



Mind and Society

 EVERYDAY WELLBEING

Mental health at work

A warm, plain guide for a working adult living with a mental-health condition: what you owe others and what you do not, how to think about disclosure and adjustments, and where the real help lives.

Who this is for: a working adult managing a mental-health condition, worried about disclosure and stigma.

Cited: peer-reviewed research on mental health at work.

Languages: English, Hindi, Marathi, and Kannada.

Read it free at weave.clinic/family

1

✿ CARRYING IT TO WORK

The morning you cannot leave it at home

✿ IN SHORT

Living with a mental-health condition and holding down a job at the same time is hard, and doing it does not mean something is wrong with you as a worker. Many people carry exactly what you carry, and still do their work well.

Some mornings the hardest part is not the work itself. It is getting out the door with a mind that woke up heavy, or wired, or somewhere far away, and then walking into an office and acting as if none of it is happening. You answer emails, you sit through the meeting, you smile at the tea break, and all the while you are managing something no one around you can see.

If that is you, please hear this first. A mental-health condition is common among working adults, and many people who have had one still work, and still do well. Struggling at work does not mean you are a bad worker or a weak one; it means you are a person carrying something real while you work. Struggling on the inside and being good at your job are not opposites; plenty of people are both at once.

common

among working adults

A mental-health condition at some point in working life is far from rare. If you are managing one, you are in very ordinary company.



The quiet effort of holding it together on an ordinary working day.

Arjun runs a project team. On paper he is doing fine; the work ships, the client is happy. What no one sees is the effort it takes on the low weeks to answer a simple message, or the way a small change in plan can flood him with dread he cannot explain. He has told no one. He is sure that the day he does, they will start watching him differently, waiting for him to crack.

Arjun is not weak, and he is not failing. He is doing something genuinely difficult, and doing it alone. The rest of this guide is about not having to do it entirely alone, and about the small, sane choices that make carrying it lighter: what you owe others, what you do not, and where real help lives.

● TRY THIS

For one week, just notice the work moments that cost you the most. Not to fix them yet, only to see the pattern: which tasks, which times of day, which people leave you drained. You are gathering quiet information about your own working life.

2

✿ YOUR PRIVACY IS YOURS

You do not owe anyone the whole story

✿ IN SHORT

Your private health details are yours. You are not obliged to share them with everyone at work, and choosing to keep them private is a reasonable, dignified choice, not a lie.

There is a quiet pressure, especially in a warm and curious workplace, to explain yourself. A colleague asks why you seem off. A relative asks why you took leave. The instinct is to either overshare or apologise. You need to do neither. What is private stays private until you decide otherwise, and that decision belongs to you alone.

Whether you say anything, when you say it, and to whom, is a personal decision. It is shaped by real things: how much stigma you sense around you, how much you trust the person, and how supportive your workplace actually feels. None of that is you being secretive. It is you being sensible about something private in a setting that is not always safe.

📖 REMEMBER

Keeping your health private is not the same as hiding a fault. You would not be expected to announce a physical illness to the whole office. A mental-health condition deserves the same ordinary dignity. Sharing is a choice you get to make on your own terms.

In our workplaces the line between colleague and family can blur, and "so what is really going on" can feel like care and pressure at the same time. You are allowed a simple, warm boundary. "I am dealing with some health stuff and I am handling it, thanks for asking" is a complete answer. It tells the truth, closes the door gently, and gives away nothing you did not choose to give.

More, if you want it [^](#)

There is a difference between the people who need to know something and the people who are simply curious. Almost no one needs the details. If a change to your work is required, a manager may need to know that you need an adjustment, but even then they rarely need the diagnosis itself, only what would help. You can share the need without sharing the whole story.

● TRY THIS

Write down one short, honest sentence you could say if someone at work asks a question you would rather not answer. Keep it kind and keep it closed. Having the line ready means you are not caught off guard in the moment.

