

INTRODUCING MENTAL HEALTH DURING NEW HIRE ORIENTATION

Orientation is a newly hired employee's first impression of the organization's mission, values, and culture. The employee is often presented with a tedious checklist of documents to sign and policies to review. However, orientation is an important opportunity to clearly communicate the organization's values around mental health and well-being. Here is a checklist to help you incorporate mental health as part of new hire orientation:

- **Call attention to mental health and substance use care in your health care offerings.**

Make it a point to describe the mental health and substance use services available under your organization's health care plans.

- **Explicitly mention what mental health services your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers.**

An EAP provides a range of services to employees, including financial planning and legal assistance, so mention that mental health services are available, too.

- **Include mental health resources in your employee handbook.**

Mental health resources could be general mental health information, online mental health screenings, or locating a local support group for a particular mental health concern. This toolkit includes an external resource list to help you identify resources most relevant to your workforce.

- **Consider adding mental health crisis resources to employee identification cards.**

Resources could include the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline (988lifeline.org), Crisis Text Line (crisistextline.org), or EAP contact information.

- **Pair a new employee with a "buddy."**

Implementing a new hire "buddy system" is a cost-effective, widely applicable method to help new employees navigate informal social and workplace cultural norms.¹

- **Ensure HR and people managers check in regularly with new employees.**

Staff should provide ongoing emotional support in addition to job training in the first couple of months of an employee's start date.

1. "Real World Solutions for Systems Change." Recruitment & Retention - Employee Orientation and Onboarding [2.4.0], <http://toolkit.ahpnet.com/Orientation-Onboarding-Intervention-Strategies/Employee-Orientation-and-Onboarding.aspx>.