Samata
HEALTH

SAMATA HEALTH'S

Guide to Workplace Mental Heath

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![Samata HEALTH logo]

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A Letter from Our CEO

At Samata Health, we believe that mental health and overall wellbeing are at the heart of living a fulfilling life. But let's face it—the traditional, one-size-fits-all approach to wellness just doesn't work. Each of us is unique, and so are our mental health needs. That's why we're on a mission to change how people and workplaces think about wellbeing.

We're embracing a new era that goes beyond basic mental health resources, and prioritizes personalized, holistic support.

And while AI has increasingly emerged as a promising tool in mental health care, we believe in the irreplaceable value of human connection and personalized care.

As we continue to evolve, we remain committed to integrating innovative solutions that align with our mission of human-centered care. Our focus is on empowering you with the tools and support necessary to navigate life's challenges and enhance your overall wellbeing.

Together, we can achieve a healthier, more balanced future for employees and their loved ones at all stages of their mental health journey.

With Kindness,

Elizabeth

Elizabeth Owings
CO-FOUNDER & CEO

For Better or For Worse? How AI is Transforming Workplace Wellness

Artificial Intelligence (AI) continues to touch different corners of our lives, and workplace wellness programs are no exception. The impact AI is making in this space is both exciting and complicated. On one hand, AI has the potential to make it easier than ever to stay healthy and balanced at work. On the other hand, its use is raising questions when it comes to privacy and ethics in providing mental health support.

Pros of Integrating AI into Workplace Wellness Programs

- **Predictive Health Insights**
  AI tools can predict potential health issues before they become bigger problems. For instance, some AI tools can spot early signs of burnout by analyzing patterns in stress levels or sleep habits This means **companies can step in early with support,** making a huge difference in preventing more serious health issues down the road.

- **Real-Time Help When You Need It**
  With AI, support is continuous. If someone needs help brainstorming self-care ideas, or wants tips on how to manage various health challenges, AI tools are available to help around the clock. Plus, some AI wellness programs offer real-time interventions and monitoring, like noticing if you're working too long without a break. In this case, the AI tool might suggest a quick walk or stretch break to avoid burnout.

Cons of Integrating AI into Workplace Wellness Programs

- **Privacy. Who's Watching?**
  Here's where things can get a bit tricky. AI needs a lot of personal data to work its magic—data like health records, activity levels, and even emotional states. But this raises a big question: How secure is this data?

  Employees understandably worry about who sees their personal health information and how it's being used. This means that companies should understand what data their vendors are collecting from their employees, and how they are using it, in order to communicate this information effectively to their teams.

- **The Paradox of Increased Stress Due to Monitoring**
  Paradoxically, the idea of constant tracking–even by tools meant to decrease employee stress–can make some users more anxious. One report labeled such AI tools as **bossware** – meaning tech that watches your every move (much like an overbearing boss). Feeling monitored can create pressure to always be "on," which can defeat the purpose of wellness programs meant to reduce stress.

- **AI is Not Immune to Bias**
  AI systems learn from vast datasets that reflect the decisions, assumptions, and inequities of the real world. These datasets—like historical health records, treatment outcomes, and demographic information—can carry deep-rooted biases. If certain groups are underrepresented or historically underserved, the AI will pick up on those patterns and replicate them.

  In one **widely cited and troubling case,** an algorithm used by several U.S. health systems showed racial bias by recommending additional care for healthier White patients over sicker Black patients. Why? Because the algorithm was trained on healthcare spending data, which often reflects access and cost—not actual medical need.

- **The Importance of Human Connection**
  AI-powered tools offer promising ways to make mental health care more efficient and accessible—but they can't replicate human empathy. That emotional connection between provider and patient, often called the therapeutic alliance, is a key ingredient in effective mental health treatment.

  In fact, research shows that the quality of the therapeutic alliance can account for up to 30% of the variance in treatment outcomes, regardless of the specific type of therapy being used. This means that the strength of the relationship between a patient and their provider can have as much, if not more, impact than the treatment method itself.

Should AI Have a Place in Your Wellness Program?

Yes—but not without careful consideration.

AI has the potential to make wellness programs smarter, more proactive, and more accessible. It can help identify patterns, personalize support, and even flag early signs of burnout. But as with any powerful tool, thoughtful implementation is key.

Concerns around privacy, transparency, and bias are serious. Employees need to know how their data is being used, who has access to it, and how it will impact their day-to-day experience.

