

About half of workers are concerned about discussing mental health issues in the workplace

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Roughly half of American workers say they are comfortable talking about their mental health in the workplace and more than one-third are worried about job consequences if they seek mental health care, according to a new poll released here today by the American Psychiatric Association (APA).

While most workers with benefits know how to access [mental health services](#) (70 percent) and are at least somewhat comfortable accessing services (62 percent) through their [employer](#) if needed, more than one-quarter of workers are uncertain about how to access [mental health care](#) through their employer.

Mental health stigma is still a major challenge in the workplace. Just over half of workers say they are at least somewhat comfortable discussing mental health openly with coworkers and supervisors; however, only about one in five are completely comfortable. Younger workers are much more likely to feel they can discuss their

mental health—millennials are almost twice as likely as baby boomers to be comfortable (62 percent vs. 32 percent).

A significant portion of workers, more than one in three, are concerned about retaliation or being fired if they seek mental health care. Looking at age and gender, [younger men](#) are more likely to be concerned than older men or women of any age about retaliation.

Most workers say they would recognize signs of distress in co-workers and would reach out to help. About three in four workers say they would recognize signs of anxiety, depression or other [mental illness](#) among co-workers and a majority say they would reach out to a co-worker showing signs of mental illness. Younger women, 18-49, are more likely (82 percent) and older men less likely (66 percent) to recognize signs in co-workers. Most people say they would help guide a troubled co-worker to mental health resources. However, about one in four workers say they would not know where to guide their co-[worker](#) for mental health help.

"These results show both encouraging and concerning aspects of mental health in the workplace," said APA President, Altha Stewart, M.D. "The extent to which people are willing to reach out and help colleagues is encouraging. However, the continued hesitancy among many to talk about mental health concerns in the workplace is troubling. We have work to do to get to the point where people are as comfortable talking about mental health concerns as they are about physical health concerns," she said.

The vast majority of workers say their employers offer some type of mental health resources, such as an employee assistance program, mental health days, wellness programs or onsite mental health

services. More than 60 percent of workers feel their employers are providing sufficient mental [health](#) coverage. About a quarter (27 percent) say their employer does not offer sufficient coverage and 13 percent are unsure.

Employers are increasingly addressing stigma against mental illness, as seen in [case studies](#) developed by the APA Foundation's Center for Workplace Mental Health that highlight innovative employer practices. The Center provides employers with tools, turn-key programs and information needed to promote the [mental health](#) and well-being of employees and their families.

These findings are from an APA-sponsored poll conducted online using ORC International's CARAVAN Omnibus Survey. The surveys were collected from a nationally [representative sample](#) of 1,005 adults during the period April 4-7, 2019 and from similar polls of about 1,000 adults in March 2018 and April 2017. The margin of error is +/-3.1 percentage points.

More information: * An Employee Assistance Program (EAP) is a free confidential voluntary workplace service offered by employers. An EAP helps employees deal with a variety of concerns such as work-life stressors, issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, family issues, financial concerns, relationship problems or legal concerns.

Provided by American Psychiatric Association

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