

# Webinar 1: Building the Business Case

Thrive in your Workplace | 2020

# Agenda

- I. Objectives
- II. The Business Case for Workplace Mental Health Investment
- III. Developing the Business Case
- IV. Implementation Tips
- V. Frequently Asked Questions

# Objectives

By the end of this webinar, participants will be able to:

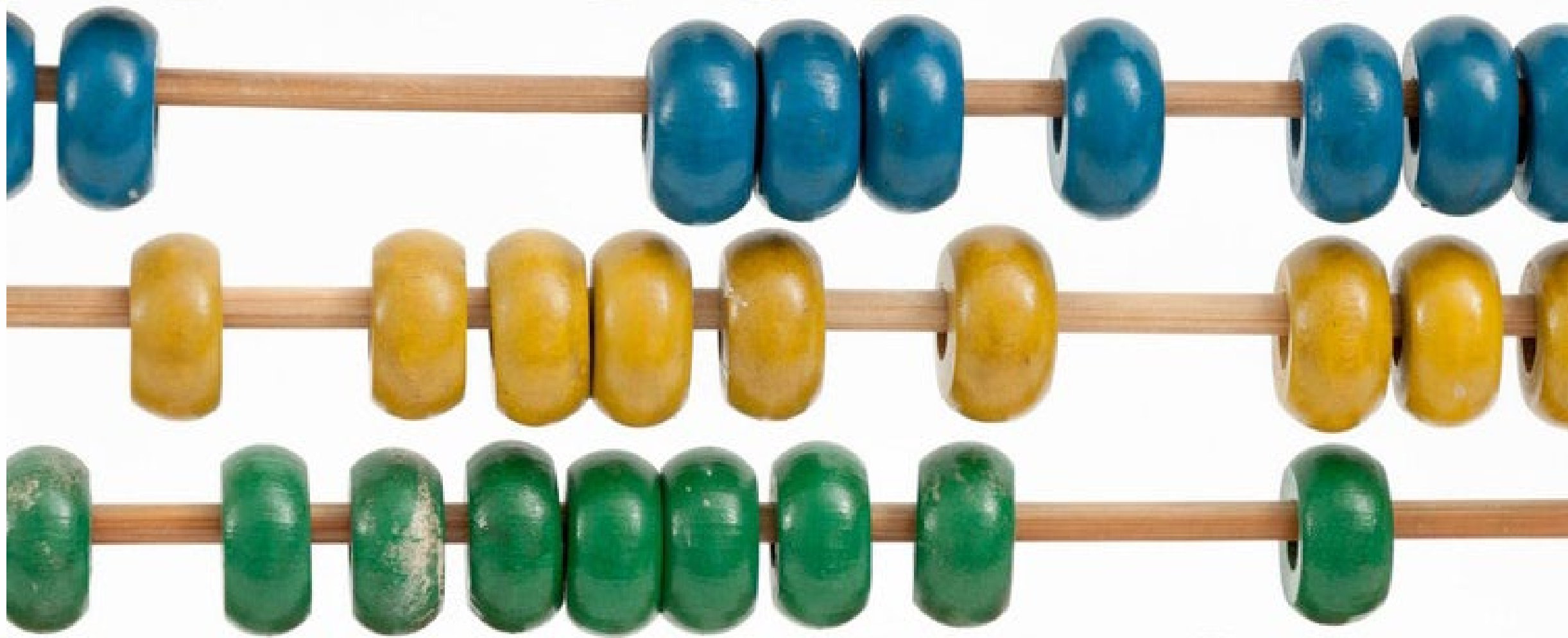
- Understand how mental health impacts organizational performance
- Craft a compelling business case for leadership to prioritize workplace mental health
- Access tools and templates to get started



