

# Mental Health's **STIGMA** in Healthcare

Despite the number of individuals affected by mental illness and mental health disorders, the stigma around mental health is only magnified in the healthcare industry.

## THE UNSPOKEN TRUTH FOR CAREGIVERS

IN 2018

IN THE U.S.  
ALONE

**1** in **5**  
ADULTS

EXPERIENCED  
MENTAL ILLNESS

(47.6 MILLION PEOPLE)<sup>1</sup>

SINCE 2001

SUICIDES  
HAVE RISEN BY

**31%**

+ IS THE **SECOND** LEADING  
CAUSE OF DEATH AMONG  
PEOPLE AGED 10-34<sup>1</sup>

## IN FACT

The same factors that increase a healthcare worker's stress level are the very barriers that can deter them from seeking treatment.

**FEAR OF JUDGEMENT**    **CALLING TO SERVE OTHERS**  
**UNREALISTICALLY HIGH STANDARDS**

## SUICIDE + SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER IN HEALTHCARE WORKERS

The suicide rate for physicians is twice that of active duty military members, with a **40% higher** occurrence of suicide among male doctors when compared to their male peers, and the female doctor suicide rate is about **130% higher** than women in the general population.<sup>2,3</sup>

Despite these unsettling truths, the mental health stigma in healthcare prevails. A national report found that **66% of male** physicians and **58% of female** physicians who reported burnout, depression, or both had never received professional help, were not currently seeking professional help, and did not plan to seek professional help.

**12.9%**

OF MALE PHYSICIANS

+

**21.9%**

OF FEMALE PHYSICIANS

**ABUSE ALCOHOL**<sup>4</sup>

## THE PANDEMIC'S EFFECT ON HEALTHCARE WORKERS

A CDC study of **5,000+** survey respondents between June 24, 2020 – June 30, 2020 found that almost

**31%**

OF SELF-REPORTED,  
UNPAID CAREGIVERS

+

**22%**

OF ESSENTIAL  
WORKERS

**HAD CONSIDERED SUICIDE IN PREVIOUS 30 DAYS.**

ANOTHER

**13.3%**

reported using alcohol + prescription or illicit drugs  
to manage stress related to the pandemic.

## HELPING HEALTHCARE WORKERS

In a time of uncharted territory, organizations already stretched thin can focus on the following tactics to help caregivers cope with the "new normal" during the COVID-19 pandemic and even beyond.

## FOCUS ON THE FOLLOWING TACTICS

- + Prepare
- + Connect
- + Debrief
- + Support

Interested in learning more about mental health's stigma in healthcare? [Download this free white paper.](#)

<sup>1</sup> National Alliance on Mental Illness. (2019, September). Retrieved August, 2020, from <https://www.nami.org/mhstats>

<sup>2</sup> Centier, C., Davis, M., Detre, T., Ford, D. E., Hansbrough, W., Hendin, H., Laszlo, J., Litta, D. A., Mann, J., Mansky, P. A., Michels, R., Miles, S. H., Projansky, R., Reynolds, C. F., 3rd, & Silverman, M. M. (2003). Confronting depression and suicide in physicians: a consensus statement. *JAMA*, 289(23), 3161-3166. <https://doi.org/10.1001/jama.289.23.3161>

<sup>3</sup> Scherhammer, E. S., & Colditz, G. A. (2004). Suicide rates among physicians: a quantitative and gender assessment (meta-analysis). *The American journal of psychiatry*, 161(12), 2295-2302. <https://doi.org/10.1176/appi.ajp.161.12.2295>

<sup>4</sup> Oreskovich, M. R., Shamailek, T., Dyrbye, L. N., Tan, L., Sotile, W., Satele, D., West, C. P., Sloan, J., & Boone, S. (2015). The prevalence of substance use disorders in American physicians. *The American journal on addictions*, 24(1), 30-38. <https://doi.org/10.1111/ajad.12173>