

ANXIETY IN THE WORKPLACE

You have probably experienced anxiety at work. If you have a big presentation or a big meeting with a client, anticipatory anxiety is a normal response that helps you perform your best. If you are noticing the anxiety becoming persistent or appearing without a definite cause you may find that anxiety is interfering with your daily functioning.

If you are experiencing anxiety while at your workplace, being able to recognize the type of anxiety is an important first step in effectively managing your anxiety.

Additionally, anxiety disorders are the most common mental health disorders, so spotting the signs that a colleague may be struggling, is a critical step in achieving a mentally healthy workplace.



Work Anxiety vs Anxiety at Work

There is a difference between experiencing anxiety at work and experiencing work anxiety. You may be experiencing work anxiety if you notice that the anxiety typically manifests itself at work, when you are getting ready for work, or if you experience heightened anxiety after the weekend or holiday breaks.

It may be helpful for you to journal or speak to a professional to get to the root of this anxiety. For example, many people who experience imposter syndrome, which is the belief that you are undeserving of a position or success because it was achieved by luck, will experience work anxiety.

For those individuals, healing the root cause of Imposter Syndrome will then alleviate some of the symptoms of their work anxiety.

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If you notice feeling anxious more days than not in several areas of your life, it is possible you are experiencing an anxiety disorder such as Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD). If you suspect that you may fit into this group, or if you feel that your anxiety is interfering with your daily life, speak to a professional about receiving treatment.

Recognizing Anxiety in the Workplace

Changes in your colleague's behavior can be a red flag that they might be experiencing some sort of psychological distress.

These changes may include an increase in absenteeism or persistent tardiness. Perhaps your coworker is recently struggling to be productive, meet deadlines, or manage their time effectively. An individual experiencing anxiety may also find themselves isolating, so keep an eye out for an individual who refrains from participating in work events or social activities.

Additionally, many people who experience unwanted anxiety (or other mental health disorders) will often use substances to self-medicate to feel temporarily relief from their psychological distress. If one of your colleagues is actively misusing or abusing substances, the best way to support them is by connecting them to professional resources.

Conclusion

There are several practices you can adopt to support an anxious coworker. Continuing to educate yourself on anxiety, validating their feeling and experiences, and celebrating their successes are a couple of ways you can do so. The more we normalize these conversations, the more likely it will be for those who need treatment to ask for help.

If you or someone close to you is experiencing anxiety, you are not alone as anxiety is the most common mental health disorder. Several effective treatments for managing anxiety exist. If you are struggling, talk to a professional so you can decide the best treatment options for you.

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