Tips for managers supporting employees with anxiety

As the individuals on the frontlines of daily workplace interactions, managers play a pivotal role in supporting employees who may be experiencing anxiety.

1 Foster a supportive workplace culture

Create an environment where employees feel safe to discuss their challenges and seek help.

- Encourage employees to voice opinions and concerns with managers; offer suggestions on productive ways to do so.
- Be open to varying work and communication styles while recognizing that different workers may need different types of support.
- Recognize and share accomplishments. Praise employees when they perform well to help them celebrate success and feel more capable; encourage team members to do the same.
- Promote a growth-mindset approach; normalize the idea that mistakes are learning opportunities.

2 Ensure access to tools and resources

Empower employees to ask for the accommodations they need. Additionally, familiarize yourself with the resources offered by your company and actively promote them to your teams.

- Create clear policies for accessing accommodations and equip managers to support reasonable requests confidently and compassionately.
- Encourage employees to take breaks and use their time off to rest and recharge.
- Utilize slower periods at work for employees to refocus and re-energize.
- Promote “monotasking” and effective time management strategies.
- Set clear boundaries on work time and encourage employees to block focus time on their calendars when they will not be available to attend meetings.

3 Encourage, but do not force connection

Consider casual team interactions and volunteer activities, as these can help improve communication and build stronger relationships without forcing socialization.

- Encourage activities that build social connections, such as workplace volunteer opportunities, online social events, interest-based groups, and employee resource groups. Participation should be voluntary.