



August 2024

HealthAwareness

Helping people live healthier lives through health education and awareness.

United
Healthcare
Global

World Breastfeeding Week

World Breastfeeding Week, held annually during the first week of August, aims to bring attention to the great benefits to both the health and wellbeing of babies that breastfeeding can provide, as well as the wider promotion of maternal health, including good nutrition, poverty reduction and food security.¹ It is supported by the World Health Organization (WHO), UNICEF and numerous Ministries of Health and civil society partners.

The campaign will celebrate breastfeeding mums in all their diversity, throughout their breastfeeding journeys, while showcasing the ways families, societies, communities and health workers can have the back of every breastfeeding mother.¹

To help families and mothers, UnitedHealthcare Global offers **LiveWell**, which contains articles devoted to pregnancy and birth:

- **Postnatal care**
- **Fitness**
- **Postpartum depression**

Contact your UnitedHealthcare Global representative for your access code for LiveWell.

UnitedHealthcare Global also offers direct access to the **Employee Assistance Program (EAP)**. EAP is a 24/7 service with access to specialists and up to 7 annual visits per issue with qualified professionals, self-improvement resources, life and financial coaching, short-term support, and legal assistance.

Sources:

¹ <https://www.who.int/campaigns/world-breastfeeding-week/2024>



Recognising World Cancer Support Month

World Cancer Support Month serves as a poignant reminder of the challenges faced by millions of individuals battling cancer. It not only emphasizes the importance of providing medical treatment but also highlights the need for emotional and psychological support for those dealing with cancer. For employers, this month provides an excellent opportunity to cultivate a supportive work environment and to show care for employees who are either directly or indirectly affected by cancer. Here's how employers can actively engage in World Cancer Support Month and make a meaningful difference in the lives of their employees.

Creating a supportive work environment

Cancer doesn't just affect personal lives; it profoundly impacts professional environments too. Employees dealing with cancer may face physical limitations, require frequent medical appointments, and need time off for treatment and recovery. Similarly, employees who are caregivers to family members with cancer also face significant challenges, balancing job responsibilities with their caregiving roles.

- 1. Flexible work arrangements:** One of the most significant ways employers can support employees affected by cancer is by offering flexible working arrangements. This can include options for remote work, flexible hours, or part-time schedules. Such accommodations allow employees to manage their health needs or caregiving responsibilities without the added stress of job security.
- 2. Health benefits and wellness programmes:** Employers should ensure that their health benefits cover a comprehensive range of cancer-related treatments and services like those included in a [UnitedHealthcare Global BeHealthy plan](#). Additionally, offering wellness programmes that promote healthy lifestyles, such as [My Wellbeing](#) and [LiveWell](#), can be beneficial. Programmes could include stress management workshops, nutritional advice, and activities that encourage physical health, which are valuable for prevention and during cancer recovery.
- 3. Educational resources and awareness:** Employers can observe World Cancer Support Month by providing educational resources about cancer prevention, treatment, and the importance of early detection. Hosting seminars or workshops with healthcare professionals can demystify the disease and empower employees with knowledge.
- 4. Emotional support and counselling:** Emotional and psychological support is crucial for employees affected by cancer. Employers can facilitate access to counselling services like EAP, accessible through the [LiveWell portal](#) or app, and support groups where employees can share their experiences and challenges in a supportive environment.
- 5. Leave Policies and Financial Support:** Reviewing and possibly revising leave policies to accommodate the needs of those undergoing treatment or caring for a family member is another area where employers can make a significant impact. Additionally, providing information about financial support services and insurance can alleviate some of the financial burdens associated with cancer. [Financial wellbeing services](#), like those offered by UnitedHealthcare Global, are ideal tools for employees who need this type of support and guidance.

Building a culture of empathy and inclusion

Beyond formal policies and benefits, fostering a workplace culture that values empathy and inclusion can make a substantial difference. Encouraging open dialogues, where employees feel comfortable discussing their needs and challenges related to cancer, contributes to a supportive atmosphere. Recognising and respecting privacy, while providing an open door for communication, is essential.

World Cancer Support Month is not just about raising awareness but also about taking concrete actions that can help ease the burdens faced by employees dealing with cancer. By implementing supportive policies, fostering an inclusive culture and providing employees with a comprehensive international benefit plan that integrates wellbeing services at every stage of their journey, employers can significantly impact their employees' lives.

Navigating Anxiety in the Workplace

Anxiety is a universal human experience. We've all felt those butterflies before a big presentation or the racing heartbeat during a stressful situation. But what happens when anxiety becomes more than just a fleeting moment? When it lingers, intensifies, and starts affecting our daily lives?

For individuals with anxiety disorders, the emotional roller coaster can be overwhelming. Here's what you need to know:

- **Intense and excessive**
 - Anxiety disorders involve fear and worry that go beyond the ordinary. These emotions can be relentless, gnawing at the edges of consciousness even during seemingly calm moments. Imagine feeling like you're perpetually waiting for something terrible to happen—a sensation that never quite lets go.
- **The physical and cognitive impact**
 - Anxiety isn't just in the mind; it manifests physically. Muscle tension, restlessness, and a racing heart are common symptoms. On the cognitive front, excessive worrying dominates thoughts. It's like having a radio tuned to a constant stream of "what-ifs."
- **The ripple effect**
 - Anxiety disorders don't stay confined to an individual's inner world. They spill over into daily activities, affecting work, family relationships, and social interactions. Imagine trying to focus on a project while your mind races with worry about unrelated matters. Or feeling paralyzed by fear during a social gathering.

The global picture

According to the [World Health Organisation](#), approximately 4% of the global population currently grapples with an anxiety disorder. As of 2019, a staggering 301 million people worldwide were living with anxiety disorders—making them the most prevalent mental health conditions.

