



Lift the Mask at Work

CORPORATE MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS PROGRAM / 2020

ABOUT THE QUELL FOUNDATION

The Quell Foundation strives to reduce the number of suicides, overdoses and incarceration of people with mental health illness. We work to accomplish this by encouraging people to share their stories, increasing access to mental health services, providing a pipeline of future mental health care professionals with scholarships, and training first responders to recognize mental health crisis warning signs amongst their own. The Quell Foundation aims to normalize the conversation around mental health illness.

LIFTING THE MASK AT WORK

The purpose of this guide is to help develop a socially responsible team of working professionals who understand the implications and strive to eradicate the stigma of mental health in the workplace. This guide offers a glimpse into the issues of untreated mental illness in the workplace. It provides talking points and strategies for corporate leadership to create an environment of awareness, acceptance, prevention, and recovery in three steps of implementation.

Awareness

Assess the current culture of your office with anonymous, pre, and post-implementation surveys. Educate managers and employees of the issues surrounding mental health, which is critical to generating a stigma-free culture of empathy, understanding, and support.

Access

Offer a comprehensive, affordable array of support and services, ensuring that each employee is comfortable and familiar with how and who to contact for help.

Training

Empower employees, team leads, and managers at all levels to identify warning signs and provide peer support and guidance in seeking help.

The core component of the Lift the Mask at Work program includes a 20-minute short film of The Quell Foundation's educational documentary, a brief overview/presentation of the issues and interactive panel discussion with representatives from The Quell Foundation and your company's EAP/HR department.

ABOUT THE ISSUE

In a society that benefits from spectacular advancements in medicine, why does mental illness go untreated? Imagine if you or someone you knew with diabetes, cancer, asthma or another physical illness went without seeing a medical professional or receiving a treatment plan. This is the current situation with mental health.

The reasons for this are varied and complex. In the U.S., the wealthiest country on Earth, mental health is stigmatized unlike any other disease, and there is a shortage of mental health care providers leaving homes, emergency rooms and prisons to become de facto mental health care facilities.

More than 500 million people on this planet live with a mental illness, yet under one-fifth of them are in treatment.¹ Treatment for the most common conditions is effective 80% of the time, yet only 33% of the people who need help, will get it because of the societal stigma; the fear of repercussions at work; and the lack of access to quality, affordable treatment.²

Stigma associated with a mental health diagnosis perpetuates a lack of recognition and understanding of the nature of mental illness. Those diagnosed often experience many challenges in accessing care and support because their condition is often misunderstood as a character flaw or "bad behavior." Only 25 percent of people living with mental health issues feel like others are caring or sympathetic about their condition.³

While many do not think of mental illness as a life-threatening condition, the suicide rate in the U.S. increased by over 28 percent in the past two decades, and today it is the second leading cause of death for Americans 13 to 34 years old. Since the beginning of the financial crisis in 2008, the rate has risen by 16 %.⁴ Many of these deaths are preventable with proper mental health treatment.

1 (RichardLayardFounder, LondonSchoolofEconomics)

2 WorkplaceMentalHealth.org 2016

3 (Disparities in Health Care Utilization and Functional Limitations Among Adults With Serious Psychological Distress, 2006–2014)

4 CDC 2018

BUSINESS IMPACT

According to the Journal of Clinical Psychiatry¹, depression alone costs employers over \$200 billion annually as more than half of employees with depression do not recognize the need for treatment. This is an indirect cost incurred by employers and the American economy. Mental health conditions also commonly co-occur with other medical illnesses such as cancer, diabetes, and heart disease, but effective integration of medical and behavioral health could save \$26-\$48 billion annually in healthcare costs.

