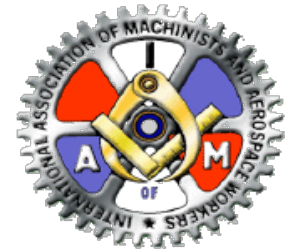




HELPING HANDS



Understanding and Managing Depression and Anxiety

Compiled by CHTGPT5

April is an important time to bring awareness to mental health challenges that affect millions of individuals every day, particularly depression and anxiety. While these conditions are common, they are also easily treatable, and support is available. Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is here to help you navigate these challenges with confidence and care.

Understanding Depression and Anxiety

Depression and anxiety are the most prevalent mental health concerns in the workplace. While they are distinct conditions, they often occur together and share overlapping symptoms. Depression may present as persistent sadness, loss of interest in activities, fatigue, difficulty concentrating, changes in sleep or appetite, and feelings of hopelessness or worthlessness. Anxiety can manifest as excessive worry, restlessness, irritability, muscle tension, and sleep disturbances. It may also include physical symptoms such as a racing heart, sweating, or gastrointestinal discomfort.



Both conditions can impact work performance, relationships, and overall quality of life, but it's important to remember that experiencing these symptoms is not a sign of weakness. They are real, medical conditions that deserve attention and care.

Seasonal transitions can affect mood and stress levels. For some, increased expectations, can intensify anxiety. For others, lingering effects of winter-related low mood or depression may persist.

Practical Strategies for Managing Depression and Anxiety

There are many effective ways to manage symptoms and improve mental health. Small, consistent actions can make a meaningful difference.

1. Prioritize Routine and Structure

Maintaining a regular daily schedule can provide stability and reduce feelings of chaos or uncertainty. Aim for consistent sleep and wake times, balanced meals, and scheduled breaks throughout the day.

2. Stay Physically Active

Exercise is a powerful tool for mental health. Even moderate activity such as walking, stretching, or yoga can reduce stress hormones and boost mood-enhancing chemicals like endorphins.

3. Practice Mindfulness and Relaxation

Techniques such as deep breathing, meditation, and progressive muscle relaxation can help calm the nervous system and reduce anxiety. Just a few minutes a day can have a noticeable impact.

4. Limit Information Overload

Constant exposure to news and digital content can increase stress and anxiety. Set boundaries around screen time and consider scheduling "unplugged" periods during your day.

5. Strengthen Social Connections

Isolation can worsen symptoms of depression and anxiety. Reach out to trusted friends, family members, or colleagues. Even brief, meaningful interactions can improve mood and perspective.

6. Set Realistic Goals

Break tasks into manageable steps and celebrate small accomplishments. Avoid placing excessive pressure on yourself to be perfect or to do everything at once.



Utilizing Available Resources

You don't have to navigate depression or anxiety alone. A wide range of resources is available to support your mental health journey.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

Your EAP offers confidential support, including short-term counseling, referrals to mental health professionals, and access to educational materials. Whether you're dealing with stress, anxiety, depression, or life transitions, EAP services are designed to provide practical and emotional support.

Mental Health Professionals

Licensed therapists, psychologists, and psychiatrists can offer evidence-based treatments such as cognitive behavior therapy (CBT). Seeking professional help is a proactive and effective step.

Digital Mental Health Tools

There are many reputable apps and online platforms that offer guided meditation, mood tracking, and stress management tools. These can be helpful supplements to professional care.

Community and Peer Support

Support groups—whether in-person or virtual—can provide a sense of connection and understanding. Hearing from others with similar experiences can reduce feelings of isolation and stigma.

Supporting Others in the Workplace

Creating a mentally healthy workplace is a shared responsibility. If you notice a colleague who may be struggling, consider reaching out with empathy and without judgment. Simple gestures—such as asking how someone is doing or offering support—can make a significant difference.

You are not alone, and support is always within reach.
Your EAP representative listed below can help!



IAM Peer
Employee
Assistance Program

The heart and soul of the District 141 Employee Assistance Program is the local lodge EAP peer coordinator. These dedicated men and women volunteer their personal time to assist union members and their families who are experiencing personal difficulties. EAP peers do not make clinical diagnoses or clinical evaluations; they are trained to make a basic assessment of your situation and refer you to an appropriate resource for a more detailed evaluation. EAP peer coordinators will follow up to ensure you have been able to access services that addressed the difficulty you were experiencing.

Free Apps for Depression and Anxiety

- Calm – Offers free meditations, breathing exercises, and sleep support.
- Headspace – Provides guided mindfulness and stress reduction tools.
- Insight Timer – Large library of free meditations and talks.
- MindShift CBT – Uses cognitive behavioral therapy techniques for anxiety.
- MoodTools – Includes a thought diary, safety plan, and videos.
- PTSD Coach – Provides coping tools for stress and trauma symptoms.
- Healthy Minds Program – Science-based training for emotional wellbeing.
- Smiling Mind provides structured mental fitness programs for all ages.
- Woebot provides CBT-based conversations to challenge negative thinking and improve mood.
- 7 Cups connects users with trained listeners for free emotional support.

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