates consistency through frequent messaging.

Take action by communicating at least once a month through a minimum of three different platforms. This could include email, posting print materials in high-traffic areas, incorporating messages into all-staff meetings or team huddles, discussing resources in one-on-one meetings, or utilizing a shared drive or Microsoft Teams channel.

Explore these resources and share them across your organization.

Highlight Mental Health Services

1. Send a Department-Wide Email. [Download](#) and use this template to get started.
2. Share a [video](#) on how to navigate your mental health benefits in a department meeting.
3. Post Flyers or Distribute Information. Rotate your flyers so that they keep them fresh with new content. Click the image to download and print the file.



[Break Signs](#)

Health Plan Resources and Benefits

There is no yearly or lifetime dollar limit for essential mental health benefits. Deductibles, co-payments, coinsurance, out-of-pocket limits, number of days or visits covered and any pre-authorization of treatment must be the same for mental health and medical/surgical services. Visit sfhss.org/using-your-benefits for more information.

<p>Blue Cross of California Life/Health: 24/7 (800) 985-2405 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services (877) 263-9952</p>	<p>Health Net Behavioral Health (833) 995-2567 Website: nhn.com Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services: healthnet.com/ehhs, or call the Mental Health Benefits number 833-996-2567 (TTY: 711)</p>	<p>Support Groups and Classes: www.kaiserpermanente.org TelePhone/Online coaching: (866) 862-4255 Mental Health and Substance Abuse Services: (800) 464-4000</p>
--	--	--

Free Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being Apps

<p>Wellness360 - Free online platform that provides access to well-being apps.</p> <p>Headspace - One-on-one coaching, therapy, and auditory services alongside guided meditations, sleep content, and mindfulness tips. Visit getheadspace.com to learn more.</p>	<p>myStrength - Online app to help you manage stress, anxiety, chronic pain, and more. Track your health, enjoy activities, and become inspired.</p> <p>Understanding by Stories - A digital mental well-being program designed to help you better understand how your mind works, reduce stress, and build healthier habits. Visit sfhss.org/individualbenefits/health/understanding-by-stories.html for more information.</p>	<p>Calm - Increase sleep, relaxation, and mindfulness with guided meditations, stories, music, soundscapes and more.</p> <p>Headspace - Get one-on-one with an emotional support coach anytime, anywhere. Guided meditations, sleep content, and mindfulness tips are also available. Support is just a text message away. Go to www.kaiserpermanente.org/health/health</p>
--	--	---

Better Every Day. San Francisco Health Service System

Mental Health Benefits Flyer

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)

Guidance Consultants Are Available 24/7 to provide a free confidential assessment and referral.

Call: (628) 652-4600

Services Include:

- Short-term solution-focused counseling for individuals and couples
- Consultation for individuals
- Critical incident response
- Workshops and trainings

Your mental health is as important as your physical health.

If you think you need help, call: (628) 652-4600

WE'RE HERE For You

SAN FRANCISCO HEALTH SERVICE SYSTEM sfhss.org

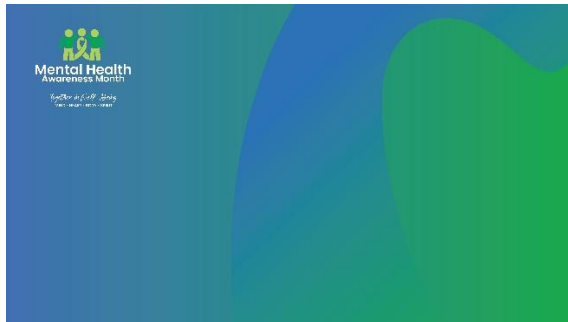
EAP Flyer



Journey Map – No Wrong Door

Show Support. There are several ways to show your support as a leader. Simple gestures, such as adding a mental health logo to your email signature or website, or virtual background during Mental Health Awareness Month in May, wearing a green ribbon pin, or sharing personal stories, can help create a workplace culture where employees feel safe discussing their well-being. Small actions make a big impact in fostering a supportive work environment.

Download and implement a resource below:



[Virtual Background V1](#)



[Virtual Background V2](#)



[Logo V1](#)



[Logo V2](#)



[Banner](#)

Reach out to SFHSS for other visual reminders that are available for employees to show their support. Please note that supplies may be limited. To request resources, email the Well-Being team at well-being@sfgov.org.

