

# Mental Health in the Workplace

COMPREHENSION • VOCABULARY • DISCUSSION

INTERACTIVE ONLINE TEST

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## Reading Passage

Read the passage carefully. Each paragraph is labelled with a letter for easy reference.

- A** In today's fast-paced work environment, mental health has become a significant concern for both employees and employers. Studies show that workplaces that prioritize mental well-being can see a marked improvement in productivity and employee satisfaction. For instance, companies that offer mental health resources, such as counseling services or stress management workshops, often report lower absenteeism rates. Employees feel more supported and valued when their mental health is acknowledged, which can lead to a more engaged workforce. A notable example is the tech giant, Google, which has implemented various mental health initiatives aimed at fostering a positive work culture. These initiatives not only help employees cope with stress but also enhance their overall job performance.
- B** Furthermore, organizations are beginning to understand the importance of creating an open dialogue about mental health. Encouraging conversations about mental well-being can reduce stigma and promote a culture of support. For instance, regular check-ins between managers and team members can provide opportunities to discuss workloads and emotional challenges. Companies like Microsoft have adopted such practices, where managers are trained to recognize signs of mental distress among their teams. This proactive approach not only helps employees feel safe to share their struggles but also allows organizations to intervene early, preventing more severe mental health issues. As the conversation around mental health continues to evolve, it is clear that fostering a supportive work environment is essential for the well-being of employees and the success of businesses.

## Vocabulary Glossary

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Key words and phrases from the passage. Study them before attempting the exercise below.

WORD / PHRASE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE SENTENCE
<b>prioritize</b>	to decide that something is more important than other things	<i>You should prioritize your health over work.</i>
<b>absenteeism</b>	when people are often not at work or school	<i>High absenteeism can be a problem for companies.</i>
<b>engaged</b>	interested and involved in what you are doing	<i>She was very engaged in the meeting and asked many questions.</i>
<b>initiative</b>	a plan or action that is intended to solve a problem	<i>The school started a new initiative to help students with learning difficulties.</i>
<b>stigma</b>	a negative and unfair belief about something	<i>There is still a lot of stigma around mental illness.</i>
<b>dialogue</b>	a discussion or exchange of ideas between people	<i>The teacher encouraged dialogue between the students.</i>
<b>distress</b>	great worry or pain	<i>He was in distress after hearing the bad news.</i>
<b>proactive</b>	taking action by causing change, not just reacting	<i>Being proactive can help prevent problems before they occur.</i>

### Vocabulary Exercise — Fill in the Blank

Use one word or phrase from the glossary above to complete each sentence. Each item is used only once. Answers are on the final page.

1. It's important to \_\_\_\_\_ your tasks to manage your time well.
2. The company is trying to reduce \_\_\_\_\_ by making work more enjoyable.
3. An \_\_\_\_\_ employee is usually more productive and happy at work.
4. The government launched a new \_\_\_\_\_ to improve public health.
5. We need to fight the \_\_\_\_\_ around mental health issues.
6. Open \_\_\_\_\_ can help solve many workplace problems.

## Comprehension Questions

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*These questions are different from the online practice test. Choose the best answer (A, B, C, or D). Answers and explanations are on the final page.*

### Question 1

**What is one effect of companies not addressing mental health in the workplace?**

- A. Higher absenteeism rates
- B. Increased productivity
- C. More engaged employees
- D. Lower employee satisfaction

### Question 2

**Why might companies encourage open dialogue about mental health?**

- A. To increase stress levels
- B. To reduce stigma
- C. To lower salaries
- D. To avoid legal issues

### Question 3

**Which company is noted for training managers to recognize mental distress?**

- A. Google
- B. Apple
- C. Microsoft
- D. Amazon

### Question 4

**What is a key component of a supportive work environment, according to the passage?**

- A. Strict deadlines
- B. Open communication
- C. High salaries
- D. Competitive atmosphere

### Question 5

**What does the passage suggest is a benefit of early intervention in mental health?**

- A. Higher medical costs
- B. Prevention of severe issues
- C. Increased employee turnover
- D. Reduced company profits

## Discussion & Writing Prompts

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*Each prompt references a specific detail from the passage above. Use for classroom discussion or a short written response (150–200 words).*

1. The passage mentions Google's mental health initiatives. Do you think technology companies have a special responsibility to lead in mental health support, and why?

2. According to the passage, Microsoft trains managers to recognize mental distress. How important is management training in improving workplace mental health, and could this be applied in other sectors?

3. The passage suggests that reducing stigma through open dialogue is crucial. How can schools and universities adopt similar strategies to support student mental health?

# Answer Key

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## COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Q1 A

Q2 B

Q3 C

Q4 B

Q5 B

## VOCABULARY EXERCISE

FIB1 prioritize

FIB2 absenteeism

FIB3 engaged

FIB4 initiative

FIB5 stigma

FIB6 dialogue

## Comprehension Question Explanations

Why the correct answer is right — and why each wrong option is incorrect.

### 1. What is one effect of companies not addressing mental health in the workplace?

✓ A — Higher absenteeism rates The passage states that companies that prioritize mental health see lower absenteeism rates, implying the opposite when not addressed.

✗ B — Increased productivity *Increased productivity is a benefit of addressing mental health, not ignoring it.*

✗ C — More engaged employees *More engaged employees result from prioritizing mental health, not neglecting it.*

✗ D — Lower employee satisfaction *Lower employee satisfaction occurs when mental health is not addressed.*

### 2. Why might companies encourage open dialogue about mental health?

✓ B — To reduce stigma The passage mentions that open dialogue can reduce stigma around mental health.

✗ A — To increase stress levels *The goal is to reduce stress, not increase it.*

✗ C — To lower salaries *The passage does not mention lowering salaries as a reason for dialogue.*

✗ D — To avoid legal issues *Avoiding legal issues is not mentioned as a reason for dialogue.*

### 3. Which company is noted for training managers to recognize mental distress?

✓ C — Microsoft Microsoft is specifically mentioned as training managers to recognize mental distress.

✗ A — Google *Google is mentioned for initiatives, not training managers.*

✗ B — Apple *Apple is not mentioned in the passage.*

✗ D — Amazon *Amazon is not mentioned in the passage.*

### 4. What is a key component of a supportive work environment, according to the passage?

✓ B — Open communication The passage emphasizes the importance of open dialogue and communication for mental health support.

✗ A — Strict deadlines *Strict deadlines can increase stress, not decrease it.*

✗ C — High salaries *High salaries are not mentioned as a component of support.*

✗ D — Competitive atmosphere *A competitive atmosphere can increase stress, not decrease it.*

**5. What does the passage suggest is a benefit of early intervention in mental health?**

✓ **B — Prevention of severe issues**

The passage states that early intervention can prevent more severe mental health issues.

✗ **A — Higher medical costs**

*Early intervention aims to reduce, not increase, costs.*

✗ **C — Increased employee turnover**

*The goal is to reduce turnover, not increase it.*

✗ **D — Reduced company profits**

*The passage suggests benefits, not reduced profits, from intervention.*

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