# Why create a Workplace Mental Health business case?



Communicate the impact of mental health on individuals and organizations



**Only 41% of adults**  
with a mental health condition received  
mental health services in the past year.



**One in 5**

American adults  
experience some form  
of mental illness in  
any given year

**SUICIDE** IS THE **10TH**  
LEADING CAUSE OF DEATH

**7%** OF ADULTS HAD AT  
LEAST ONE MAJOR  
DEPRESSIVE EPISODE IN  
THE PAST YEAR.

**18%** OF ADULTS  
EXPERIENCED  
AN ANXIETY DISORDER  
IN THE PAST YEAR.



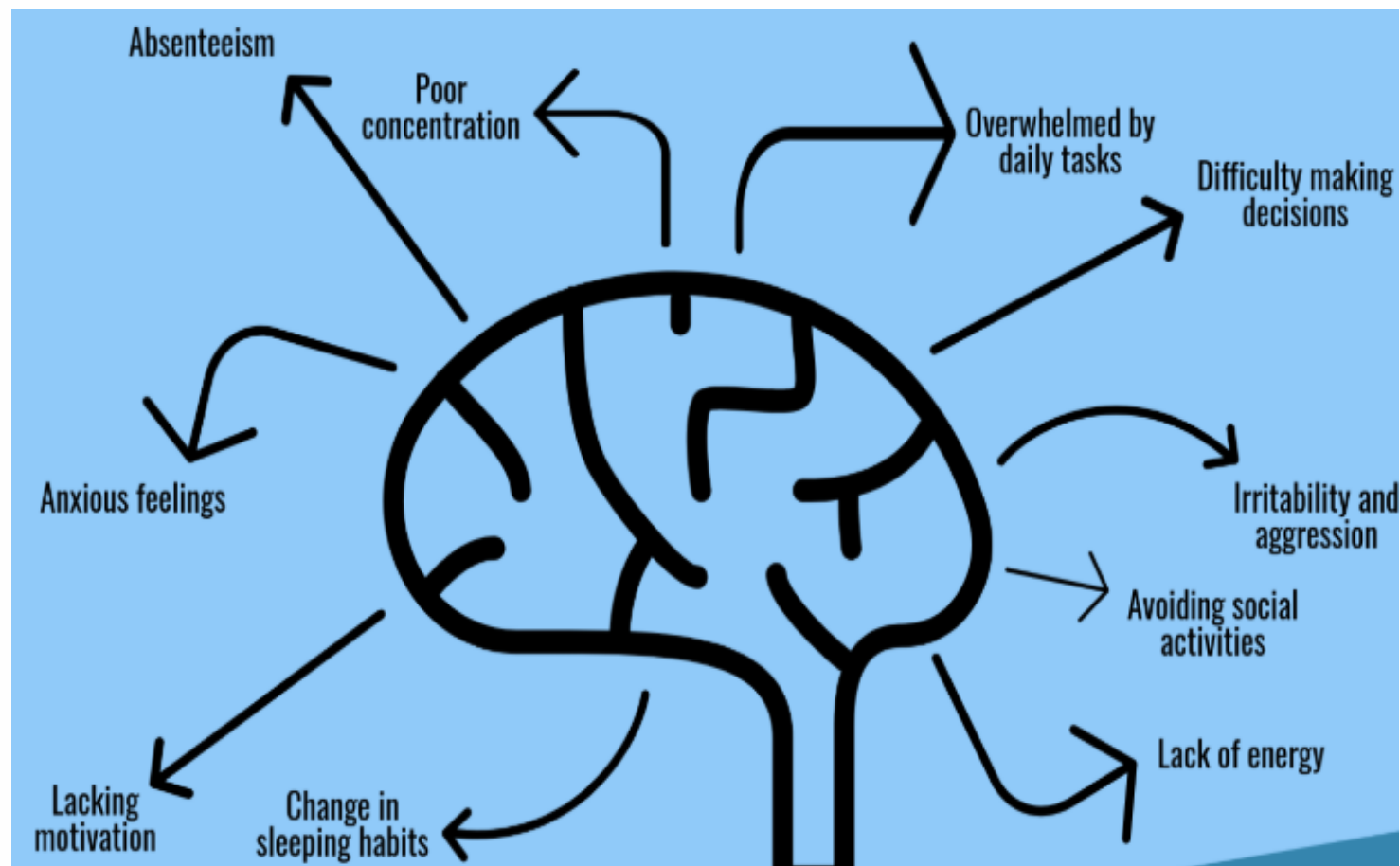
That equals over  
**40 MILLION AMERICANS**

More than the  
populations of New York  
& Florida combined.

Mood disorders are  
the 3rd most common  
cause of hospitalization  
for both youth  
and adults  
aged 18-44.



Common mental health conditions include depression, anxiety and substance use disorders with symptoms that can affect all aspects of our lives





Mental illness has both *direct costs*, such as increased healthcare expenditures, and a variety of *indirect costs*, such as losses in productivity

- Research estimates that mental health disorders will **cost nations \$16.3 trillion** between 2011 and 2030
- More workers **are absent from work because of stress and anxiety** than because of physical illness or injury
- **Depression is estimated to cause 200 million lost workdays** each year at a cost to employers of \$17 to \$44 billion



A recent WHO-led study estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy US\$1 trillion each year in lost productivity



## The intersectional relationship between mental and physical health can increase costs further

- People with mental illnesses often have co-occurring chronic, physical conditions such as heart disease or diabetes
- Medical costs for patients with co-occurring disorders are 2-3x higher compared to the costs for patients without “comorbid” disorders



# Good news: Mental health treatment helps



- Most people who experience a mental health issue will recover and live happy, active lives.
- The majority of individuals with mental disorders will improve with appropriate diagnosis and treatment
- 80% of employees treated for mental health problems report improvements in their job satisfaction and productivity



# Employers can leverage workplaces to promote good mental health

The workplace can be activated to:

- increase access to and quality of mental healthcare
- create a supportive environment that promotes positive mental health

In doing so, employers may also reap the social and economic benefits of a mentally healthy workforce:

- A World Health Organization study estimated that every \$1 invested in prevention and treatment provides a return of \$4 in improved health and productivity to the US economy.

