



Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers

Burnout, mental distress, and mental illnesses like depression and anxiety are at an all-time high in the wake of COVID-19. The turnover rate in the U.S. has now climbed to 57%, reflecting a 15% increase in the last four years alone. Organizations are rapidly shifting priorities to focus on occupational health and wellness programs to address employee mental health and well-being.

The **Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers** teaches mental health support skills to leaders (managers and supervisors) through engaging and interactive online activities. Leaders will learn to better recognize and support employees' mental health through actionable lessons and leadership behaviors, with a goal of enhancing workforce retention and well-being.

Participating leaders begin with a **1-hour online training** followed by our **Supportive Leadership Behavior Tracking Exercise** that reinforces use of learned supportive behaviors in daily practice and requires only two minutes per day for a two-week period.

Originally tested in a Military population, the Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers has been shown to **significantly improve**:

- ✓ Leaders' knowledge of mental health and supportive leadership behaviors
- ✓ Leaders' perceived usefulness and favorability of the program
- ✓ Employees' sense of having emotional and instrumental support at work*
- ✓ Employees' general feelings of belonging within their teams*

This training was co-developed by Occupational Health experts, Drs. [Leslie Hammer](#) and [Jennifer Dimoff](#). Organizations interested in implementing the **Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers** should contact Dr. Leslie Hammer (Principal Investigator) at hammerl@ohsu.edu. To learn more about our evidence-based supervisor support interventions, visit supportiveleadership.org.

**Particularly evident among workers who reported high levels of stress and loneliness at the start.*

Managers need to recognize and respond to employees' mental health challenges

More than 46 million Americans are currently living with a mental illness and more than 12 million have considered death by suicide.^{1,2} In any given year, one in five U.S. adults will experience a mental illness.²

A mentally unhealthy workforce is costly. Mental health in the U.S. carries an annual price tag of \$225 billion in medical care, suicide-related expenses, and lost productivity,³ with \$211 billion in depression-related losses alone.⁴ According to the National Safety Council, employers spend approximately \$15,000 annually *per employee* who is experiencing mental distress.^{5,6} This includes an average of \$4,700 in lost days and \$5,700 in turnover per employee each year.^{5,6} Similarly, job stress has an estimated cost of \$221 million to \$187 billion annually, largely due to losses in productivity, health care and medical costs.⁷ Chronic job stress, or burnout, significantly heightens employees' risk for experiencing anxiety and depression, and increases their likelihood of engaging in substance use.^{8,9}

Managers and supervisors greatly influence worker well-being, for better or worse. Across industries, more than 85% of employees report that work impacts their mental health and well-being.¹⁰ Most workers feel their supervisor provides inadequate emotional support.¹⁰ Those who feel unable to discuss job stress with their supervisor are also more likely to feel the workplace is not psychologically

The ROI for employers who prioritize workers' mental health is \$4 for every dollar invested!⁴

safe.^{10,11} Conversely, supervisors' emotional (e.g., willingness to discuss stressors) and instrumental support (e.g., provision of resources) improve both perceptions of a having a healthy work environment and employee retention.^{10,12,13}

The **Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers** teaches leaders how to recognize and respond to employees' mental distress with specific emotional and



Contact Dr. Leslie Hammer (hammerl@ohsu.edu) for access to the **Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers**

instrumental support behaviors. The program requires only a small time investment from participants and promotes tangible, measurable improvements in staff and organizational well-being.

Our research has repeatedly shown that leadership support training interventions can significantly improve employees' job stress, mental health, and cardiovascular health.¹⁴⁻¹⁷ Those targeted specifically to improve mental health recognition and support show a strong **Return on Investment (ROI)** with sustained benefits for both managers and employees.¹⁸⁻²¹

Meet the Experts



Dr. Leslie Hammer is Co-Director of the [Oregon Healthy Workforce Center](#) at [Oregon Health & Science University](#) (OHSU), and a Professor within the [Oregon Institute for Occupational Health Sciences](#). Dr. Hammer is a renowned expert in [Total Worker Health](#)[®], work-life balance, job stress, and the development of effective supervisor-support trainings. She has studied job stress and the effectiveness of workplace interventions within a variety of industries, including retail, healthcare, construction, information technology, and government. Dr.

Hammer's supervisor supportive training programs have significantly improved employees' job performance, workplace safety, organizational commitment, job satisfaction, sleep quality, cardiovascular health, work-family stress, and turnover intentions. The full catalog of available leadership trainings developed by Dr. Hammer and her team can be found at supportiveleadership.org.

Dr. Jennifer Dimoff serves as Assistant Professor in the [Telfer School of Management](#) at the [University of Ottawa](#), as well as an Affiliate Faculty Member at [OHSU](#). She has worked with local, national, and



international organizations to develop, deliver, and evaluate evidence-based solutions to real workplace problems. Dr. Dimoff co-developed the [Mental Health Awareness Training](#) (MHAT), which was one of the first scientifically evaluated mental health training programs for workplace leaders to demonstrate ROI. Dr. Dimoff has co-edited a book, [Leading to Occupational Health and Safety: How Leadership Behaviours Impact Organizational Safety and Well-Being](#), that challenges the reader to explore the critical roles leaders play in determining the health, safety, and mental well-being of their employees. Her primary area of

research focuses on the intersections between leadership, occupational health and safety, and employee training and development.

To introduce the Workplace Mental Health Support Training for Managers or explore research collaborations at your organization, please contact Dr. Leslie Hammer (hammerl@ohsu.edu).

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Resources

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