



UNITED STATES OFFICE OF PERSONNEL MANAGEMENT
Washington, DC 20415

The Director

May 1, 2023

Memorandum for Heads of Executive Departments and Agencies

From: Kiran A. Ahuja
Director

Subject: Advocation for Mental Health Awareness Month

Overview

As we welcome warmer temperatures and longer days during the month of May, the U.S. Office of Personnel Management (OPM) is highlighting the importance of Mental Health Awareness Month. According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), nearly one in five Americans live with a mental illness, and OPM has made advocacy and communication regarding resources to support the well-being of Federal employees a top priority. We encourage agency leaders to remind employees about the importance of cultivating healthy wellness habits, which include caring for one's mental health on a proactive rather than reactive basis. Initiating regular conversations surrounding mental and emotional well-being is instrumental in normalizing and destigmatizing receiving mental health treatment and fostering a healthier workforce.

Wellness Resources and Benefits Available to Employees

In 2022, OPM released several resources to assist Federal employees in managing and maintaining their well-being, including our [Mental Health pamphlet](#) and [Mental Wellness in the Workplace tip sheet](#). Additional resources and supports, as well as access to private, confidential counseling can be found by utilizing agency Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs). Offered by each Federal executive agency, EAPs can be a vital aid in assisting employees with a wide span of problems which may adversely affect morale, performance, and well-being. Agencies should keep in mind that EAP's should not solely be promoted in the wake of tragedies or negative events, as they can provide mental health counseling and resources which are helpful in maintaining a positive state of mind. Many EAP counseling services can work in conjunction with FEHB health plans to find covered local care for Federal employees.

OPM would also like to shed light on Mindful Fed, a new interagency community of practice offering an array of services including mindful space and guided meditations to help cultivate wellbeing and resilience in the Federal workplace. Mindful Fed is designed to complement agencies' total worker wellness goals by integrating mindfulness strategies and practices into the federal workplace culture, thus enhancing employees' performance, leadership development, and health and resilience. Agency leaders should remind employees that Mindful Fed gathers every Wednesday at 1:30pm ET. Employees can contact Mindful-FED-subscribe-request@listserv.gsa.gov to receive email invitations and updates regarding upcoming events.

In addition, we encourage Federal agencies to remind employees of the various leave and workplace flexibilities available to assist Federal employees in caring for both themselves and their family members. Some of these options include:

- [Sick Leave for Personal Medical Needs](#)
- [Sick Leave for Family Care and Bereavement](#)
- [Sick Leave to Care for a Family Member with a Serious Health Condition](#)
- [Family and Medical Leave](#)
- [Parental Bereavement Leave](#)
- [Voluntary Leave Bank Program](#) or [Voluntary Leave Transfer Program](#)
- [Annual Leave](#)
- [Advanced Sick Leave](#)
- [Advanced Annual Leave](#)
- [Leave without Pay](#)
- [Alternative Work Schedules](#)
- [Credit Hours under Flexible Work Schedules](#)
- [Compensatory Time off](#)
- [Telework](#)

Additional Resources Available for Agencies and Employees

We also continue to provide policy guidance and technical assistance to agencies to support a focus on mental health, including:

Tip Sheets for Employee Work-Life Support – Tips for supervisors, agency leaders, and employees to assist federal employees in navigating new changes, understanding, and properly attending to mental health, becoming aware of potential signs of suicide, and to familiarize employees with the vast array of resources available to support their mental health needs.

OPM's Work-Life staff is available to assist with any additional questions or inquiries. If you have any questions, please contact worklife@opm.gov.

cc: Chief Human Capital Officers (CHCOs)
Deputy CHCOs
Human Resources Directors

Attachments: Tip Sheets