

# EMPLOYEE-DRIVEN POLICY AND PROGRAMS CHANGES

Creating a mentally healthy workplace requires cross-departmental collaboration and investment from all levels of an organization – transformative change doesn't occur overnight, but it is definitely worth the outcome! In working with MHA's [Bell Seal Recipients](#), MHA identified the six most common policy and program change areas that have proven effective based on employees' direct feedback.<sup>1</sup> Examples are provided for each area.

## 1. INCREASED OR IMPROVED MENTAL HEALTH BENEFITS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCE SUPPORT

- Provided full coverage of mental health counseling visits, regardless of provider or network level
- Provided in- and out-of-network benefits covered at the same co-pay or co-insurance rates
- Implemented \$0 co-pay for unlimited mental health therapy sessions
- Increased telehealth options
- Increased the number of annual Employee Assistance Program (EAP) sessions
- Offered a free virtual 1:1 counseling program
- Hired a full-time behavioral health specialist
- Expanded family-building benefits for the LGBTQIA+ community
- Provided crisis child care or eldercare support

## 2. EVALUATED COMPENSATION EQUITY AND ROLE STRUCTURE

- Implemented performance-based merit increases
- Increased compensation transparency and equity
- Increased minimum wage to reflect the current costs of living
- Restructured roles to fit employees' needs or provide greater clarity and equity

## 3. IMPLEMENTED PERMANENT FLEXIBLE WORK SCHEDULES AND ENHANCED LEAVE POLICIES

- Implemented a four-day work week
- Offered "Flexible Fridays" in which employees take half days off or schedule no meetings
- Implemented a permanent hybrid work environment
- Developed 40+ different schedules for ultimate flexibility
- Implemented a caregiving policy
- Offered paid family leave to care for family members with health conditions
- Implemented floating and organization-wide "Mental Health Days"

## 4. ENCOURAGED EMPLOYEE RESILIENCE AND PROVIDED MENTAL HEALTH EDUCATION

- Offered small group well-being coaching
- Provided a four-week emotional wellness program
- Provided monetary incentives for reaching personal wellness goals
- Launched a series of learning simulations for Mental Health Month
- Provided Mental Health First Aid training

## 5. SUGGESTED BALANCED APPROACHES TO DAILY INTERACTIONS AND SCHEDULED MEETINGS

- Implemented 45-minute meetings vs. 60-minute meetings
- Suggested "No Meeting Wednesdays" or two-hour calendar blocks to focus on other work responsibilities
- Circulated a "work preferences survey"
- Suggested adding working hours to email signatures

## 6. MAINTAINED CONNECTION AND MITIGATED SOCIAL ISOLATION AMONG COLLEAGUES

- Offered in-person and virtual colleague-to-colleague support
- Hosted "Connection Meetings" and virtual happy hours



1. Adams, T (June 2022). "Bell Seal for Workplace Mental Health 2022 Brief: 92 Employers Leading the Workplace Mental Health Movement." Mental Health America, <https://mhanational.org/sites/default/files/2022-Bell-Seal-Brief-FINAL.pdf>.