The 2019 Mind the Workplace Report by Mental Health America and FAAS Foundation discovered that Supervisor communication and a company culture of safe and open communication are correlated with an employee's motivation, confidence, and pride. 66% of workplace issues negatively affect employees sleep, half of whom reported that they engage in unhealthy behaviors to cope with workplace stress. 55% of respondents reported that they were afraid to take the day off and tend to their mental health, resulting in presenteeism (the act of physically showing up at work, but not fully functioning due to an injury, illness or condition). In a three month period, patients with depression miss an average of 4.8 workdays and suffer 11.5 days of reduced productivity. An estimated 217 million workdays are completely or partially lost each year due to mental illness.

Most employee assistance programs offer behavioral health services at little or no cost to the employee, but on average the usage of these benefits is extremely low; 3-5%, indicating that stigma may be preventing employees from seeking help. As an employer, you are in a prime position to lead by example, to normalize the conversation of mental health and encourage life-saving treatment. It's in your best interest to invest in mental health as there are measurable returns; a healthy, happy and productive workforce.

¹ J Clin Psychiatry. 2015 Feb;76(2):155-62. doi: 10.4088/JCP.14m09298.

TALKING POINTS FOR LEADERS & MANAGERS

There is a direct correlation between the mental wellbeing of our workforce and our overall success as a company. With suicide rates on the rise and 1 in 5 people experiencing a mental illness at any given time, it's imperative that as a managers, we take the lead in normalizing the conversation of mental illness, to provide awareness of resources, and encourage peer support so that we may all thrive both in the workplace and in our daily lives.

What you can do:

- **Understand the impact.** In the "Business Impact" (pg. 4) of this guide, there is a breakdown of the cost associated with not taking mental health care seriously.
- **Get educated about the issues.** Use the "Basic Factsheet" found (pg. 6) to familiarize yourself with the state of mental health and mental health care.
- **Learn how to identify warning signs.** Familiarize yourself with the "Warning Signs" chart (pg. 7) to reference the signs if someone on your team is experiencing a mental health crisis.
- **Familiarize yourself with resources.** With the help of your EAP, become familiar with local resources through your company and your community.
- **Bring this knowledge to your team.** Get behind this initiative as a group and feel free to adapt and make it your own to work with your team's communication style.
- **Share your story.** The Quell Foundation offers a variety of ways to share your story. An easy first step? Take part in The Foundation's "Lift the Mask" social media campaign at www.thequellfoundation.org/liftthemask.
- **Lead often and by example.** In a recent study of 1,000 employees, 62% of respondents said having someone in a leadership role speak openly about mental health would make them feel more comfortable talking about it themselves.

THE FACTSHEET

- 1 in 5 people is living with a mental health diagnosis.¹
- 1 in 10 working adults will experience depression in a given year.²
- 55% of employees report fear of taking a day off from work to attend to their mental health.³
- 66% of workplace issues negatively affect employees' sleep.⁴
- Suicide is the 10th leading cause of death in the U.S. and the 2nd leading cause among ages 10-34.⁵
- The overall suicide rate has increased by 31% since 2001.⁶
- 90% of people who died by suicide exhibited symptoms of a mental health condition.⁷
- Between 40-70% of caregivers show clinically significant symptoms of depression, and roughly 43.5 million people in the U.S. serve as a caregiver for an elderly or disabled person.⁸
- Mental illness short-term disability claims are growing by 10% each year.
- 77% of all U.S. counties are designated mental health professional shortage areas (there is less than one licensed professional for every 30,000 people).⁹
- The average wait time to see a psychiatrist is 25 days.¹⁰
- 80% of patients in treatment report feeling better.¹¹

1 Nami.org

2 Kessler, R. C., Chiu, W. T., Demler, O., Merikangas, K. R., & Walters, E. E. Prevalence, Severity, and Comorbidity of Twelve-month DSM-IV Disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication. *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 62.6 (2005): 617-627.