There is a clear return on investment to employers who prioritize employee mental health, but how do you obtain internal support and guide your organization to make these decisions?





Developing the business case for Workplace Mental Health



# A Workplace Mental Health business case has 4 elements:

1. **Outlines common mental health issues** across the working-age population and their financial implications for employers
2. **Presents research that illustrates potential savings** in healthcare costs and productivity resulting from mental health support
3. **Demonstrates the positive impacts of mental health friendly policies** on both individual wellbeing and on organizations
4. **Advocates for resources** (i.e. time and money) to support mental health programming

Lay the groundwork with  
a deep understanding of  
both mental health and  
of your organization  
before diving in







## Tip #1: Identify organizational change processes

### **Does your company have a formal process for evaluating strategic plans?**

Think of the business case as a strategic plan for mental health. Some organizations only conduct strategic planning at specific times, such as during the annual budgeting process, so you should align your effort to any internal timelines.

### **Who has the authority to approve your case?**

Determine which individuals need to be involved in the planning and approvals process and engage them early.

### **What level of detail is suitable for your organization?**

Some organizations require employees to utilize business case templates.



## Tip #2: Know your audience

### **Identify your key decision maker(s) and consider the following:**

- What do they stand to gain—or lose—from the opportunity?
- Who within the organization or what factors influence decision-making?
- Are there similar initiatives that they have supported in the past?
- How do they prefer to receive information and make decisions?



## Tip #3: Use data to make your case

**Use both national and organizational data about how poor mental health impacts individual health, productivity, and healthcare costs** to make an argument that is tailored to your context, yet supported by the big picture.

You might use internal data sources or a mental health calculator to get started:

- Aggregate healthcare costs
- Employee surveys (if available)
- EAP utilization data and common concerns

[The APA Workplace Mental Health](#) provides free, digital calculators that estimate the impacts of depression and substance abuse at work



## Sample Business Cases



# Business case A: Non-profit is concerned about rates of high turnover and stress among staff

## Framing

- Access to mental health care has been shown to help people recover from mental illness, and supportive management training has been found to reduce burnout and improve relationships



## Expected benefits

- Decreasing turnover can increase productivity, morale and quality of staff, and reduce presenteeism
- Access to quality outpatient care can reduce healthcare costs



## The proposal

- Conduct a campaign about health benefits to encourage use
- Develop policies and training to become a vicarious-trauma informed organization

# Business case B: A business leader is interested in workplace mental health, but remains suspicious about its promise

## Framing

- Untreated mental illness is costly: depression is estimated to cause 200M lost workdays each year
- Based on healthcare and EAP usage, substance use is a common problem among staff at this company

## Expected benefits

- Coordinated care models increase access to care and reduces healthcare costs
- Reducing absenteeism will increase worker productivity

## The proposal

- Hire mental health staff to provide on-site counseling to employees and increase access to psychiatry services via telemedicine.
- Develop workplace policies that limit alcohol at company events and conduct an educational campaign about substance use



## Frequently Asked Questions

**Q: My leadership does not think it is appropriate or necessary to address mental health at work. How can I get their support?**

Explain that workplace mental health programs do not and should not provide mental health diagnosis or treatment (that should only be done by a clinician!) but rather focus on creating an environment that supports employees to feel comfortable accessing care.

**Q: We already offer a lot of mental health benefits and anyone with an issue can just call the EAP. Why should we continue to focus on this issue?**

The existence of resources is not always enough to ensure that employees are actually receiving appropriate mental health care. Describe the low rates of utilization of EAPs nationally and the need to encourage uptake of services. If possible, review benefits information to determine utilization rates and identify if there is a need to improve awareness of services and encourage their use.



## Additional Resources

- [Mental Health – A Workforce Crisis](#): Sample business case, data and infographics
- [Center for Workplace Mental Health](#): Statistics on workplace mental health, substance abuse calculators, benefits of basic and enhanced medical care
- The [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health](#) ‘Making the Business Case’: information on costs associated with untreated mental illness, relevant statistics, suggestions for union-management collaboration
- [One Mind at Work](#): sample business case, infographics and fact sheets, serious depression cost calculator
- [HBR Ascend](#): templates for crafting a compelling business case



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Thrive in your Workplace's webinar:  
Building a Business Case.

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Webinar 6: Offering High Quality Benefits

Webinar 7: Supportive Management Practices

Webinar 8: Addressing Burnout in the Workplace

Webinar 9: Building a Peer Support Program

Webinar 10: Creating a Vicarious Trauma Informed Workplace

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