What's more, AI can't—and shouldn't—replace the emotional intelligence, empathy, and trust that come from human connection. Especially in mental health care, the relationship between a person and their provider remains one of the most important factors in healing and growth.

As organizations explore the role of AI in employee wellness, the goal shouldn't be to automate empathy but to enhance care. That means using AI to empower—not replace—human centered support.

Samata HEALTH

Workplace Stress Management in High-Stakes Careers

Certain professions are hotbeds for burnout due to their demanding nature. Implementing industry-specific strategies can make a significant difference in how employees feel and perform. Below, we've outlined insights for a few of the most notoriously taxing industries.

Healthcare Professionals

Why? Healthcare workers face immense pressures, from long shifts to emotionally taxing situations. Studies indicate that burnout rates among healthcare professionals can reach **up to 70%**, which not only affects their wellbeing but also impacts patient care.

How to Manage

- **Peer Support Programs**
  Creating support groups where staff can share experiences and coping strategies fosters a sense of community and shared understanding.

- **Access to Mental Health Resources**
  Providing counseling services and stress management workshops equips staff with tools to manage stress effectively. Encourage use of these programs if you notice employees demonstrating signs of burnout or compassion fatigue.

EXAMPLE

A hospital implements a "buddy system" where nurses and doctors check in on each other's mental wellbeing. They also introduce optional debrief sessions after high-stress cases to process emotions and experiences.

Finance Professionals

Why? The finance sector is notorious for high stress levels, often due to high-stakes decision-making and long hours. Research indicates that workers experiencing burnout are nearly **three times more likely** to be actively searching for another job.

How to Manage

- **Clear Role Definitions**
  Ensuring employees have a clear understanding of their responsibilities reduces role ambiguity, preventing confusion and stress.

- **Regular Breaks**
  Encouraging short, frequent breaks helps maintain focus and reduce fatigue.

- **Mental Health Days**
  Allowing employees to take days off specifically to recharge mentally recognizes the need for mental rest in high-pressure environments.

EXAMPLE

A financial firm introduces a "no-meeting Friday" policy to allow employees uninterrupted time to focus on deep work or personal projects, reducing stress and cognitive overload.

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Workplace Stress Management in High-Stakes Careers

Technology Professionals

Why? Tech workers often grapple with rapid changes, tight deadlines, and the pressure to stay ahead in an ever-evolving industry. The constant demand to innovate can lead to significant stress and burnout. Plus, recent layoffs in the industry have employees feeling insecure.

How to Manage

- **Continuous Learning Opportunities**
  Providing resources for skill development helps employees keep up with industry changes, making them feel more competent and less stressed.

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**
  Offering options like remote work helps employees balance their personal and professional lives, increasing job satisfaction and reducing burnout.

- **Recognition Programs**
  Acknowledging and rewarding employee achievements boosts morale, validates efforts, and enhances motivation.

EXAMPLE

A tech company implements "innovation time," where employees dedicate a few hours per week to passion projects or skill-building, reducing stress while fostering creativity.

Veterinary Professionals

Why? Veterinary professionals deal with emotionally challenging situations like witnessing trauma, sharing terminal diagnoses, and more, leading to high levels of stress and compassion fatigue.

How to Manage

- **Debriefing Sessions**
  Allowing staff to process emotionally intense cases helps reduce stress and build emotional resilience.

- **On-Site Wellness Resources**
  Offering meditation rooms, relaxation spaces, or therapy dog sessions provides stress relief.

EXAMPLE

A veterinary clinic introduces biweekly team check-ins where staff can openly discuss emotional challenges and receive support from peers and supervisors.

Workplace Stress Management in High-Stakes Careers

Legal Professionals

Why? Lawyers and legal professionals face high-pressure environments with long hours, tight deadlines, and emotionally charged cases. The demanding nature of legal work can lead to chronic stress and burnout.

How to Manage

- **Mindfulness Programs**
  Providing guided meditation or stress reduction workshops can offer practical tools for handling pressure.

- **Flexible Work Policies**
  Allowing hybrid work options or designated quiet work hours can improve focus and mental wellbeing.

EXAMPLE

A law firm introduces a "quiet hour" policy where employees can work without interruptions, promoting deep focus and reducing stress.

By recognizing the unique challenges in each field and tailoring mental health strategies accordingly, organizations can create healthier, more sustainable work environments for employees across high-stakes industries.

