



Mental Wellbeing Toolkit

Locally Sponsored By:



Table of Contents

- I. The Business Case for Investing in Mental Wellbeing
- II. Heart Health + Mental Wellbeing Connection
- III. COVID-19 Domino Effect on Mental and Heart Health
- IV. Actionable Strategies for Employers Overview
- V. AHA Resources and Suggested Timeline Overview
- VI. AHA Employee Engagement Resources
- VII. Mental Resiliency Playbook for Employees

The Business Case for Investing in Mental Health

Employers should provide comprehensive mental health prevention and treatment programs because:

- Adults spend most of their waking hours at work.
- Mental health disorders and stress are common among the U.S. workforce.
- Many people have depression as well as other expensive chronic conditions including obesity, diabetes and heart disease.
- The cost of doing nothing is higher than investing in evidence-based prevention and treatment.
- Several evidence-based and cost-effective employer strategies are available.
- Effective treatments can lower total medical costs, increase productivity, (e.g. reduce presenteeism and absenteeism) and decrease disability costs.



Mental Wellbeing + Heart Health



A Two-Way Relationship



Better mental well-being leads to healthier behaviors, ie:

- Healthier Diet
- No Tobacco Use
- Motivation to Exercise
- Stress Management

Depression is #1 cause of disability globally

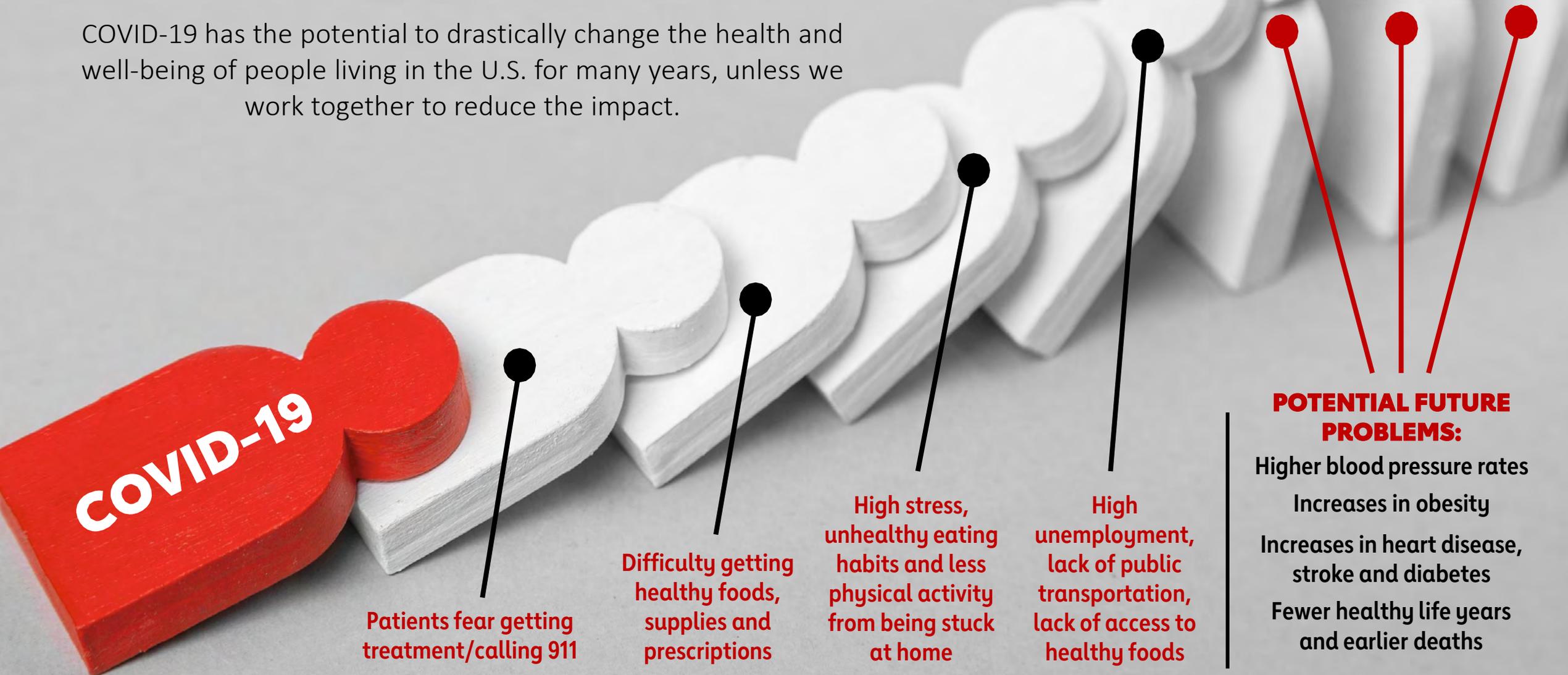
1 in 5 people with heart disease struggle with depression

