

Meet an unexpected productivity boost: mental health care



As a caring leader, you likely pay close attention to your employees' mental, emotional and behavioral health and try to be supportive of them.

But while compassion might be your main concern, you can't ignore the effect poor mental health can have on your business. As you develop strategies to foster mental health in the workplace, remember that your efforts are not just about supporting employees; they are about supporting your business as well. Here's the connection between mental health and staying in the black.

- **Mental health affects how people think.** You might think of conditions such as depression and anxiety as being about emotions. And while some people with depression feel persistently sad, for example, that's not the only way depression plays out. It may also be described as feelings of loss or anger that interfere with everyday activities, including work. Even mild depression can have these same effects.¹ That's not to say that people with mental health conditions cannot be valuable employees, but rather that it can keep them from functioning at their best.
- **Poor mental health makes people miss work.** You might have heard the term "mental health day" as a synonym for blowing off work without much notice. But that's not what most mental health days actually are; taking a "mental health day" means taking a day off to focus on relieving stress, relaxing, having fun and most importantly, preventing burnout.² Depending on the state you're in and your company policy, you might already include mental health in your leave policy. But regardless of what your policy is, a mental health day amounts to time that your employees aren't at work — an absence that can be prevented for some, with the proper care.
- **Even when people who are experiencing mental health issues show up, they may be less productive.** There is clear evidence that poor mental health is associated with lost productivity through absenteeism and presenteeism, according to the American Psychiatric Association.³ That productivity loss adds up: The World Health Organization estimates that \$1 trillion is lost annually due to depression and anxiety alone.⁴

- **Some businesses try to support their employees — but employees might not feel the impact.**

You're probably not shocked to hear that Americans' mental health has been suffering, and neither are your peers. But business leaders on the whole seem to overestimate the impact that their mental health support has on their employees. More than half of employees don't think their employers care about their mental well-being.⁵

- **The good news: When employers do invest wisely in mental health, it pays off.** If you're able to close the gap between what you are offering and what employees value in mental health support, you are helping your bottom line as much as you are helping your employees. While measuring dollar-for-dollar ROI on health and wellness can be difficult, the benefit of having lower turnover, higher productivity and healthy employees can make the investment worthwhile. Employees who feel supported by their employers have better mental health outcomes and higher levels of engagement at work.⁵

You've had to make difficult choices for your business — including some that might pit the financial security of your workforce against the financial security of your business. But mental health care doesn't need to be one of those choices. Investing in your employees' mental and emotional well-being is a true win-win.

Learn more about protecting your employees' well-being — and your financial health.
Contact your Aflac benefits advisor or visit [Aflac.com/business](https://aflac.com/business).

¹ World Health Organization. "Depressive disorder (depression)." Published 8.29.26. [Accessed 4.1.26](#).

² VeryWellMind. "It's OK to Take a Mental Health Day - When and How to Ask for One." Updated 2.26.25. [Accessed 4.1.26](#).

³ PLANSponsor. "The Workplace Mental Health Crisis of 2025." Published 3.27.25. [Accessed 4.1.26](#).

⁴ Forbes. "The Trillion-Dollar Productivity Drain: Absenteeism And Presenteeism." Published 9.30.25. [Accessed 4.1.26](#).

⁵ Aflac. "Aflac Workforces Report: Workplace benefits trends. Executive Summary." Published 2025. [Accessed 4.1.26](#).

Content within this article is provided for general informational purposes and is not provided as tax, legal, health or financial advice for any person or for any specific situation. Employers, employees and other individuals should contact their own advisers about their situations. For complete details, including availability and costs of Aflac insurance, please contact your local Aflac agent.

Individual insurance coverage is underwritten by Aflac. Group insurance coverage is underwritten by Continental American Insurance Company (CAIC), a wholly owned subsidiary of Aflac Incorporated. CAIC is not licensed to solicit business in New York, Guam, Puerto Rico or the Virgin Islands. For groups situated in California, group insurance coverage is underwritten by Continental American Life Insurance Company. For individual insurance coverage in New York or coverage for groups situated in New York, coverage is underwritten by Aflac New York.

WWHQ | 1932 Wynnton Road | Columbus, GA 31999

Aflac New York | 22 Corporate Woods Boulevard, Suite 2 | Albany, NY 12211

Continental American Insurance Company | Columbia, SC