From Zoomers to Boomers: Supporting Mental Health in a Multigenerational Workforce

One of the biggest challenges in fostering employee mental health is recognizing that different generations approach wellbeing in distinct ways. In today's diverse workplace, a one-size-fits-all strategy simply doesn't work. Employers must adopt a tailored approach to meet employees where they are and help them take advantage of available resources.

Here's how different generations engage with self-care and mental health, along with strategies to support them effectively.

1946 – 1964

Baby Boomers: Traditional Healthcare Advocates

Baby Boomers tend to rely on conventional healthcare practices, including regular visits to doctors and prescribed treatments. Many in this generation manage chronic health conditions, making preventive care a top priority. However, mental health remains a sensitive subject for some, with a tendency to "push through" challenges rather than seek formal support.

HOW TO SUPPORT THEM

Normalize mental health conversations by providing educational materials about therapy, psychiatry, and digital mindfulness tools. Highlight employee assistance programs (EAPs) and in-person counseling options to make mental health care feel more familiar and accessible.

Gen X: The Balancing Act

1965 – 1980

GGen Xers, often juggling responsibilities between aging parents and their own children, experience significant stress. While mental health awareness is growing among this generation, only 30% seek professional help despite experiencing **higher rates of stress** about money, family responsibilities, and work than any other generation.

They value efficiency and convenience. So though awareness is growing, mental health care is often deprioritized amid their many obligations.

HOW TO SUPPORT THEM

Promote the accessibility of teletherapy, emphasizing flexible scheduling and remote access. Offer streamlined, step-by-step guides on how to use mental health benefits, and consider stress management workshops or financial wellness programs tailored to their concerns.

1981 – 1996

Millennials: The Wellness Enthusiasts

Millennials have redefined self-care, integrating mental health into their broader wellness routines. They seek balance through therapy, fitness, and mindfulness apps, often turning to social media for guidance. Digital solutions and peer recommendations play a major role in their approach to wellbeing.

HOW TO SUPPORT THEM

Frame mental health benefits as part of personal and professional growth. Consider peer-led discussions, wellness challenges, or virtual "mental health weeks" that integrate self-care into company culture. Highlight the role of digital therapy and coaching in achieving career and life goals.

Gen Z:
The Mental Health Advocates

1997 — 2012

For Gen Z, mental health isn't just important—it's a priority. Open discussions about therapy and emotional wellbeing are the norm, and they expect mental health resources to be easily accessible and seamlessly integrated into their daily lives. They value authenticity and digital-first solutions.

HOW TO SUPPORT THEM

Use engaging, social media-style internal communications, such as short videos or interactive content, to promote mental health resources. Provide anonymous feedback channels to ensure their voices are heard. Leverage chat platforms to create open, ongoing conversations around mental wellbeing.

How Leaders Can Build Trust Through Mental Health Support

In today's workplace, trust between leaders and employees is more important than ever. With increasing workplace stress, burnout, and other mental health concerns, employees look to their leaders for guidance and support. One of the most effective ways leaders can foster trust is by prioritizing wellness initiatives and mental health support.

This isn't just about being a "nice boss"—it's about creating a workplace where employees feel safe, valued, and heard. Research shows that employees who feel supported by leadership report higher engagement, lower stress, and increased productivity. When employees trust their leaders to care about their wellbeing, they are more likely to stay committed to their work and the organization.

But of Gen Zs & millennials recently surveyed, only ~50% feel their manager would know how to help them if they shared their mental health challenges.

So, how can leaders build trust with their teams through wellness initiatives and mental health support?

1 Promote Mental Health Resources

When leaders actively promote and normalize the use of these resources, they send a clear message: mental health is a priority here. Simply having a resource isn't enough—leaders must regularly remind employees of their mental health benefits, and destigmatize seeking help.

2

Build a Strong Wellness Infrastructure

Wellness programs shouldn't just be an afterthought; they should be built into the company's core infrastructure, policies and standard procedures. This demonstrates dedication & commitment to your team's wellbeing. Some examples include:

- **Strengthening Support Through Policy**
  From accommodations, to non-retaliation and more, make sure these policies are clearly (and regularly) communicated.

- **Flexible Work Arrangements**
  Remote work options and flexible hours help employees balance personal and professional demands.

- **Mental Health Leave**
  Offer and normalize leave for mental health purposes.

- **Mindfulness breaks**
  Proven to lower stress and increase job satisfaction.