3

✿ WHETHER, WHEN, TO WHOM

Deciding what to say, and to whom

✿ IN SHORT

If you do choose to tell someone at work, the biggest thing is usually not the telling. It is how it is received. A supportive response helps; a judgemental one can leave you more ashamed. That is worth weighing before you speak.

There is no single right answer to whether you should disclose. Some people find that telling a trusted manager lifts a weight and lets them ask for what they need. Others find that in their particular workplace, silence is the safer choice for now. Both can be wise. The question is not "should everyone disclose", it is "what is right for me, here, with this person".

What the evidence points to is quietly important. The deciding factor for how disclosure turns out is usually not the act of telling itself, but how the other person reacts. A supportive supervisor tends to go with better wellbeing; a stigmatising reaction tends to go with more shame. So the real question is less "should I tell" and more "is this a person, and a moment, where telling is likely to be met with support".



I did not need my manager to understand everything. I needed to know that if I told her, she would not hold it against me. Once I believed that, saying it was easy.

Arjun, team lead

So how do you weigh it? Think about the person, not the policy. Have they responded kindly when others were struggling? Do they keep confidences? Is there a specific reason you need them to know, such as an adjustment that would genuinely help? If yes, telling one trusted person is often enough; you rarely need to announce anything widely.

More, if you want it [^](#)

Timing matters too. A steadier week is usually a better time to have the conversation than the middle of a crisis, when everything feels urgent and raw. And you can start small: share the practical need first ("I work better with a bit more notice before changes") and only share more if and when it feels safe. Disclosure is not one big confession. It can be a slow, careful opening of a door you keep your hand on.

● **TRY THIS**

Think of one person at work you would trust first, if you ever chose to tell someone. You do not have to say anything to them. Just knowing who that person might be makes the choice feel less frightening and more in your hands.

4

✿ ADJUSTMENTS AND RETURN

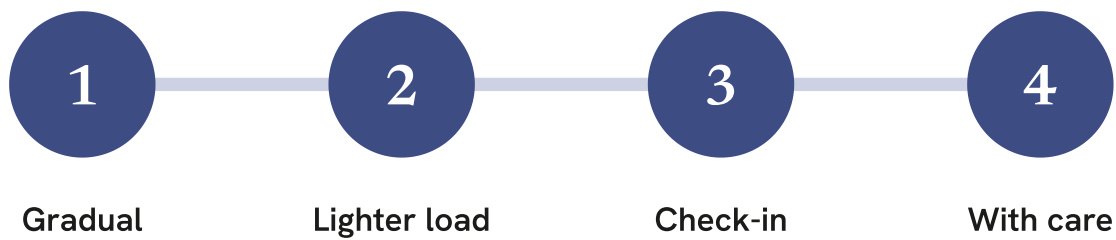
Small changes, and coming back after leave

✿ IN SHORT

Practical support at work, alongside proper care, genuinely helps. Adjusted duties or a planned, gradual return can mean fewer days lost and a smoother path back to working well.

Sometimes the thing that would help most is small and practical: a bit more notice before changes, a quieter place to focus, flexible hours on the harder days, or a lighter load for a while during a rough patch. These are not favours or special treatment. They are the everyday adjustments that let a capable person keep doing good work through a hard season.

If you have had to take time off, coming back can feel daunting. Here the evidence is encouraging. Practical support at work combined with treatment, such as adjusted duties or a planned, gradual return rather than being thrown straight back into everything, can help people take fewer days off sick and get back to working well. A phased, supported return usually works better than a sudden, total one.



A gentler path back. A return that is planned and gradual tends to hold.

Come back gradually, not all at once, where you can.

Start with a lighter or adjusted load for a while.

Agree a simple check-in so problems get caught early.

Pair the return with your ongoing care, not instead of it.

You do not have to earn these changes by proving how sick you are. A short, practical conversation is usually enough: "A gradual return over a few weeks would help me come back well" is a reasonable thing to ask. Frame it around what helps you do the work, because that is what an adjustment is for.