Share Educational Resources

Meditation Videos

Taking just a few moments each day to pause and breathe can make a big difference in your mental and emotional well-being. These short meditation videos—ranging from just 90 seconds to a few minutes—are designed to help you find calm, clarity, and connection wherever you are in your journey. Visit sfhss.org/meditation-videos to explore:






- 90-Second Meditation
- Meditation for Beginners
- Meditation for Sleep
- Healing and Recovery Meditation
- Anxiety Relief Meditation
- Trauma Informed Meditation

Guided Breathing and Stretching Videos

RECHARGE Breathe - sfhss.org/well-being/take-time-breathe

RECHARGE Stretch - sfhss.org/well-being/take-time-stretch

Web Resources

EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM	sfhss.org/were-here-for-you sfhss.org/first-responder-resources
 ComPsych	www.guidanceresources.com/groNg/#/login (ID SFHSS) pages.e2ma.net/pages/1807892/45831
 HelpGuide.org	www.helpguide.org/
 Greater Good Science Center	greatergood.berkeley.edu/
 SAMHSA Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration	www.samhsa.gov/
 NAMI National Alliance on Mental Illness	www.nami.org/
 NIH National Institute of Mental Health	www.nimh.nih.gov/
 Psychology Today	www.psychologytoday.com/us

Using Your Benefits

Explore tools and resources available to support you. Visit sfhss.org/Using-Your-Benefits/mental-health-emp



Print Materials

Post signs to remind employees to take breaks, breathe, and stretch. Click the links below to download and print the file.



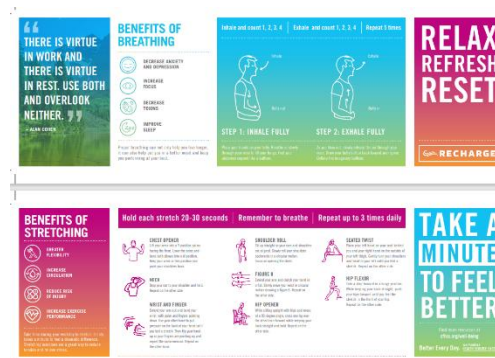
[Breathe Poster](#)

[Stretch Poster](#)

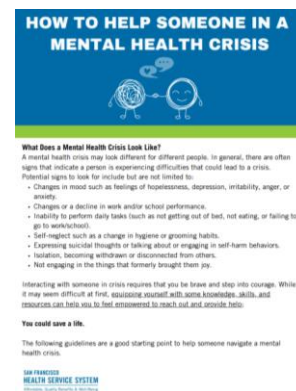
[Breath and Stretch Handout](#)



[Just Breathe Posters](#)



[Breath & Stretch Pocket Guide](#)



[Mental health crisis handout](#)

Provide Opportunities for Growth through Workshops and Training

When employees receive training on mental health and mental health care benefits, they report a [10-point decrease](#) in their concerns about being judged for sharing their mental health stories with colleagues. In addition, employees at workplaces offering mental health training are [less likely to report a decline](#) in productivity due to mental health challenges.

SFHSS offers a variety of webinars, training, and workshops to educate employees about mental health, stress in the workplace, self-care, communication, and so much more. Empower your team to thrive by investing in employee wellbeing. Act today and make mental health a priority by equipping your employees with the tools they need to succeed and stay well. Explore training and workshops available and plan, as most courses require 8 weeks to 90 days of lead time. If you're unsure where to begin, refer to the workshops and training courses in **bold**.

Mental Health Workshops

The workshops offered are FREE and range from self-paced web-based to in-person or virtual formats. They typically last between two hours and four hours and include interactive learning, role playing, and scenarios to provide hands-on experience. Recommended workshops to support employee mental health include:

Workshop Title	Target Audience	Description
Mental Health First Aid Introduction	All active employees	A 2-hour self-paced online course that covers workplace well-being, reducing stigma, supporting colleagues, and building resilience and self-care skills.
Mental Health First Aid Certification 2.0	All active employees	An instructor-led training where employees practice the skills needed to recognize and respond to a co-worker who may be experiencing a noncrisis or crisis mental health or substance use challenge – and connect them with the appropriate resources in accordance with company policies. Upon completion, learners will receive a certification in MHFA at Work. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prerequisite: MHFA Intro, for all employees • Virtual/in-person • 4 hours