3

Offer Mental Health Days Without Guilt

Encouraging employees to take mental health days is another powerful way to build trust. **Too often, employees feel guilty for needing a break even when they are overwhelmed or struggling. This fear of judgment leads to presenteeism, where employees show up to work but are not fully productive.**
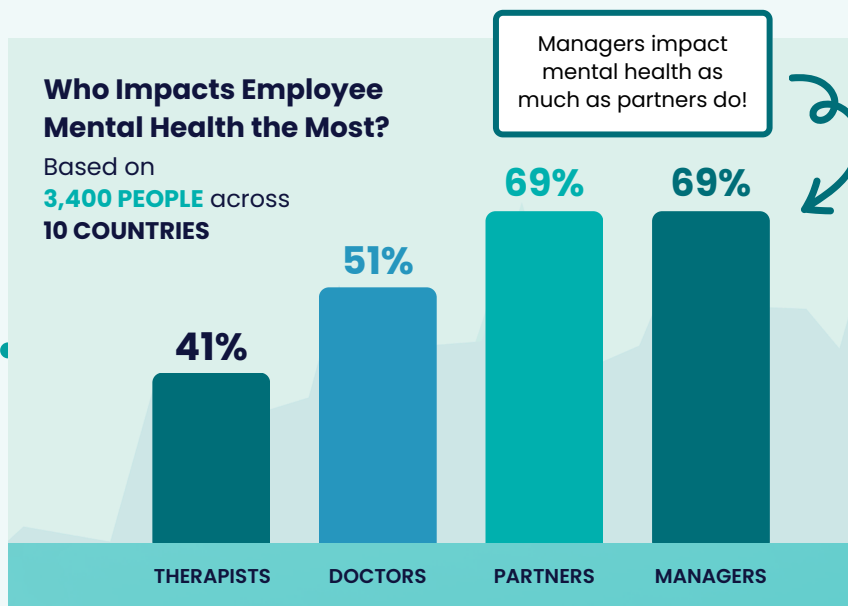
Data shows that companies with flexible mental health policies see a 21% increase in employee productivity and a **32% decrease in turnover.** When leaders actively encourage mental health days—and take them themselves—they reinforce that self-care isn't just allowed, it's essential.

4 Train Your Managers

Recent studies have found that managers impact employees' mental health more than doctors or therapists— and even the same as a spouse or partner.

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Often, managers are the first line of defense in noticing and addressing employee mental health concerns, before they become a bigger problem.

Who Impacts Employee Mental Health the Most?
Based on **3,400 PEOPLE** across **10 COUNTRIES**

Managers impact mental health as much as partners do!

41% — THERAPISTS
51% — DOCTORS
69% — PARTNERS
69% — MANAGERS

This is why it's critical to train your managers. To get started, check out our free and on-demand training **here!**

5 Focus on Transparency, Empathy, and Consistency

To build a trust-first culture, we recommend paying extra attention to:

- **Transparency**

  Be open about company decisions, especially those impacting employee workload and wellbeing.

- **Empathy**

  Take time to understand individual struggles and accommodate needs when possible.

- **Consistency**

  Follow through on wellness initiatives so employees know they can count on them long-term.

When employees feel safe and supported, they bring their best selves to work—and that's a win for everyone.

How to Create Inclusive Wellness Programs that Work for Everyone

When it comes to workplace wellness programs, one size definitely does not fit all. A truly inclusive health program considers the diverse needs of employees, whether they have disabilities, mental health concerns, or simply require flexible benefits to make wellness work for them. By designing programs that accommodate everyone, companies can foster a culture of health and wellbeing that leads to happier, more engaged employees.

So, how do you ensure that your wellness program is inclusive?

Start by Understanding Employee Needs

Before jumping into a new health initiative, take the time to understand what your employees actually need. A survey or focus group can help uncover specific concerns, like:

- Are there enough mental health resources available? Are they the right kind of mental health resources for your team?

- Do employees feel they have access to disability-friendly fitness options?

- Would they benefit from more flexible benefits, like remote work options or customized wellness perks?

Collecting this feedback ensures the program is built around real needs, rather than assumptions. Plus, when employees feel heard and involved, they're more likely to participate.

If your team wants more mental health support...

Remember that mental health support isn't one-size-fits-all. Employees face unique challenges, have different preferences, and require various types of care—so why should workplace mental health programs be any different? The shift toward personalized mental health benefits isn't just a passing trend; it's a critical shift that benefits both employees and businesses.

A modern mental health benefit should be easy to use, digitally accessible, and personalized. Employees need access to culturally competent, licensed therapists and a variety of care options that meet their individual needs. Personalized support is no longer a luxury—it's an essential part of building a healthier, more engaged workforce.
If your team wants something more flexible & customizable...

