



A Proactive Approach to Employee Well-being

Transforming Mental Health & SUD Benefits with Innovative Digital Solutions



Executive Summary

Background

The impact of behavioral health conditions on employer-sponsored health plans remains underestimated, despite the enhanced understanding of the need for mental health services in the aftermath of the pandemic.

Lost productivity as a result of two of the most common mental disorders, anxiety and depression, costs the global economy \$1 trillion each year¹. Substance use disorders (SUD) alone cost employer-sponsored health plans more than \$35 billion per year in the U.S. and this number does not include the indirect costs of absenteeism, presenteeism, lost productivity, and turnover².

Employers are facing a tough decision: there's an apparent need for improved mental health services, but the current economic environment demands a stringent benefits budget.

Purpose

To outline the proactive ways employers can deliver mental health support to employees at an affordable cost — with preventative measures that save crucial dollars down the line. Manifesto's solution provides a mental health platform and an interactive mobile app that provides on-demand peer support, recovery coaching, and peer-led care navigation.

Target Audience

HR Directors/Managers, Employee Benefits Managers, CHROs, CFOs, CEOs, Workplace Wellness Coordinators, EAP Managers, Risk Managers

Success Metrics

Manifesto implementation will:

- Decrease overall healthcare spend by mitigating the avoidable cost of escalation to the highest and most costly levels of care
- Decrease indirect costs such as absenteeism, presenteeism, and loss of productivity
- Decrease the average amount of time to behavioral health support
- Give employees instant access to peer support professionals, peer-led navigation services, and self-guided recovery resources
- Enhance your existing mental health care navigation with peer-led services that integrate with in-network care systems to fill costly gaps in mental health care

Peer Support/Peer-Led Navigation Role

- A majority of employees will be effectively supported through our subclinical support services alone.
- Digital peer support replicates human-centered principles in the online space in a natural and humanistic form of support that drives hope, empowerment, and change.
- For the smaller group of members who need clinical care, our peer-led navigation services keep people warm during the gap between referral and treatment and in the critical return to work process.

The Need for Proactive Mental Health & SUD Services



The mental health crisis facing Americans imposes significant costs to the well-being of affected individuals, their loved ones, and society as a whole. Increasing the productive capacity of the economy going forward requires improving people's mental health, which can be done by improving the affordability of mental health treatment, expanding the behavioral health workforce, and removing barriers to seeking care.

-White House Briefing, 2023

Mental health and substance use issues result in substantial financial costs for both employers and employees. Some costs are plainly evident in claims data and other tangible metrics. However, the hidden costs described below may be even more detrimental to employers' financial health:



Absenteeism and Reduced Productivity:

Behavioral health conditions, including substance use, can lead to increased absenteeism and decreased productivity. Absenteeism means more missed days of work — resulting in lost productivity and higher healthcare costs.



Increased Healthcare Utilization:

Individuals with untreated behavioral health conditions often turn to high-acuity care like emergency rooms or urgent care centers for immediate help which leads to increased utilization of expensive medical services.



Impact on Chronic Physical Conditions:

Employees struggling with behavioral health conditions are more likely to have uncontrolled chronic illnesses such as diabetes, hypertension, and heart disease. Lack of proper management of these physical conditions can further escalate healthcare expenses for employers.



Turnover and Recruitment Costs:

The cost of recruiting and training new employees can be significant, making it essential to address the root causes of turnover related to behavioral health.



Disability Claims and Long-Term Absence:

The cost of disability benefits and extended leaves of absence can place a significant strain on employer-sponsored health plans. Addressing these issues early on through proper mental health support can prevent long-term disabilities and reduce associated expenses.



Presenteeism:

Behavioral health conditions can contribute to presenteeism as employees may struggle to concentrate, feel emotionally overwhelmed, or experience reduced motivation. Addressing mental health concerns can improve employee engagement and productivity.