Depression is **3x more common** in patients after a heart attack

Post-stroke depression affects **1 in 3** stroke survivors

The COVID-19 Domino Effect

COVID-19 has the potential to drastically change the health and well-being of people living in the U.S. for many years, unless we work together to reduce the impact.



Actionable Strategies for Employers



Leadership

Leaders demonstrate visible and proactive actions to build a diverse and inclusive culture that supports a mental health-friendly workplace.



Policies and Environmental Support

Develop a broad Mental Health Plan for the organization that can be fully implemented, understood, and available to all employees.



Communication

Develop a plan to communicate clearly and often to employees about the organization's mental health policies, medical benefits, education resources/training



Programs and Benefits

Offer a comprehensive package of medical and behavioral health benefits and programs based on caring for and supporting employees.



Engagement

Involve all employees in all aspects of workplace decision-making.



Community Partnerships

Use community partnerships to promote the internal and external objectives of the Mental Health Plan.



Reporting Outcomes

Collect and analyze a variety of data to identify strengths and opportunities to continually improve the mental health and well-being of employees.

***For more information on each strategy please visit:**

<https://ceoroundtable.heart.org/mentalhealth/introduction/>



MONTH	MONTHLY TOPIC	AHA RESOURCE DESCRIPTION
January	Gratitude + Mindfulness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 21 Days of Gratitude Infographic• Loving Kindness Meditation Infographic• Take the Mercy Health 'Be Well' Challenge
February	Heart Health Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 8 Steps to Prevent Heart Disease + Stroke Infographic• Learn your Heart Score• Register for Mercy Health's 5K Heart Walk
March	Food + Mood	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Healthy Diet Infographic• Mindful Eating Infographic
April	Move More Month	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Recommended Amount of Physical Activity Infographic• At Home Circuit Workout Infographic
May	Brain Health: Stroke Awareness	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• High Blood Pressure + Stroke Risk• Emotional Effects after Stroke Resources• Know the Signs of a Stroke (F.A.S.T)
June	Relax + Unwind this Summer	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Stop Stress in its Track Infographic• Fight Stress with Healthy Habits

New AHA Resources for Employee Engagement



Team Captain
+ Heart Throb
Opportunities



Live Fierce
Challenge



ACTIVITY
TRACKER
APP

(available Feb 13-Mar 13)

Building Resilience During the Crisis

COVID-19 Playbook For Employees

Building Resilience During the Crisis

- Resiliency is the ability to **withstand, recover and grow** in the face of stressors and changing demands
- Resilient people **can cope better** with stress and remain calm, manage their emotions, guard against burnout and remain productive
- Some people are born with resilience, but it is also a **skill that can be learned**



Resiliency Strategies (I)

- Maintain a **regular schedule** – allow for lunch and breaks in between
- Prioritize **personal hygiene** and limit physical contact with others
- Stay **active** and eat a **healthy diet**
- Get enough **sleep** – try for at least 7 hours a night (some may need more)



Resiliency Strategies (II)

- Regular **meditation** – even a few minutes a day – improves mood
- **Maintain your social network** – stay connected with family and friends
- **Journal** or write down a **gratitude list** to stay creative and present
- Get limit social media consumption, but **stay informed** (we recommend CDC and WHO)



Eat Smart

Focus on Five

- **Fruits and vegetables** – add color to your diet and try for 4-5 servings a day
- **Wholegrains** – try for 3 servings a day
- **Fish** – any fish is good for your heart, especially oily fish; try for 2 servings a week
- **Salt** – limit salt at home and select low sodium meals in stores and restaurants
- **Sugar** – reduce or eliminate sugar sweetened beverages; try for no more than 36 oz a week; add more water



[Click the icon to access more information!](#)

Fighting Stress

Healthy For Good

- **Slow down and be present** – avoid rushing around to do things
- **Let worry go**– things will go wrong sometimes; give yourself a break
- **Get organized** – managing a to do list will ensure you focus on what is important
- **Stay mentally and creatively active** – learn a new skill or work towards a goal



American Heart Association
Healthy for Good

STOP STRESS IN ITS TRACKS

TRY THESE TIPS TO GET OUT OF STRESS FAST.