3 Mind the Workplace Report, FAAS Foundation & Mental Health America, 2019 pg. 4

4 Ibid

5 Nami.org

6 Ibid

7 Ibid

8 Center for Workplace Mental Health WorkplaceMentalHealth.org "Caring for Working Caregivers." 2016

9 (Bureau of Health Workforce, Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA), U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, December 2017) 5. (Caccavale, J., Ph.D. Reeves II, J., Ph.D. Wiggins, J., Ph.D., PsyD. 2010)

10 (Caccavale, J., Ph.D. Reeves II, J., Ph.D. Wiggins, J., Ph.D., PsyD. 2010)

11 WorkplaceMentalHealth.org 2016

KNOW THE WARNING SIGNS

Symptoms of Distress	What it looks like to colleagues
Deep feeling of sadness	Withdrawn, isolating oneself
Loss of interest, low motivation or morale	Indifference, Presenteeism*
Trouble sleeping, sleeping too much, energy loss and fatigue	Late to work, can't get going in the morning, afternoon fatigue, errors on the job
Lack of concentration, slowed thoughts or difficulting thinking	Missed deadlines, accidents on the job, putting things off
Forgetfulness and trouble remembering	Seems "scattered" or absentminded, missed deadlines
Physical aches and pains	Frequent trips to the doctors, increased healthcare cost
Irritability, anger or tearfulness	Poor relationships with coworkers, boss or clients
Weight or appetite changes	Physical changes in appearance
Trouble making decisions	Procrastination, indecisiveness, slowed productivity

This information can be found at TheRightDirectionForMe.com, Partnership for Workplace Mental Health a program of the American Psychiatric Association Foundation and Employers Health Coalition.

*Presenteeism-Defined as the problem of employees who are not fully functioning in the workplace due to injury, illness or another condition. Although the employee is physically at work, he/she may not be able to fully perform duties and is much more likely to make mistakes on the job.

START THE CONVERSATION

When in doubt, avoid phrases like:

- Snap out of it.
- Change your attitude.
- Do volunteer work.
- Just do yoga.
- You'll get over it.
- Stop dwelling on the negative.

Build trust by not:

- Placing blame
- Speaking loudly or raising your voice Criticizing blaming or raising your voice at them.
- Talking too much, too rapidly, too loudly.
- Showing any form of hostility towards them.
- Making assumptions about their situation. Assuming things about them or their situation.
- Using sarcasm or jokes about their experiences. Being sarcastic or making jokes about their condition.
- Patronizing them or saying anything condescending.

Sample appropriate questions:

- "I noticed you've been coming into the office late all of a sudden, is everything ok at home?"

CREATE A STIGMA-FREE WORKPLACE

- Where you choose to have the conversation is essential. Find a space that is mutually comfortable, quiet, and calming. Avoid potential distractions and interruptions.
- Take your time and pace the conversation. Don't fill the silence with empty chatter. If they're not ready to talk, it's OK, don't pressure them.
- Speak softly and calmly. Be sure to speak in a relaxed and calm manner.
- Demonstrate empathy and respect. Validate their feelings using reflective listening and "I" statements. i.e., "I understand where you're coming from. That must be difficult."
- When ready, let them talk and be an engaged listener by making eye contact.
- Don't cast judgment or place blame. Show respect and understanding by looking for common ground and shared experiences.
- Pay attention to body language and any signs of discomfort or confusion that may arise from your conversation.
- Keep it age-appropriate and speak to their developmental level. Mental illness does not equal a lack of intelligence.
- Be genuine in expressing concern and inquiries.
- Offer hope for recovery and support in seeking help. Connect them with resources if they're open to getting help.