If your team wants something more flexible & customizable...

Not every employee values the same benefits. Some may prioritize mental health support, while others need better parental leave policies. Offering a comprehensive range of support and allowing employees to choose what works best for them makes wellness programs far more effective. Some examples include:

- **Health & Wellness Stipends**
  Provide a wellness stipend that employees can use however they choose—whether that's for therapy, fitness classes, or other wellness programs.

- **Remote Work & Flexible Hours**
  Allowing employees to work from home or adjust their schedules can improve both physical and mental health. Plus, a Harvard Business Review study found that companies offering flexible work options see a **30% boost** in employee retention.

- **Flexible Spending Accounts (FSAs)**
  FSAs give employees control over their healthcare spending and help cover out-of-pocket costs for medical care, therapy, and wellness-related expenses.

Next, Hone in on Inclusivity

Even the best wellness programs won't work if employees don't feel comfortable using them. It's important to create a workplace culture that supports health and wellbeing for everyone.

- **Encourage Open Conversations**
  Leadership should actively discuss mental health and wellness initiatives, making it clear that employees won't be penalized for prioritizing their wellbeing.

- **Diversity & Inclusion Training**
  Educating managers and employees about different health needs, unconscious biases, and inclusive workplace practices ensures that everyone feels seen and valued.

- **Support Employee Resource Groups (ERGs)**
  ERGs focused on mental health, disability advocacy, or wellness can create safe spaces for employees to share experiences and offer peer support.

Last but Not Least, Measure Success

A wellness program isn't something you set up once and forget about—it needs regular adjustments to stay effective. Keep track of and ensure your external vendors provide insight on participation rates. How many employees are actually using the wellness resources? If engagement is low, adjustments may be needed.

Additionally, we recommend collecting ongoing feedback from the team. Conduct annual surveys or hold informal check-ins to see how employees feel about the program.

A Practical Checklist for Employee Wellness

A proactive approach to employee wellness creates a workplace where employees feel supported before burnout sets in—leading to a happier, healthier team. This means promoting a workplace culture where wellbeing is built into the everyday—not just something employees turn to in crisis.

Plus, this leads to better retention, increased productivity, and lower healthcare costs.

In fact, every $1 invested in proactive mental health support returns $4 in productivity gains and reduced healthcare expenses.

To foster a proactive approach to employee wellness, check out our checklist below.

☑ **Identify Gaps in Support**
Use employee feedback surveys and wellbeing assessments to uncover areas where support is needed most.

☑ **Equip Managers to Lead Well**
Train leaders to recognize early signs of burnout, have supportive mental health conversations, and model healthy work habits.

☑ **Build Workloads That Work**
Encourage managers to set clear priorities, prevent overwork, and ensure employees take breaks.

☑ **Normalize Mental Health Conversations**
Encourage leadership to share personal insights, highlight employee stories, and integrate wellbeing discussions into team meetings. Psychological safety makes a difference.

☑ **Make Mental Health Check-Ins Routine**
Implement regular wellness surveys and manager-led check-ins to track stress levels and adjust workloads accordingly. Microsoft, for example, uses periodic wellbeing assessments.

☑ **Provide Easy-to-Access Mental Health Resources**
Offer digital therapy platforms, guided meditation apps, and stress management tools—before employees reach a breaking point.

☑ **Set Clear Work-Life Boundaries**
Establish policies that limit after-hours emails, reinforce vacation as real time off, and introduce recharge days. Companies like Salesforce offer "Wellness Days" to help employees reset.

How to Choose a Mental Health Benefit

Employee mental health benefits are becoming increasingly popular. Yet, it's hard to sift through all of the different options. When looking for a mental health benefit, there are a few important variables to consider. These are:

1 **Team Size**
If you are a team with 1,000+ employees, the world is your oyster! If you have fewer folks, you'll want to look for benefits that offer usage-based rates, and don't have restrictive headcount minimums.

2 **A Diverse Network of Providers**
Make sure you're providing a solution for your entire workforce, not just a select few.

3 **A Digital Interface**
Employees want digital interfaces that are easy to use. If they have to jump through hoops to access a provider (we're talking phone calls or self-help modules) they're less likely to engage.

4 **Personalized Care**
Mental health is personal. Cookie cutter options just don't help a workforce, unless you are simply looking for general tips & tricks to send to the entire team!

