

# Mental Health in the Workplace: Identifying Issues and Accommodating Employees





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# Presentation Team



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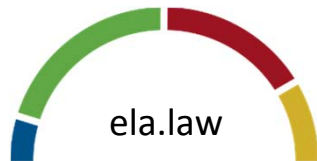
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# Understanding Mental Health

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# Definition of Mental Illness

A mental disorder is a syndrome characterized by clinically significant *disturbance* in an individual's

- Cognition
- Emotion regulation
- Behavior

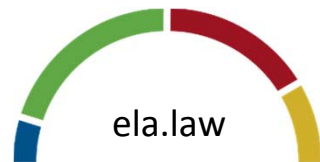
Mental Illness are associated with *significant distress or disability* in social, occupational, or other daily activities

Source: adapted from DSM V



# Recognizing Warning Signs

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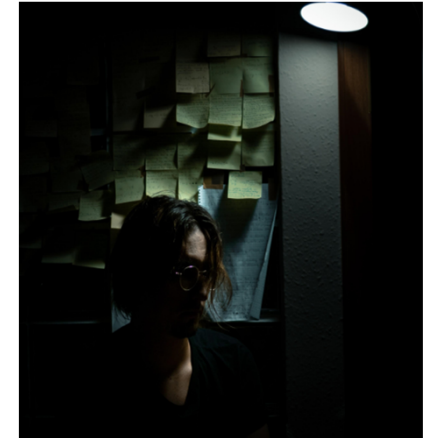
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# Observe Warning Signs



## Emotional

- Irritability
- Anxiety
- Depression
- Paranoia
- Mood swings



## Physical

- Headaches or back aches
- Shallow or rapid breathing
- Fatigue
- Sweating or shaking/chills



## Behavioral

- Excessive talking or restlessness
- Limited attention span
- Poor motivation/lack of energy
- Disrespectful or threatening
- Social isolation





# Observe Signals

Symptoms manifest themselves in:

- The quality of the work itself
- Interpersonal relationships
- Behavior shifts
- Duration of presenting issue



Pattern Of Behavior



# Work-Related Signs and Symptoms

- Frequent absenteeism
- Long lunch breaks
- On the job absenteeism
- Rigid perspective
- Inability to work with co-workers
- Inconsistent work patterns
- Trouble accepting responsibility
- Blames others for poor performance
- Strange or grandiose ideas
- Reacting out of context
- Feels resentful and unappreciated
- Leaving work early or arriving late
- Avoiding supervisors or co-workers
- Lack of respect for workplace boundaries
- Financial difficulties
- Changes in personality or behavior
- Poor appearance and hygiene
- Defensiveness





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## High Risk Warning Signs

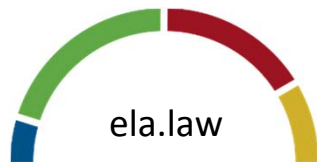
- Suicidal statements
- Saying things like “it would be better if I wasn’t here” or “I want out”
- Making statements about being hopeless or worthless
- Losing interest in things that used to be valued
- Increased irritability and dramatic mood swings
- Impulsive behavior
- Always thinking about or talking about death
- Taking extreme risks or having a “death wish,” such as driving recklessly
- Giving away possessions, putting affairs in order, saying farewell to friends/colleagues
- Sudden, unexplained change in mood from extreme sadness to calm, happy appearance
- Any major changes in patterns of behavior





# Providing Support

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## As a Manager, How Can You Help?

- Know company policies and protocols
- Involve others (e.g. HR or Work/Life Assistance Program)
- Reach out to the person based on work performance
- Be specific about what you have observed
- Avoid trying to diagnose/interpret the problem
- Be prepared to offer resources
- Avoid enabling and stigma





## Example of CCA Intervention

**Scenario:** A manager has a supervisory meeting with an employee due to recent absenteeism. The employee becomes tearful and distraught, and says they need help.

### **Intervention:**

- Individual is evaluated immediately for risk
- If risk identified, emergency services engaged
- If no imminent risk, individual referred for in-person assessment
- Individual provided with short-term counseling (if appropriate) or referred on to specialized services
- Individual provided with case management oversight
- Ongoing consultation with Company regarding employee's progress and readiness for return to work



# Health and Well-being in the Workplace

## Encourage:

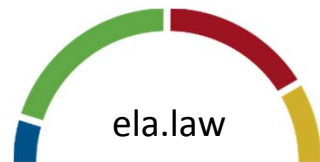
- Preventive care
- Healthy eating
- Exercise
- Good sleep habits
- Employees to contact the work/life program
- Appropriate break & meal times





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# INSERT Cokeley Slides





# Leave of Absence: What Law Applies?

- Local
- State
- Federal
  - FMLA
  - HIPAA
  - COBRA



And does preemption apply?



# How Well Do Your Benefit Plans Complement Your Leave of Absence Policy?

- Review plan documents
  - For insured benefits, insurance policy or group contract
  - For self-funded benefits, stop loss insurance policy
- Details matter
  - Review definitions
  - Read provisions together
  - Compare different types of leave – e.g., nonmedical vs. medical
- Consider what's been communicated
  - Summary plan descriptions
  - Employee handbook
  - Leave of absence policy





## Pre-Planning Can Minimize Stress Later

- How long can an employee on leave continue to be covered under your benefits?
- Do you want to negotiate longer coverage with insurers?
- Do you want to standardize the length of time across various benefits?
- Do you need to correct or clarify benefits coverage in your policies and SPDs?
- When will a COBRA qualifying event occur, triggering need to issue COBRA election notice?



## When Considering Changes, Keep in Mind:

- HIPAA nondiscrimination regulations
  - Prohibits discrimination on the basis of a health factor
  - Exception for benign discrimination
  - Consider safe harbor effective date
- ERISA disclosure requirements
  - Summary of material modifications generally within 210 days after end of plan year in which change is adopted
  - Exceptions may apply



## When Considering Changes, Keep in Mind:

- ACA Play or Pay Consequences
  - Is employee on disability or sick leave still accruing hours of service for 4980H purposes?
  - Are they still considered an ACA full-time employee?
  - How will you code their 1095-C?
  - Are your COBRA premiums ACA affordable?





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# Wrap Up