CAMPAIGN CALENDAR

Three weeks out

- Join our online community by connecting with The Quell Foundation on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Please make sure to tag us on any social media posts as you market the event.
- Compile a contact list of potential audience members and divide it into groups that can be contacted via email and social media platforms, and those who you'll want to be in touch within person, over the phone, or through posters placed in your community. Then start spreading the word.
- Using the items available in the Lift the Mask marketing kit, download the invitation to print out or send electronically to your guests. Be sure to include your date, time, admission or donation policies, directions, and a link to The Quell Foundation website and social media channels.
- Print the Lift the Mask posters and have canvassing groups post around neighborhoods, campuses, or on community bulletin boards.
- Create a Facebook event, an Evite, or an Eventbrite listing for your screening.
- Begin to send event announcements and updates via your Twitter feed. If your audience isn't Internet-savvy, arrange a phone tree to spread the word among friends and colleagues the old-fashioned way. Find ready-to-go social media content in the marketing kit to get the ball rolling.

One week out

- Test-run the equipment you will be using. If you have a problem, contact liftthemask@thequellfoundation.org.
- Double-check with your venue about day-of-event details such as parking procedures, room capacity, wheelchair-accessible entries, and policies on food and drink.
- Send reminders about your event via email and social media platforms.
- Are you collecting donations at your event? Decide if you will be accepting credit card donations using a Stripe account, using a QR Code so that attendees can scan to The Quell Foundation giving page, or print off buck slips and envelopes for cash and check donations.
- Gather some resources and pamphlets from your organization's HR department regarding mental health and suicide prevention from your local health care provider agency or department.
- We highly suggest investing in tissues and having them on hand during the screening, so stocking up on a few boxes before your event may be helpful.
- Create a simple itinerary for your event using the ideas in the following pages.

YOUR EVENT TIMELINE

To ensure that your screening runs smoothly, consider following an itinerary similar to the one below.

Intro (2-3 minutes)

- Welcome your guests to your venue, ask them to silence their phones, and shut down their emails. Introduce The Quell Foundation, and talk about the purpose of that day's event. Tell your audience about your first experience viewing or hearing about Lift the Mask. You might even explain what moved you to host this event for your community in the first place. **PRO TIP:** Start the event with a member of senior leadership speaking. This gives co-workers in the room space and opportunity to speak openly in the following hour.

Introduction to The Foundation & Overview of Issues (3-5 minutes)

- A representative from The Quell Foundation will kick-off the event with a brief presentation about the state of mental health and address the healthcare shortage in your area.

Screening (20 minutes)

- Dim the lights first to signal the beginning of the viewing experience (as in a movie theater). Once any rustling or chatter has stopped, start playing the film.

Post-film discussion (30 minutes)

- Audiences often feel very inspired and ready to speak out after your screening, so be prepared for some group discussion whether you have a panel or not at your screening.
- Let a moment or two pass before you turn the lights up, to help transition your audience out of the emotional screening experience and into the discussion portion of the film.
- If you have a guest speaker or discussion moderator, introduce them to the group now and have the moderator introduce the panelists. If the conversation will be audience generated, or if your group is small, you may wish to offer a few initial observations to guide and inspire discussion and reflection from the audience.
- As you wrap up your event and before you lose anyone's attention, encourage your guests to turn their phones back on, and to take a moment to connect with The Quell Foundation on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and LinkedIn to keep the conversation going long after they leave the viewing area.

AFTER YOUR EVENT

- Send a thank-you note to attendees through email and your social media networks, and be sure to thank any volunteers or special guests who helped make the night possible. You can find some sample social media posts for this in the marketing kit.
 - Encourage attendees to consider supporting The Quell Foundation's efforts to continue screening this documentary with audiences across the country and help bolster its national scholarship program.
 - Ask guests to take part in the Foundation's "I AM" social media campaign.
- Many audience members will want to know how they can learn more about The Quell Foundation and Lift the Mask screenings in the future, or how they can host their events. Send them on to www.thequellfoundation.org for more resources and encourage them to follow us on Facebook and Twitter. Prospective screening hosts can email liftthemask@thequellfoundation.org for more information.
- If you have photos from your event, post them online so that The Quell Foundation can repost on its accounts.
- If you have feedback, pass it along to us! What worked? What was difficult? We'd love to hear from you!