Get Ahead of Rising and Avoidable Costs

Our cost-avoidant solution employs on-demand access to our peer support and recovery coaching. Our subclinical personnel fill gaps in mental health care by helping people set realistic goals, take effective actions, and navigate in-network provider networks and community-based resources when needed.

Manifesto gives employers the ability to avoid high claims and invest in employees' well-being. Our coaches are trained in evidence-based practices that support whole-person health by emphasizing mental, emotional, social, occupational, and physical wellness. Manifesto meets your employees wherever they are in their health journey to provide on-demand support, guidance, and motivation.

Behavioral health issues, such as mental health conditions and substance misuse, contribute to increased healthcare costs in a myriad of direct and indirect ways. With a proactive and preventive approach, many cost-saving benefits can be realized:



Preventing or Managing Chronic Physical Health Conditions:

Behavioral health issues can exacerbate or increase the risk of developing chronic physical health conditions. By addressing and treating underlying behavioral health concerns, individuals are more likely to manage physical health effectively, reducing the need for costly interventions and hospitalizations.

with mental health conditions, leading to increased healthcare costs due to suboptimal treatment outcomes.



Increased Productivity and Functioning:

Effective behavioral health treatment can enhance individuals' ability to function at work or school, improving productivity and reducing absenteeism. This, in turn, can lead to financial benefits for both individuals and employers, as well as potentially reducing the need for disability-related expenses.



Emergency Room and Hospital Utilization:

Untreated behavioral health conditions can lead to crises and emergencies, resulting in frequent emergency room visits and hospitalizations. By providing appropriate and timely behavioral health interventions, individuals are less likely to require emergency care, thus reducing the associated costs.



Reduced Use of Unnecessary Medical Services:

Behavioral health conditions often manifest with physical symptoms, leading to unnecessary medical tests, consultations, and procedures. By addressing the underlying behavioral health concerns, healthcare providers can avoid unnecessary and costly medical interventions.



Improved Medication Adherence:

Behavioral health support can help individuals better adhere to prescribed medications. Poor medication adherence is a common problem among those

The Manifesto Solution

Over the next decade, mental health is expected to be the largest driver of healthcare costs among millennials³. In addition to the increased demand for mental health services, a main catalyst of avoidable spending is the immediate escalation to the highest levels of care such as emergency rooms and hospitalizations. A recent McKinsey analysis found that only 25% of people actually need some level of clinical support such as psychotherapy. Despite this, therapy is usually the only option considered to address mental health issues. Therapy is expensive for both employees and employers as single sessions can cost upwards of \$200.



"Using digital tech to support employees' mental health and resilience," [McKinsey](#), 2021.

Many employees can address their mental health or substance use issues directly through working with our subclinical coaches and peer support. Only 1 in 100 employees require high-acuity or intensive services to manage their behavioral health.

It is important to acknowledge that no single solution can address all the mental health support needs an individual will require. No one solution works for everyone. We need a coordinated ecosystem that spans the full range of biopsychosocial support needs. And, while proactively treating mental health can contribute to cost savings, the specific impact may vary depending on the individual.



Manifesto takes an individualized approach when working with employees and their dependents. We help people improve their mental health and prevent distress through coaching and peer support by real people — enhanced by the efficiencies and accessibility of technology and data-driven insights.

-Dr. Patrick Mullen
Chief Clinical Officer &
Cofounder, Manifesto Health

Components of a Proactive Mental Health & SUD Solution

So, how do we help employers avoid trading off cost-savings for high-quality care? The answer lies in our digital platform powered by on-demand peer support, recovery coaching, and peer-led care navigation.

Digital Peer Support

Manifesto’s staff is made up of certified peer support workers and recovery coaches. Peer support workers are people with lived experience managing their own mental health conditions and are certified to provide support, human connection, motivation, accurate empathy, and a host of other meaningful interactions. The recovery coaching element of our solution integrates a holistic approach to health with a motivational and whole-person aim.