Mental Health First Aid Transform	Leaders, Managers, and Supervisors	<p>An interactive workshop for HR professionals and leaders from different departments to discuss their organization's current mental health culture and create a cohesive strategy to address factors that may be impacting the workforce on their path to a healthy workplace culture that enhances employee well-being.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 hours • Prerequisites: MHFA Intro and Certification • For leaders and HR professionals • Virtual/in-person
-----------------------------------	------------------------------------	--

Download the full list of [mental health and emotional well-being offerings](#) to learn more about training requirements and learning objectives.

Training

The training offered covers a wide range of topics and can be delivered either in person or virtually. Sessions typically last between 45 and 60 minutes and address areas such as management support, personal development, legal and financial support, communication skills, behavioral health and wellness, and resilience, among others.

For a full list of well-being activities offered through SFHSS Well-Being, download the [Activity Description List](#).

Requesting a Workshop/Training

Follow these steps to request a workshop or training.

Step 1: Determine the workshop or training you'd like to offer for your employees. If you are interested in a workshop or training provided by the SFHSS Well-being, please contact them directly at well-being@sfgov.org to determine the best workshop or training for your team.

Step 2: Identify the preferred day, time, and location for the workshop or training.

Step 3: Complete the online [Event Request Form](#).

Please allow an 8 - 12 week lead time. Confirmations could take up to 10 business days.

Build a Culture with Connection, Community, & Caring

Work-related stress is the leading stressor for adults in the US and is linked to poor mental health. One in four employees in the US says they have considered quitting their jobs due to mental health concerns, and the [US economy spends more than \\$280 billion annually](#) on mental health costs.

Over our lifetime, we spend over [1/3 of our lives, or 90,000 hours, at work](#). We spend more time with those we work with than with those who are family and friends. Implementing positive leadership practices can serve as a foundation for building and maintaining a positive organizational environment. Positive leadership practices play an important role in influencing workplace culture and employee attitudes toward mental health. Emphasizing the importance of improved mental health in the workplace helps to shape employee perceptions of the organization's commitment to whole health and well-being and serves to destigmatize mental health issues.

[91% of employees](#) say mental health care benefits are important in creating a positive workplace culture. Begin to create a healthy workplace culture that focuses on connection, community, and caring by providing employees opportunities to support their well-being when they need it. Allow community and team building opportunities and recognize and appreciate your employees on a regular basis. Focus on consistency and showing this through actions by walking the walk. What are you going to do today?

Explore and consider implementing the following activities at a minimum of once a month.

Group Exercise Classes are a great way to bring people together, focusing on the mind and body. Classes like Tai Chi, Meditation, Yoga/Chair Yoga, and Stretching help mental health and overall well-being. Bringing an activity to an all-staff meeting or group huddle, dedicating one day a month to offering a class, or simply providing opportunities for employees to engage in activities, can lead to a culture of caring. SFHSS Well-Being offers free group exercise classes for active city employees. For more information on how to request a class visit: sfhss.org/well-being/WB-activities.

Department-led activities can bring groups of individuals together, build social connections, and create opportunities for developing meaningful relationships. Organizational leaders must be proactive in dedicating time, creating spaces, and offering programs to break down the walls of mental health stigma. Check out some of the ideas below to get started.

1. Implement a Mental Health Fair. Work with SFHSS Well-Being to bring in various city departments, health plan partners, and vendors to provide interactive activities and materials that support mental health for employees.