Breaking down barriers in the workplace

Workplace stressors like understaffed teams, growing responsibilities, and policy changes can exacerbate anxiety. Employers might underestimate how many employees are coping with anxiety concerns because not all symptoms are visible.

To help employees manage their anxiety in a positive way, consider using some of the following strategies:

1. **Promote mental health awareness:** Educate employees about anxiety and reduce stigma, offer resources like workshops or webinars on stress management
2. **Create a supportive environment:** Encourage open communication, provide flexible work arrangements when possible or consider adjustments like private workspaces
3. **Encourage self-care:** Promote healthy habits like exercise, mindfulness, and adequate sleep and encourage breaks during the workday

Discover more resources, tips and tools from [LiveWell](#) to help develop a stronger understanding what may be driving anxious thoughts and feelings – and how to help teams manage them.

- **Anxiety and panic:** Triggers and tools podcast for managers who want to develop a stronger sense for what triggers anxiety and even panic
- **What a panic attack may feel like and how to help**
- **Ways to ease anxiety and panic**
- **Leaving on a jet plane:** 5 essential coping skills for flight anxiety
- **Box breathing technique** and **4-7-8 breathing videos**

Five Ways to Help Employees Reduce Stress and Avoid Alcohol Issues

From diminished productivity to missing an entire day of work, workplace drinking can be an enormous cost for businesses.¹ Bearing this in mind, employers can play a vital role in helping to reduce alcohol consumption by employees both in and out of the workplace.

As the World Health Organization has noted, globally, 3 million deaths every year are caused by the harmful use of alcohol, and it is a contributing factor in over 200 diseases and injuries.² There are several signs that may point to an employee struggling with alcohol use. Examples include frequent lateness, overuse of sick leave and unexplained or unauthorised absences.³ If any of these behaviours are observed, it is important to make colleagues aware of any available resources or programmes.

Here are five strategies employers can consider to help improve employee wellbeing and encourage a healthier relationship with alcohol:

1. Strike a balance

Social events are a great way to lift spirits and strengthen relationships across the workplace. These events can often include both alcoholic and non-alcoholic drinks. However, it is important that every business has its alcohol workplace policies in place to avert any potential misunderstanding. Formalising these policies in a place where employees can access them, such as in a handbook or on a company internal website, is a first step to help ensure every employee knows what is expected of them.

2. Provide free and confidential support

Employers should also provide access to Employee Assistance Programmes (EAP) and other types of support to assist those who may be struggling with their alcohol use. Offering access to healthcare professionals and consultations (if necessary) can help to build a strong and supportive culture. For example, through UnitedHealthcare Global, employers can provide the [LiveWell platform](#) and direct eligible employees to a range of EAP resources designed to support mental health, including issues such as depression, anxiety and stress, and substance abuse.⁴

3. Host alcohol-free social events

Gatherings with colleagues are a fun opportunity to relax and strengthen colleague relationships. To support that, employers can make a commitment to diversify the type of social events that are organised. Rather than going to the bar, arranging alternative forms of social activities is an excellent way to raise morale and enhance employee wellbeing too. Stress-relieving activities, from pottery making to group cooking classes to bowling, may provide amusing alternatives to workplace drinking. For assistance, UnitedHealthcare Global's [My Wellbeing programme](#) offers various alcohol-free activities to keep employees involved.

4. Shake up office “happy hours”

Employees often feel obliged to drink if alcohol is supplied during a work-related event, so shaking up happy hour with alcohol-free alternatives can reduce consumption. Other alternatives for happy hour could include serving gourmet snacks and fruit, or even arranging a fun activity for entertainment to encourage employees to come together for a social event.

5. Take part in global initiatives

Encouraging your workplace to take part in initiatives such as Alcohol Awareness Week, which takes place each March, can help raise employee understanding of alcohol-related issues. Engaging openly and positively with the topic is a great chance to raise awareness of any potential issues inside the workplace.

Ultimately, it's all about **striking a balance** and **encouraging a healthy relationship with alcohol**. Whether it is providing an alcohol-free happy hour, training courses for employees, or initiatives to target stress, these are fantastic first steps to create a comfortable and positive workplace environment.

Discover additional resources available:

- **Alcohol: Taking action**
- **Reducing alcohol intake**
- **How to tell if you have an alcohol abuse problem**

Sources:

1 <https://alcoholchange.org.uk/alcohol-facts/fact-sheets/alcohol-in-the-workplace>

2 <https://www.who.int/news-room/fact-sheets/detail/alcohol>

3 <https://www.reassured.co.uk/feeling-stressed/>

4 <https://www.opm.gov/policy-data-oversight/worklife/reference-materials/alcoholism-in-the-workplace-a-handbook-for-supervisors/>



Discover more health and wellness resources from UnitedHealthcare Global

©2024 UnitedHealth Group Incorporated. The service marks contained in this literature are owned by UnitedHealth Group Incorporated and its affiliated companies, many of which are registered and pending service marks in the United States and in various countries worldwide. Confidential property of UnitedHealth Group Incorporated. Do not reproduce or redistribute without the expressed written consent of UnitedHealth Group Incorporated. UnitedHealthcare Insurance dac trading as UnitedHealthcare Global is authorized and regulated by the Central Bank of Ireland. Authorised by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Subject to regulation by the Financial Conduct Authority and limited regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority. Details about the extent of our regulation by the Prudential Regulation Authority are available from us on request. Registered in Ireland with registration number 601860. Registered Office: 70 Sir John Rogerson's Quay, Dublin 2, Ireland. UK Financial Services Register number 802734. 07/24 SAL-GS-1665613-EU

**United
Healthcare
Global**