
Strength through Awareness

Supervisors and Mental Health Support

Mental health influences how people think, feel, and act throughout their everyday lives. Just like physical health, mental health is not static—our well-being can change depending on stress, personal circumstances, and the support systems we have in place. For USPS supervisors, understanding the basics of mental health is a key part of maintaining a safe, respectful, and productive work environment.

Employees may experience a wide range of mental health symptoms, including stress, anxiety, depression, and reactions related to trauma or grief. It is important to remember that these symptoms do not look the same for everyone. Cultural background, age, identity, and life experiences all shape how individuals express distress. Some employees may share emotional concerns directly. Others may report headaches, fatigue, or physical discomfort. Some may become quieter or more withdrawn, while others may show frustration more easily. These differences highlight the need for supervisors to approach each situation with awareness, patience, and respect.

Misconceptions about mental health can create significant barriers to receiving support. Mental health challenges are common, and they are not signs of weakness or failure. Many people managing mental health concerns continue to work effectively, support their families, and contribute positively to their communities. Mental health struggles are not always visible, and asking questions or checking in does not make the situation worse—respectful, open conversations often reduce stigma and empower individuals to seek help.

Every person's path to well being is unique. Some employees benefit from conversations with trusted family members or friends. Others may rely on professional counseling, physical activity, mindfulness practices, faith communities, or creative outlets. There is no single “right” approach, and what works for someone at one point in life may not work at another. For some individuals, receiving a mental health diagnosis can bring clarity and direction. A diagnosis does not define a person; rather, it helps guide treatment, resources, and support plans.

Daily habits also influence both emotional and physical resilience. Routine practices—such as maintaining healthy sleep, taking short breaks, practicing breathing or relaxation techniques, staying connected with supportive people, or setting small, achievable goals—can strengthen well-being over time.

Supervisors are not expected to diagnose or treat mental health conditions. However, supervisors play an essential role by fostering awareness, supporting respectful communication, and guiding

employees to available resources. Creating an environment where employees feel safe asking for help is one of the most impactful leadership behaviors. When supervisors model empathy, reinforce confidentiality, and remind employees of support services—especially the Employee Assistance Program (EAP)—they help ensure mental health is treated with the same importance as physical safety.

The EAP is a completely confidential* resource available to all USPS employees and their families. By encouraging employees to reach out early, supervisors help reduce the impact of stress and support healthier teams. Through awareness, compassion, and consistent leadership, supervisors contribute to a stronger, more resilient workforce and a Postal Service where every employee feels valued and supported.

For additional information on how the EAP supports USPS leaders, reach out.

**EAP counselors have master's degrees and are licensed professionals. Your privacy is protected by strict federal and state confidentiality laws and regulations and by professional ethical standards for counselors. Information you share with the EAP may not be released to anyone without your prior written consent, except as required by law (e.g. when a person's emotional condition is a threat to him or herself or others, or there is suspected child or elder abuse) or the issuance of a court order upon a showing of good cause.*