More, if you want it [^](#)

If a formal return-to-work plan is not offered, you can still shape one informally with a manager you trust: fewer hours to begin with, one or two duties set aside for now, and a date to review how it is going. Keep it simple and concrete. The aim is not to do less forever; it is to build back to full strength without breaking again on the first hard week.

● TRY THIS

Write down one adjustment that would make your working week more manageable right now. Make it small and specific. Even if you never ask for it, naming it clearly is the first step to knowing what you actually need.

5

✿ A MANAGER WHO HELPS

When your manager is an ally

✿ IN SHORT

A manager who responds with support rather than judgement makes a real, measurable difference. Workplaces can prepare managers to notice, listen, and help without prying.

Not every manager knows how to respond well, and that is often a lack of training, not a lack of heart. But a good one changes the whole experience. A manager or supervisor who meets you with support instead of judgement makes a genuine difference to how the hard season goes; workplaces that prepare their managers to notice, to listen, and to help without prying, protect their people better. The single most useful thing a manager can offer is not expertise; it is a steady, non-judging response.



A manager who listens first, and helps without prying.

When Arjun finally told his manager, she did something simple and right. She did not ask for the diagnosis, did not pry into the details. She said, "Thank you for telling me. What would actually help you at work?" They agreed on a couple of small changes, and she checked in now and then without hovering. Nothing dramatic happened. He just found the work a little more possible, and himself a little less alone with it.

If you are lucky enough to have a manager like that, it is worth telling them plainly what helps and what does not. If you are not, that is not your failing; it is a gap in how your workplace has prepared its people. You can still lean on the other supports in the next section, and keep your private matters private with those who have not earned your trust.

More, if you want it [^](#)

A useful thing to remember: a good manager does not need to become your counsellor. Their job is not to treat you. It is to make reasonable room for you to do your work and get proper care, and to respond to you like a person rather than a problem. That is a low bar, and a fair one to hope for.

● TRY THIS

If you have a manager or senior you trust, notice one small thing they already do that helps, even if you have never named it. Knowing what support looks like from them makes it easier to ask for a little more of it when you need to.

6

✿ GETTING HELP

Where the real help is

✿ IN SHORT

Reaching out for help, whether workplace support, a phone helpline, or a doctor, is a reasonable and effective step. Support at work plus proper care works better together than either one alone.

You do not have to hold all of this by yourself, and you do not have to wait until things fall apart. Reaching out for help, whether that is a workplace support programme, a phone helpline, or a doctor, is a reasonable and effective step, not a last resort or a sign of weakness. And what the evidence keeps showing is that support at work and proper care work better together than either alone.

You do not have to choose between fixing it at work and getting care; the two are stronger side by side.

If your workplace has any kind of support, an employee assistance line, a counsellor, an HR person you trust, it is worth knowing what is there, even if you never use it. Alongside that, a doctor can properly assess what is going on and help you build a plan. There are also free helplines you can call in your own language, without giving your name, simply to talk to someone who understands.

 IN YOUR CORNER

On the days when it all feels like too much and telling anyone feels impossible, hear this: reaching out is not you falling apart. It is you doing the sensible, brave thing that quietly turns the week around. You are allowed to be helped.

More, if you want it

You can also think about medicine as one option among several, never the whole answer. A doctor may sometimes suggest a type of medicine that helps steady the mind, alongside talking support and practical changes at work; any such decision is made carefully, with you, and never instead of understanding and support. The point is that you have more than one door, and none of them require you to have everything figured out first.

● TRY THIS

Before you close this, do one small thing. Save one number or name you could reach out to: a helpline, a doctor, an HR contact, a trusted senior. You do not have to call today. You just have to know the door is there, so that on a harder day it is one less thing to find.

WHERE THIS COMES FROM

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FURTHER READING

- WHO: Mental health at work
- NHS: Mental health at work

This guide helps you recognise and understand. It is not a diagnosis. For that, see a professional.

● Feeling like it is all too much? **Read the crisis card.** Help is one page away.