1. Count to 10 before you speak or react.
2. Take a few slow, deep breaths until you feel your body unclench a bit.
3. Go for a walk, even if it's just to the restroom and back. It can help break the tension and give you a chance to think things through.
4. Try a quick meditation or prayer to get some perspective.
5. If it's not urgent, sleep on it and respond tomorrow. This works especially well for stressful emails and social media trolls.
6. Walk away from the situation for a while, and handle it later once things have calmed down.
7. Break down big problems into smaller parts. Take one step at a time instead of trying to tackle everything at once.
8. Chill out with music or an inspiration podcast to help you rage less on the road.
9. Take a break to pet a dog, hug a loved one or help someone out.
10. Work out or do something active. Exercise is one of the best antidotes for stress.

**GET MORE WELLNESS TIPS AT
[HEART.ORG/HEALTHYFORGOOD](https://www.heart.org/healthyforgood)**

EAT SMART. MOVE MORE. BE WELL.

© Copyright 2020 American Heart Association, Inc., a 501(c)(3) not-for-profit. All rights reserved. Healthy for Good is a trademark of the AHA. Unauthorized use prohibited. 8/20 DS18478



[Click the icon to access a printable version!](#)

Sleep Hygiene

Be Well

- **Move it**– no technology in the bedroom
- **Close it**– a dark room is more conducive to getting your zzz's
- **Set it** – set your alarm clock and try to keep a regular time for waking up
- **Enjoy it**– exposure to sunlight will boost your Vitamin D



American Heart Association
Healthy for Good

CLEAN UP YOUR SLEEP HYGIENE.

Is your phone keeping you up at night? With a few tweaks to your tech habits, you can wake up more refreshed and ready to face the day.

- MOVE IT.**
Charge your device as far away from your bed as possible. Added bonus? The distance may help you feel less overwhelmed in general.
- DIM IT.**
Dim your screen or use a red filter app at night. The bright blue light of most devices can mess with your circadian rhythm and melatonin production.
- SET IT.**
Alarms aren't just for waking up – set a bedtime alarm to remind you that it's time to wrap it up for the night.
- LOCK IT.**
If you've got a scrolling habit you need to kick, try an app-blocking app that makes it impossible to get lost in after-hours emails, social media or gaming.
- BLOCK IT.**
Tell notifications to buzz off if they're waking you up at night. Put your phone on a "do not disturb" mode to block it all out when you're trying to sleep.

EAT SMART. MOVE MORE. **BEWELL.**

GET MORE WELLNESS TIPS AT
[HEART.ORG/HEALTHYFORGOOD](https://www.heart.org/healthyforgood)

 [Click the icon to access a printable version!](#)

Physical Activity

Release Stress

- **Move More**– Regular physical activity improves mood and helps release stress
- **Sleep More**– Exercise is not only one of the best ways to keep your body healthy, it also helps improve quality of sleep
- **Healthy Body=Healthy Mind**– Studies show that higher fitness levels are linked to better attention, learning, working memory and problem solving
- **Recommendations for Adults**– Get at least 150 minutes per week of moderate-intensity aerobic activity or 75 minutes per week of vigorous aerobic activity



American Heart Association
Healthy for Good

MAKE EVERY MOVE COUNT

When you Move More every day, you can reach some pretty big goals over time. With motivation, dedication and great foot support, your small daily steps can add up to huge strides. Let your feet take you places you never thought possible!

 <p>10 Minutes of stretching is like walking the length of a football field.</p>	 <p>2.5 Hours of walking every week for a year is like walking across the state of Wyoming.</p>
 <p>30 Minutes of singles tennis is like walking a 5K.</p>	 <p>1 Hour of dancing every week for a year is like walking from Chicago to Indianapolis.</p>
 <p>20 Minutes of vacuuming is like walking one mile.</p>	 <p>30 Minutes of grocery shopping every other week for a year is like walking a marathon.</p>

Source: <http://www.heart.org>

EAT SMART ADD COLOR **MOVE MORE** BE WELL

For more ways to add activity to your life, visit HEART.ORG/MOVEMORE

 [Click the icon to access a printable version!](#)