

Fact Sheet

What is *Right Direction*?

Right Direction is a first-of-its-kind initiative to raise awareness about depression in the workplace and its effect on productivity. It promotes early recognition of symptoms and works to reduce the stigma surrounding mental illness. It was developed through a collaborative effort between the Center for Workplace Mental Health, a program of the American Psychiatric Association Foundation, and Employers Health, a national employer coalition based in Ohio, with support from Takeda Pharmaceuticals, U.S.A., Inc. and Lundbeck US.

As part of *Right Direction*, employers have access to a customized framework for taking action at their workplace to increase awareness and help-seeking behaviors among employees. *Right Direction* gives them the tools to share the business case with senior management including educational presentations about depression and its effect on the workplace; the "Field Guide," a toolkit which includes a step-by-step implementation plan; as well as corresponding promotional resources, such as posters, intranet copy, PowerPoint templates and an employee website.

Why *Right Direction*?

Depression is very common. It affects an estimated one in 10 adults in any given year.¹ Despite advances in treatments, only one-third of people with diagnosable mental health conditions seek care.² Many individuals with depression are not aware they even have the condition due to lack of awareness of its signs and symptoms. Employers play a critical role in helping people to get healthy through increasing awareness of the symptoms, reducing stigma and promoting help-seeking behaviors.

Depression in the Workplace:

Depression is evident in the workplace in the following ways: presenteeism (being at work, but not engaged/productive), which is exacerbated by cognitive symptoms of depression, such as difficulty concentrating, indecisiveness and forgetfulness, as well as absenteeism (days away from work), sleep disturbance and low energy.³

Researchers have found that absence, disability, and lost productivity from depression cost employers more than four times the cost of employee medical treatment, even when workers' compensation medical costs are considered.⁴

The symptoms of depression are known to cause people significant distress or impairment in social, occupational, and other important areas of life, but many people may not feel comfortable seeking treatment because of the stigma and fear of repercussions (such as losing their job or not receiving a promotion). There are also data that show that mental illness short-term disability claims are growing by 10 percent annually and can account for 30 percent or more of the corporate disability expense for the typical employer.⁵



Addressing Depression in the Workplace



Value to Existing Wellness Programs

For years, employers have developed and refined robust wellness offerings that make an impact. Incorporating information and resources, like those available through *Right Direction*, help to address an important part of individual wellness – mental health. *Right Direction* provides employers actionable tools that work in tandem with other benefit vendors to better engage employees and achieve the best healthcare results.

Available Resources through *Right Direction*

The *Right Direction* “Field Guide” offers employers a multitude of turn-key resources that can be customized to communicate with employees about depression, the symptoms, its effects on personal and work life, available resources to help employees and more. Additional assets include the following:

- ▶ Content for intranet sites
- ▶ Logos and icons
- ▶ Template PowerPoint presentation to create TV/ plasma screen slides
- ▶ PowerPoint presentation decks for managers and employees
- ▶ Posters – standalone and customizable
- ▶ Employee pocket cards

All of these resources can be found on the employer website, RightDirectionforMe.com/ForEmployers. In addition, employers can direct their employees to the consumer website RightDirectionforMe.com where they can find:

- ▶ Information about the signs and symptoms of depression
- ▶ A downloadable depression screening tool to fill out and bring to their doctor
- ▶ A form allowing anyone to anonymously recommend *Right Direction* to their employer
- ▶ Resources and tips to get help
- ▶ A FAQ section answered by a mental health expert, which allows visitors to submit questions

¹ Kessler RC, Chiu WT, Demler O, Walters EE. Prevalence, severity, and comorbidity of twelve-month DSM-IV disorders in the National Comorbidity Survey Replication (NCS-R). *Archives of General Psychiatry*, 2005 Jun;62(6):617-27.

² US Department of Health and Human Services. *Mental Health: A Report of the Surgeon General*, December 1999.

³ Conradi HJ, Ormel J, De Jonge P (2011). Presence of (residual) symptoms during depressive episodes and periods of remission: a 3 year prospective study. *Psychological Medicine*. 44: 1165-1174.

⁴ Bendt ER et al. Workplace performance effects from chronic depression and its treatment. *Journal of Health Economics*. October 1998, pp. 511-535.

⁵ Marlowe JF. Depression’s surprising toll on worker productivity. *Employee Benefits Journal*. March 2002, pp. 16-20.

⁶ Greenberg, Paul et al. The Economic Burden of Adults With Major Depressive Disorder in the United States (2005 and 2010). *Journal of Clinical Psychiatry*. February 2015.

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