# TOTAL BRAIN

# **MENTAL HEALTH:**

## A CRISIS AT WORK

# Poor mental health is affecting your organization.

Organizations offer employees a number of physical health benefits ranging anywhere from standard health insurance to fitness programs, reimbursements, and discounts.

## But what about an employee's mental health?

Poor mental health can hurt productivity, contribute to poor physical health, and drive up healthcare costs. With an estimated 44 million U.S. adults experiencing a mental health condition each year[1], it's time for organizations to better understand the mental health of their workforce and focus on providing the support their employees need.

### An employee's poor mental health can:

▶ Decrease productivity

▶ Increase risk of physical health conditions

▶ Raise an employers healthcare costs

▶ Promote absenteeism and presenteeism

TOTAL BRAIN

# DID YOU KNOW...

## Poor mental health and poor physical health often affect each other.

It's important for organizations to realize that poor mental health and poor physical health are often related. Poor mental health can contribute to physical illnesses. Take, for example, someone suffering from stress. This can increase their risks for physical health conditions such as obesity, high blood pressure, and heart disease. Depression can cause fatigue and insomnia, which will prevent an employee from performing their best in the office.

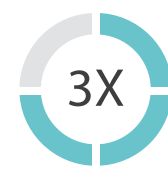## The Link Between Physical and Mental Health

Those with a mental health condition are at a higher risk of developing a physical illness.
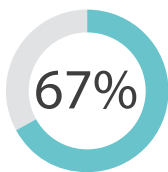
**67%**
higher risk of heart disease[12]
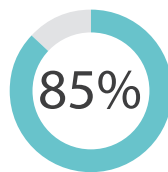
**85%**
more likely to suffer a heart attack[13]
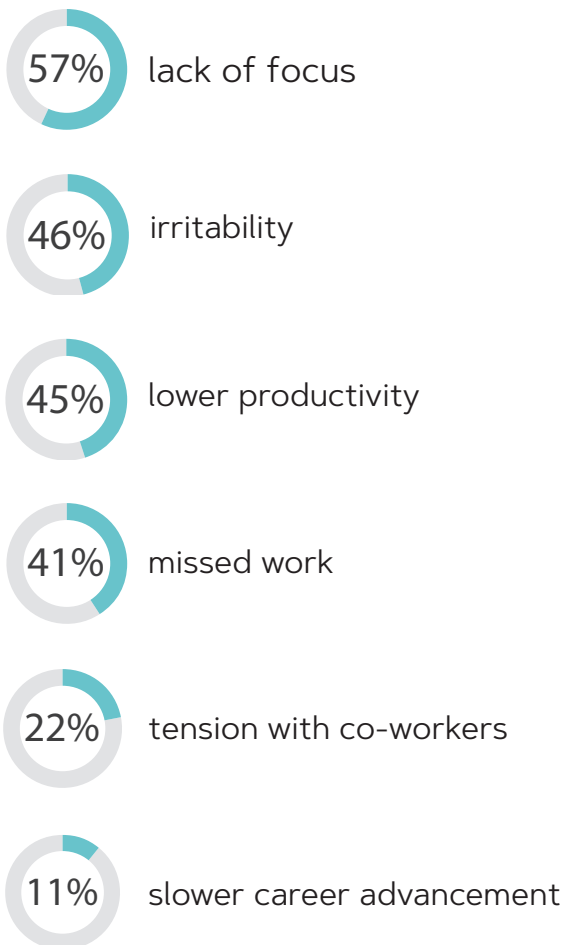
**3X**
more likely to develop hypertension[14]

Focusing on mental health is not only beneficial for employees, but the organization as well. By working with employees to better manage their mental health, organizations can reduce their total healthcare costs. Studies show that mental health costs are rising twice as fast as any other medical expense.[2] An employee with a mental health condition submits on average $14,967 per year in medical claims compared to $4,929 for the total population.[2] Employees with untreated mental health conditions can struggle with physical, mental, and emotional impairments that can increase over time, while also increasing the healthcare costs for the employer.