5 **Data Privacy**
A shocking amount of benefit programs sell user data. You always want to ask about your employees' data to make sure you are not unknowingly selling their personal information & exposing it to other players across the internet.

About Samata Health

Samata Health is the personalized mental health benefit built for growing teams. With our usage-based rates, we provide high-quality mental health care to teams of all sizes with zero barriers to access.

Unlike traditional, one-size-fits-all EAPs with low utilization, we connect employees with high-quality care tailored to their unique needs. As a result, we see over 20% of employees with our benefit schedule sessions with our expert, licensed therapists. We also prioritize accessibility, offering a seamless, digital experience to help employees get the support they need, when they need it. Plus, we manage the benefit so it's not a big lift on HR teams.

By providing flexible, personalized mental health solutions, we empower businesses of all sizes to foster healthier, more engaged workforces—where employees feel seen, supported, and equipped to thrive.
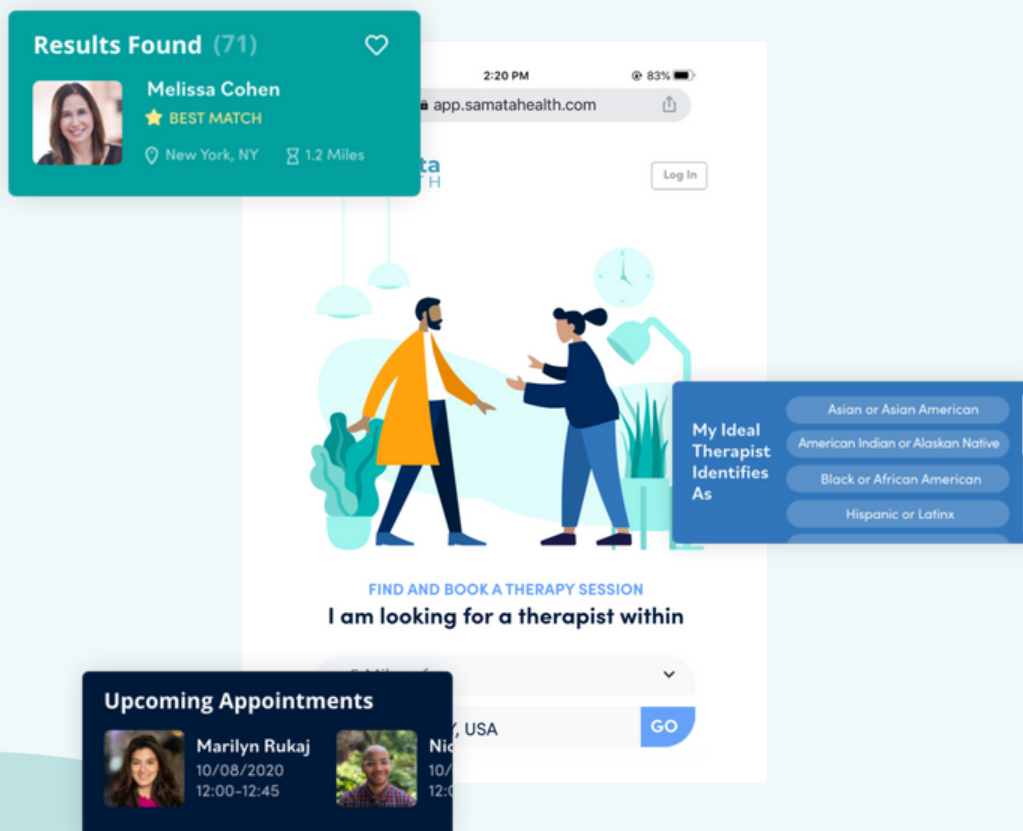
Resources

HR & TEAM LEADERS

- Programming for Mental Health Awareness Month
- Mental Health Training for Managers
- Guide to Managing Trauma in the Workplace

PEER SUPPORT FOR HR TEAMS

- Academy of Human Resources Development
- International Association of Administrative Professionals
- National Association of African Americans in Human Resources
- @NotSHRMApproved on Instagram
- Nine to Thrive HR Podcast

EMPLOYEES

- Attachment Styles in the Workplace
- Managing ADHD at Work
- All About Employee Burnout
- Coping with Social Anxiety at Work
- Interested in similar articles? Check out our blog!

ON-DEMAND WORKSHOPS

- Managing Year-End Burnout for HR Professionals
- Sitting with Uncomfortable Feelings Meditation
- Separating Productivity & Self Worth Addressing
- Disability & Mental Health in the Workplace