

## 5 ways to support BIPOC mental well-being

Mental health struggles can affect everyone, regardless of race, gender, age, or income level, but it is important to acknowledge the unique challenges that employees that identify as BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, or a person of color) may have. BIPOC communities face ongoing systemic oppression and discrimination, economic and health disparities, violence, and microaggressions that contribute to chronic stress and trauma. BIPOC employees may also be managing unique family dynamics, language barriers and feelings of isolation which can impact mental well-being. Demonstrate your commitment to supporting BIPOC employees by taking the following actions.

### 1. Prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI)

Incorporate diversity, equity, and inclusion into your organizational strategy. Be intentional about honoring voices from marginalized populations and increase representation of people from these groups.

Provide mentorship programs to foster career advancement and professional development to retain valuable employees.

Conduct regular pay equity audits, review pay structures, and ensure all employees are paid a living wage.

Consider offering floating holidays to recognize traditions outside the standard holiday calendar.

#### Tips for HR teams:

- + Prioritize diversity, equity, and inclusion
- + Create an inclusive culture
- + Encourage self-care
- + Promote a psychologically safe workplace
- + Offer robust benefits

## 2. Create an inclusive culture

Take action to show your commitment to supporting the mental well-being of BIPOC employees goes beyond words on paper. Provide opportunities for ongoing learning across all levels of the organization on topics such as DEI, unconscious bias, and conscious inclusion.

Use inclusive and unbiased language in all internal and external communications. Focus on using respectful, person-first language – language that prioritizes the person over their mental health status – and encourage others to do the same.

Enhance the sense of belonging and celebrate what makes your workforce unique by investing in and supporting Employee Resource Groups (ERGs) to connect underrepresented employees with others who share similar backgrounds. ERGs create a safe space for people to discuss current events, share ideas, and network.

## 3. Encourage self-care

Encourage employees to set boundaries, take breaks throughout the day, not respond to emails outside of working hours, and fully unplug while on vacation. Allow flexible schedules and hybrid work options and offer time off to take care of sick children.

Promote healthy lifestyle habits like physical activity, a well-balanced diet and sleep to proactively manage mental well-being. Ask leaders to share the things they do to take care of their well-being and ask staff what works for them.

## 4. Promote a psychologically safe workplace

Create safe spaces, such as meetings, webinars, coffee chats, or Teams channels, for employees to discuss how current events are impacting them without fear of negative perceptions or backlash. Use these spaces to also talk and learn about culturally relevant topics that impact them daily.

Ask leaders to hold regular check-ins with staff to discuss workload, challenges and concerns. Ask employees how they are doing and really listen.

## 5. Offer robust benefits

Embrace strategies to address key stressors, improve behavioral health literacy, promote mental well-being, and prevent substance misuse. Offer paid time off for mental health days, an employee assistance program, digital solutions, and health care benefits. Normalize using these services by sharing personal stories.

At Providence, we offer solutions across the behavioral health continuum. Members have access to everything from self-help tools to 24/7 crisis support. We make it easy and affordable to access help, virtually and in-person.

**Want to learn more about how you can support workplace mental well-being?  
Our team will be glad to help!**

[WorkplaceWellness@providence.org](mailto:WorkplaceWellness@providence.org) | [ProvidenceHealthPlan.com](https://www.providencehealthplan.com)