2. Offer a Recess Break. [Download the Instant Recess toolkit](#) to learn more.
3. Implement a 1-minute mental well-being break in all meetings or focus on a day of the week, such as Well-Being Wednesday, and offer an activity.
4. Bring together small groups to have open dialogue around mental health. Leverage the SFHSS EAP team to support you.
5. Offer a scavenger hunt where small groups of employees can get out and find specific landmarks around their work location or focus on items colored green to show support for mental health.
6. Create a pop-up wellness space in different areas throughout your workspace that allows individuals to relax and de-stress. Provide puzzles, coloring books, or simply create a RECHARGE space that is conducive for someone to find a quiet place to recharge. Download the [RECHARGE Space toolkit](#) to learn more.
7. Organize a community/department art project. Ask employees to bring in art supplies such as paint, pens, paintbrushes, canvases, paper, etc. Have employees create a vision board or provide a prompt, such as things that bring you joy, and ask them to paint something that supports that prompt. Bring together everyone's art and display it collectively in an open space for others to see.
8. Offer teambuilding activities. Sometimes something as simple as an icebreaker can help to get people talking and learning about each other, which fosters a culture of caring. Download this [list of icebreakers](#) and find the right ones for your department.
9. Have your employee learn and role-play by listening using the [rules of R.A.S.A.](#)
10. Make opportunities to recognize and appreciate employees. This can be done through peer-to-peer recognition, manager-to-employee, or department-wide. Download the [Recognition and Appreciation Guide](#).

Explore what others are doing and check out department [Well-Being@Work Spotlights](#) that are submitted by many of the city departments, which highlight the activities they are bringing to their workforce that support well-being.

Additional Resources

There are many additional resources that you can implement to support employee well-being. Consider allowing employees flex time to attend well-being activities and events. To understand how employees can use their accrued time to engage in well-being activities, download and review the [DHR Well-Being Memo](#). For questions, reach out to your Department Personnel Officer (DPO).

The City provides policies and resources that directly support the mental health and well-being of our workforce. If you are interested in how to support your workforce related to the policies outlined, please reach out to well-being@sfgov.org.

1. Support employees in their journey to find a work/life balance through the implementation of the [Telecommute Policy](#). Not only does it increase productivity, but it can also improve employee morale and job satisfaction, and decrease energy consumption while being an efficient use of City resources. Additionally, under the Family Friendly Workplace Ordinance, employees can request changes to the terms and conditions of their employment that provide flexibility or scheduling predictability to assist with caregiving responsibilities.
2. Support lactating mothers as they return to work after giving birth. Provide them with information on the [Lactation Policy](#) webpage, where they can read the policy, download the Request for Lactation Accommodation Form, locate a lactation space offered at City worksites, and review a breastfeeding support guide. Encourage employees to contact SFHSS EAP to support their transition back to work
3. Create an environment where people feel safe to come to work. [According to the Psychological Association](#), in 2022, more than two-in-five workers reported that health and safety concerns negatively affected their stress level at work. Ensure your department has a [Workplace Violence Prevention Plan](#) and that employees have read and understand the plan. Ensuring employees understand their respective departments' Workplace Violence Prevention Plans enhances their safety, security, and well-being at work by creating a structured and proactive approach to preventing and addressing workplace violence.
4. Ensure that every individual is treated with civility and dignity, free from disrespectful behavior. Commit to creating a safe, healthy, and respectful workplace for all employees by implementing the [Equitable, Fair, and Respectful Workplace Policy](#) in your department. This includes having discussions about the policy and coming up with team agreements to foster collaboration, communication, and accountability. Train your managers on how to implement the policy, review the policy annually with employees, and post posters throughout your workspace using resources from the [Get on Board With Respect Campaign](#) webpage.

References

1. [More than 1 in 4 workers don't know if they have mental healthcare benefits, survey finds](#)
2. [MHA - 2024 Workplace Wellness Research](#)
3. [CDC - Protecting the Nation's Mental Health](#)
4. [US Surgeon General Report: Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being](#)
5. [The 2025 NAMI Workplace Mental Health Poll](#)
6. [Employees want more workplace mental health resources](#)
7. [NAMI - Stigma Free](#)
8. [NAMI Stigma Free Guides](#)
9. [NAMI Annual Survey](#)
10. [Workers appreciate and seek mental health support in the workplace - American Psychological Association](#)
11. [Campfire Experiences for Connection](#)
12. [Emotional Intelligence in Organizations](#)
13. [Employee Mental Health at a Crossroads](#)
14. [Organizational Best Practices Supporting Mental Health in the Workplace](#)
15. [The Economic Cost of Mental Disorders - National Library of Medicine](#)
16. [Mental Health and the Economy -- It's Costing Us Billions](#)
17. [2025 State of Workforce Mental Health Report - Lyra](#)
18. [Workplace Stress](#)