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TIPS FOR EMPLOYERS ON HIRING INDIVIDUALS WITH MENTAL HEALTH CONDITIONS

*Now is the time to
take an intentional,
strategic approach to
employing people with
lived experience!*



Did you know, as an employer, you stand to benefit when you actively recruit and hire individuals with mental health conditions?

- Have you missed out on the unique perspectives and creative talents that people with mental health challenges bring to the workplace?
- Are you leaving money on the table from tax incentives offered for hiring and employing individuals with mental health conditions?
- Have you fully leveraged the power of diversity, equity, and inclusion within your workforce?

Once you look past the inaccurate stereotypes, you'll be able to see that the ways employees with mental health conditions can enhance your organization are invaluable.

In fact, the reality is that you may very well already be employing people with mental health challenges. Individuals living with mental health conditions are not as sparse in the workforce as we may think: 1 in 5 of current employees has a mental health diagnosis.

CAFÉ TAC wants to support you, as an employer, in recruiting and supporting employees with mental health conditions, and incorporating strengths-based hiring and employee support that encourages retention and shared expertise. This is an opportunity to enhance your organization in ways you may not have considered!



Myths and Misperceptions of Individuals with Lived Experience¹:

MYTH/STEREOTYPE	FACT
Mental health conditions are a result of poor character or laziness.	Mental illness is a health condition and not a moral or character flaw. People with mental health conditions can and do recover from their illness.
Individuals with mental health conditions pose a danger to others in the workplace.	Despite the flashy headlines, there is no credible evidence that individuals with mental health conditions pose a danger to others in the workplace. In fact, people with a psychiatric disability are far more likely to be victims than perpetrators of violence. ²
Individuals with mental health conditions cannot work in stressful or demanding jobs.	Many individuals with a psychiatric disability can and do work effectively. How the condition impacts work life varies considerably and there is no “one size fits all.”
Individuals with mental health conditions do not recover.	The vast majority of people with psychiatric disability do get better, thanks to improved treatments and supports.
Individuals with mental health conditions cannot work until they are completely recovered.	Workplace accommodations such as flexible hours, changes to the work environment, and remote work options enable many with psychiatric disabilities to work effectively with their disability. ³



References

1. ADA National Network <https://adata.org/factsheet/health>
2. See facts about the lack of correlation between mental health conditions and violence at <https://www.mentalhealth.gov/basics/mental-health-myths-facts> and <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC1525086/>
3. See more about workplace accommodations at <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/mental-health/maximizing-productivity-accommodations-for-employees-with-psychiatric-disabilities>

• *There are numerous benefits to hiring people with mental health conditions, both financial and organizational. Including individuals with mental health diagnoses in your organization helps you tap into the strategic advantages of diversity, equity, and inclusion. The varying perspectives they bring to your workforce help you connect with your customers in the services you provide and the work you do.*



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Financial Benefits of Hiring Applicants with Lived Experience:

1. Decreased absenteeism and presenteeism, lower staff turnover, and increased productivity – When providing a supportive culture for those with mental health conditions, employers realized significant savings. According to studies, net savings for employers ranged from \$56,000 to \$204,000 at the end of five years. (CMHA, 2018)
2. Work Opportunity Tax Credit (WOTC) – This credit is available to employers for hiring individuals from certain target groups who have consistently faced significant barriers to employment, including mental illness. (DOL, 2021)
3. State Deductions – States also provide additional tax credits for employers willing to hire eligible disabled employees. The type and amount of credit offered will vary by state.
4. Disabled Access Credit – The Disabled Access Credit provides a non-refundable credit of up to \$5,000 for small businesses that incur expenditures for the purpose of providing access to persons with disabilities. (DOL, 2021)



Inclusive Hiring Practices in Recruiting:



References:

1. U.S. Department of Labor Office of Disability Employment Policy. Retrieved on September 30th, 2021 from <https://www.dol.gov/agencies/odep/program-areas/employers/tax-incentives-for-employers>
2. Canadian Mental Health Association. *Research emphasizes benefits of hiring people with lived mental health experience. October 4, 2018* Retrieved on September 30th, 2021 from <https://ontario.cmha.ca/news/research-emphasizes-benefits-of-hiring-people-with-lived-experience/>
3. Job Accommodation Network (JAN) <https://askjan.org/disabilities/Mental-Health-Conditions.cfm>
4. ADA National Network <https://adata.org/factsheet/health>
5. Effectively Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace <https://prezi.com/view/ANx68MJWouzaDeSSaqXu/>
6. Suicide Prevention Resource Center <https://www.sprc.org/livedexperiencetoolkit/finding>

Now that you know the benefits of hiring those with mental health conditions, how do you do it?

1. Use the job description to be clear in stating that those with mental health conditions are encouraged to apply, and articulate how their lived experience adds value to otherwise equal candidates.
2. Review background checks on an individual basis, allowing the applicant to address past legal issues.
3. Use your internal network and referrals from existing staff with a clear explanation of the value of those with lived experience of mental health conditions. This allows for current staff to vouch for the organization's inclusivity, diversity, equity, and employee support practices.
4. List jobs within networks known to those with lived experience (peer support networks, job boards specific to those looking to re-enter the workforce, etc.).
5. Have a clear, accessible recruitment and hiring policy that explains your intent to recruit applicants with lived experience, and utilize a strengths-based interviewing approach:
 - a. Ask questions that identify a candidate's strengths and match them to the role. Strengths-based interviewing allows for individuals to explain gaps in work history or limited work experience and allows for the individual to share examples from various life experiences (learning, work experience or volunteering) to explain their ability to meet the needs of the position.
6. In interviews and job descriptions, explain supports offered for those with lived experience through HR practices, Employee Assistance Programs, mentoring, and accommodations such as flexible work schedules or remote options.
7. Finally, make sure to incorporate these hiring practices to all hires, as you may never know if an applicant has a mental health condition, and always remember that disclosure is a choice.