

The Impact of Mental Health in the Workplace

Introduction:

Two employees have an informal chat about mental health in the workplace, with one employee providing the other with important information and next steps.

Learning Objectives:

- Recognize the prevalence of stress and mental health issues being experienced by adults in the U.S.
- Identify some of the specific ways employees' mental health impacts the workplace.
- Identify two steps you can take to support mental health in the workplace.

Outline:

- Prevalence of stress and mental health issues
- Mental health is part of the workplace
- You don't know what someone is dealing with on a given day
- How employees' mental health impacts the workplace
- Two steps everyone can take to support mental health in the workplace
- Resources

Characters:

- Alejandra – Latina female, a person of size, dressed professionally, in a middle management type leadership position, been with the company more than five years.
- Kai – Asian male, snappy dresser, younger generation, employee newer to the company.

Color Palette: Office – neutrals, Characters – jewel tone clothing or similar colors to stand out from background.

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1. Intro – Kai goes to see Alejandra			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
Open office area. Alejandra is sitting at her desk and working on the computer.	Kai: Hi Alejandra, I brought some coffee to perk up your day. What are you working on? Alejandra: Thank you Kai. I'm just typing up some notes for a presentation I'll be giving on mental health.	Alejandra is typing. Kai walks over to Alejandra's desk and puts the coffee on her desk. Alejandra stands up and moves around to the front of the desk to talk with Kai.	

2. Prevalence of Mental Health Issues			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
Still in in the office.	Kai: Ughhh, great. Alejandra: Um, what was that sound you just made? Is there something you want to say about my presentation? Kai: Look, no judgment, I just don't know why everyone wants to talk about their personal business nowadays. I don't think there's a need to talk about mental health. Alejandra: Actually, I think we don't talk about it enough, which is one of the reasons why there's still such a stigma around mental health. Do you know that nearly one in five adults in the U.S. live with mental illness? And beyond	Alejandra moves her hands when she talks to emphasize points. Kai's movements and expressions vary, from somewhat defensive at first to listening to surprise at some of the statistics, then listening again.	

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	<p>that, almost seventy five percent of people have stress that affects their mental health and their relationships with others. That's three out of every four people. With numbers like that, this isn't something to be ignored.</p> <p>Kai: Okay, fine, those numbers ARE high. I just still don't understand why mental health has to be part of the workplace.</p> <p>Alejandra: Kai, it already IS part of the workplace whether you realize it or not. We're all human and what we are experiencing in our lives doesn't just go away when we walk through the doors to this building.</p>		
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3. Close Up Conversation			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
<p>Still in in the office. Zoom in slowly on Alejandra and Kai as they are talking.</p>	<p>Alejandra: When I came in today, I said, "Hi, how are you doing?" to each person I saw. Everyone gave a similar response, saying they were okay.</p> <p>Alejandra: But the fact is, we often don't really know what someone is dealing with on any given day. What's behind that simple one-word response of</p>	<p>Alejandra and Kai adjust their position to face forward. It as if Alejandra is also addressing the viewer when she speaks now. Alejandra moves her hands when</p>	

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	<p>“okay” can be completely different from person to person.</p>	<p>she talks to emphasize points. Kai is listening.</p> <p>Have a notable transition to next scene to indicate to learner we are changing locations and are inside Alejandra’s head as she remembers her morning and describes it to Kai.</p>	
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4. A View from Above			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
<p>Building lobby (this scene has soft edges to give the illusion of a memory). An image of Alejandra and Kai still talking in her office can be seen in the upper left-hand corner. The scene below illustrates what she is saying to Kai.</p> <p>In the lobby, employees walk in both directions. Four employees will be featured and they will have thought bubbles over their heads with images representing what Alejandra is saying. The four employees have neutral expressions on their face as they walk through the lobby.</p>	<p>Alejandra: When someone says they are “okay” what they might mean is “My day is going well, and I’m excited to go out to dinner with my spouse tonight”. But it could also mean “I’m so behind on my bills. I just need to make it to payday before they shut off my electricity”. Or they might mean “I’m overwhelmed trying to juggle my new work responsibilities, being a new father, and taking care of my aging parents”. Or even “I struggled to get out of bed today. I feel like I’m going through every day in a fog.”</p>	<p>Employees walking through lobby.</p> <p>Thought bubbles with graphics in them appear / disappear for four of the employees.</p> <p>At end of this scene, have a notable transition to the next.</p>	

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5. What to Do			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
<p>Back in the office at Alejandra’s desk, she and Kai continue their conversation.</p>	<p>Kai: Wow. I guess I didn’t really give much thought to it before. Alejandra: Well, I’m glad we’re having this conversation then! Look, we may not know what someone else is going through, but it’s important to at least be aware of how many people may be struggling with mental health and stress, and it’s also important to understand the impact of that in the workplace. Kai: So, what actually is the impact? Alejandra: Well, studies have shown that poor mental health and stress can negatively affect an employee’s job performance and their productivity. It can also affect their engagement with their work, communication with coworkers, as well as their physical capability and their day-to-day functioning. Kai: That sounds serious. Alejandra: You’re right. It can be serious, and some mental illnesses like depression are even associated with higher rates of disability and unemployment. Also, only about half of employees that report moderate</p>	<p>Kai has a concerned expression on his face. Both he and Alejandra’s expressions and poses vary throughout the conversation to align with what is being said or heard by each character.</p> <p>Transition to resources screen after last scene of Kai and Alejandra talking.</p>	

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	<p>to severe depression receive treatment to manage it.</p> <p>Kai: I can't believe I didn't know any of this. What do we do?</p> <p>Alejandra: We have a lot of great resources in place for employees to support their mental health, but unfortunately, only about half of employees report actually knowing about these resources and even fewer say they would be comfortable using those company resources and services.</p> <p>Kai: Why do you think that's the case?</p> <p>Alejandra: When it comes to resource utilization, I think it goes back to how there's still a stigma attached to mental illness and that can be particularly difficult for someone to deal with in the workplace. There's a lot of work to be done, but two steps that everyone can take to support mental health in the workplace are making time to better understand mental health issues and increasing their knowledge on available resources.</p> <p>Kai: Thanks Alejandra, this really gave me a lot to think about. I can definitely make some time to</p>		
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	<p>learn more about mental health issues, and I'm going to look at some of the company's resources and services for mental health so I'll be more informed in the future.</p> <p>Alejandra: That's great Kai. Thanks for listening and being willing to have this conversation! That's a big deal. Everyone can help make a difference by better understanding mental health and creating a more supportive work environment.</p>		
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6. Resources			
Visuals/Graphic	Script/Audio	Programming/Animation Notes	Comments
<p>A large computer screen with the following information on it. Create custom image of employee wellness dashboard with mental health resources links.</p> <p>[header] Visit our company's EmployeeNet for resources</p>	<p>No narration, just background music.</p>	<p>Upbeat music comes on in time with the Resources scene.</p> <p>Fade scene and music out.</p>	