TOTAL BRAIN

# WHAT'S POOR MENTAL HEALTH REALLY COSTING YOUR ORGANIZATION?

Direct costs to treat mental conditions are easily quantifiable. But what most organizations don't often account for is the indirect costs associated with poor mental health. Absenteeism and presenteeism in the workplace aren't always apparent. That doesn't mean, however, these conditions aren't costing an organization money. In fact, the calculated cost of presenteeism in the U.S. is expected to be more than $150 billion a year.[3]

## According to Unum's 2019 Mental Health report[7], mental health issues can have a significant impact on job performance.

**57%** lack of focus

**46%** irritability

**45%** lower productivity

**41%** missed work

**22%** tension with co-workers
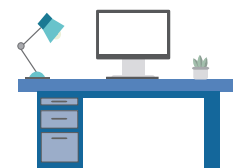
**11%** slower career advancement

## Adding Up the Costs

Depression has been found to be the leading cause of lost work hours, measured through absenteeism and presenteeism.[4]

One study shows that an employee with major depressive disorder loses 27.2 work days per year with a per capita cost of $4,426 per ill worker.[5]

In total, 62 percent of missed work days each year can be attributed to a mental health condition.[6]

# Why are so many Americans suffering with their mental health?

Our research shows that 76 percent of 18-34 year olds admit they struggle with their mental health, but only one in four currently receives professional help.[9] Why? Employees often accept feelings of stress and anxiety as a normal part of their job. When an employee is expected to work long hours to complete a project with a tight deadline, or is bombarded with numerous projects at the same time, they consider this a normal part of the job.

Just like a physical health problem, those struggling with their mental health may require time away from work to recover. Unfortunately, employees don't always decide to take time off to focus on their mental health. One-third of 18 to 54 years olds say anxiety or depression causes them to be mentally unproductive at work.[9] To address their mental health concerns, employees often have to use their paid time off or possibly even unpaid leave which isn't always ideal.

**76%**

of 18-34 year olds admit they struggle with their mental health.

**33%**
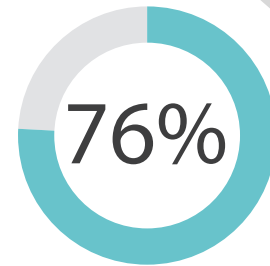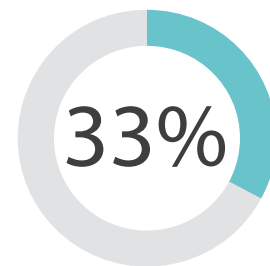
of 18-34 year olds say anxiety or depression causes them to be mentally unproductive at work.

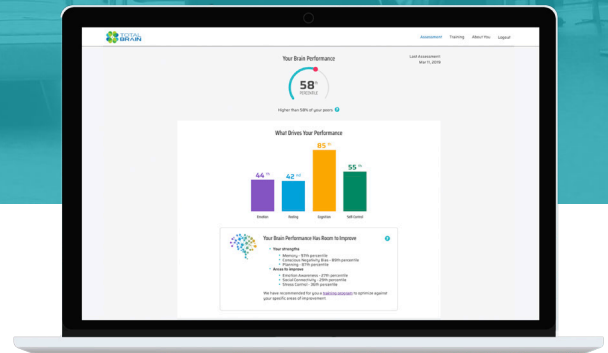TOTAL BRAIN

# Overcome the mental health stigma at work.

Unum's report also shows that over a third of employees don't disclose their mental health condition to their employers because they're ashamed of their condition, fear they may be discriminated against by co-workers, or worry they will be passed up on opportunities for career advancement due to their condition.[9]  It's here organizations can step in to break the stigma of mental health in the workplace by educating employees about the importance of caring for their mental health and supporting those who struggle with a condition.

To make the conversation about mental health in the workplace a more open and accepting experience, organizations can:

▶ **Focus on prevention -** Instead of waiting until a condition escalates, it's easier to tackle it with prevention. Offering a mental health and fitness program such as Total Brain allows employees to understand their brain's strengths and weaknesses, and improve their self-awareness and brain performance both in and out of work. In addition, Total Brain confidentially screens employees for common mental health conditions including depression, anxiety, ADHD,  and others so employees can take the appropriate next steps to seek out help.

▶ **Offer mental health benefits -** Organizations offer physical health benefits, so why not a benefits package that also focuses on mental health? Employees with access to these benefits are more likely to address their mental health concerns. EAP's can also assist with a wide range of problems including everything from financial worries to assistance for caregivers. Offering both practical and emotional support for employees through counseling can prevent certain issues from escalating and impacting mental health.

▶ **Learn to recognize the signs -** A mental health condition may not be easy to identify since it's difficult to understand what's going on inside an employee's head. Someone who distances themselves from co-workers or misses deadlines may be seen as an unmotivated employee when in fact, they could be suffering from depression. In this instance, it's important for organizations to train managers to learn how to recognize symptoms of a mental health condition and how to properly address it in the workplace.

▶ **Communicate with employees -**  Simply having resources for mental health is often not enough. The organization must communicate with employees about these available benefits and encourage them to take advantage. An organization that openly addresses mental health as a priority in the workplace and leads by example encourages employees to participate.

TOTAL BRAIN

# Give your employees what they're asking for.

Knowing the effects poor mental health can have on employees in the workplace, organizations need to take the necessary actions to support their employees' mental health. While 97% of employees feel acknowledging mental health is important, only 68% of employers are described as being committed to the mental health of their employees.[10] In addition, one in two employees would like to see their company focus more on mental health and well-being.[11] With this in mind, it's time organizations open their eyes to the mental health crisis in America and support the mental health of their employees for an overall happier, healthier, and more productive workforce.

## About Total Brain

Total Brain is an innovative mental health and fitness platform powered by the world's largest standardized neuroscientific database. Founded on the notion that our mental health can be measured, improved and managed like our physical health, our platform enables the assessment of your workforce's brain capacities and risk of mental conditions, coupled with proven brain and mind training exercises to consolidate their strengths and improve their weaknesses.

To learn more about Total Brain, visit totalbrain.com/learn-more

1. https://www.nami.org/learn-more/mental-health-by-the-numbers
2. https://www.cnbc.com/2018/09/26/employers-are-starting-to-think-about-healthy-differently.html
3. http://www.nationalpartnership.org/our-work/resources/workplace/paid-sick-days/lost-productive-work-time-american-productivity-audit.pdf
4. https://www.samhsa.gov/data/sites/default/files/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016/NSDUH-DetTabs-2016.pdf
5. https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/full/10.1176/ajp.2006.163.9.1561
6. "Bad for Business: The Business Case for Overcoming Stigma in the Workplace," National Alliance for Mental Illness of Massachusetts, 2015.
7. https://www.unum.com/about/newsroom/2019/march/mental-health-report---articles-and-research
8. https://nypost.com/2017/11/08/americans-check-their-phones-80-times-a-day-study/
9. Survey Methodology: Based on a 2019 study conducted by Total Brain and The PARAGRAPH Project among a representative general population sample of 1,008 people age 18+.
10. https://ceoroundtable.heart.org/mental-health-a-workforce-crisis-report/
11. https://www.mercer.com/content/dam/mercer/attachments/global/webcasts/gl-2018-pdf-global-talent-trends-study-us-canada.pdf
12. https://onlinedegrees.bradley.edu/blog/how-mental-health-affects-physical-health/
13. https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/21680721
14. https://consumer.healthday.com/encyclopedia/depression-12/depression-news-176/depression-and-high-blood-pressure-644943.html