Scalability	The capacity of the intervention to be applied in a way that reaches a large number of people
Reach	Capacity to extend treatment to individuals underserved by traditional service delivery model
Affordability	Relatively low cost compared to treatment by a clinician
Expansion of the behavioral health workforce	Increase the number of providers who can deliver interventions
Expansion of settings where interventions are provided	Bring interventions to settings where those in need are likely to be
Feasibility	Ensure interventions can be adapted to reach diverse groups
Flexibility	Provide options and choice for different needs
Acceptability	Delivery of the intervention must be acceptable to its potential consumers

Adopted from: Kazdin, A. E. (2021) Chapter 22: Extending the Scalability and Reach of Psychosocial Interventions’, in Begin and Garfield’s Handbook of Psychotherapy and Behavior Change. John Wiley & Sons. p. 772

Digital peer support delivers psychosocial interventions that can enhance and extend the continuum of care.

Peer-Delivered and Technology-Supported

Unlike the many 'self-serve' consumer products available, digital peer support replicates the human-centered principles in the online space. Peer support is a natural and humanistic form of support that helps to drive hope, empowerment, and change.

A large systematic review found that digital peer support interventions are high in feasibility, acceptability, and effectiveness with regard to enhancing participants' functioning, reducing symptoms, and improving program utilization⁴. Additionally, peer-delivered and technology-supported interventions demonstrated the most promising evidence for both biomedical and psychosocial outcomes.

The features valued by users of digital mental health services include: anonymity, privacy, safety, discretion, group moderation by professionals; compelling and trustworthy information, flexibility, self-reliance, autonomy, and 24/7 availability.^{5,6}

How it Works

Step 1: ACCESS

Melanie has instant access to mental health support through her employee benefits portal.



Step 2: ENGAGEMENT

Melanie learns about her new employee benefit and engages with the Manifesto platform through her cell phone.



Step 3: ASSESSMENT

Melanie takes a digital, standardized assessment that indicates a moderate substance use issue.



Step 4: FILL GAPS IN MENTAL HEALTH CARE

On-demand peer support and recovery coaching is readily available for Melanie at the click of a button on her phone.

Peer-led navigation services are ready and able to support Melanie if a referral to an in-network provider is clinically indicated.



Step 5: RETURN TO WORK

In the event that Melanie's substance use issue required a medical leave of absence, Manifesto personnel walk with Melanie in her return to work process.

Continued engagement through human connection and on-demand support is available to Melanie for the long run.



Peer support professionals keep Melanie warm and engaged during the gap between referral and treatment.

Step 6: OUTCOMES & REPORTING

Employers are provided detailed reports on success metrics including employee engagement and satisfaction, utilization rates, cost savings, EAP usage, industry benchmarking, ROI, and more.



People helping people, enhanced by technology, supervised by clinicians, and integrated with wider systems of care.

Subclinical & Preventative Scope

Not every anxious feeling or depressive symptom requires a therapist — just like not every ache in your back needs an orthopedic surgeon. Manifesto aims to shift the focus to prevention — away from only providing reactive care to crises and illness.

Presently, access to mental health care is strewn with barriers such as month-long wait lists, high costs, and a serious supply crunch of providers. Manifesto fills gaps in mental health care through quick access to human connection. Our peer support and coaching personnel have different training than other licensed mental health providers because their scope is different.

Our approach is preventive by design – specializing in helping people set realistic goals, clarify their personal values, and motivate them to take steps towards meaningful change in accordance with their freely chosen values.

Navigation Services to Treatment Providers:

No one single solution can address all the mental health support needs an individual will require and no one solution works for everyone. There are times when an employee will need help getting to a higher level of care such as psychotherapy or withdrawal management for substance use. We manage these situations with our proven peer navigation services. Peer support workers are especially trained to guide people in need through the complex and fragmented process of finding clinical treatment.

Our support staff have walked a similar path of seeking mental health support which gives them a deep understanding of the feelings, fears, and uncertainties that can accompany help-seeking. Additionally, our staff don't just provide one-time assistance — they can be ongoing sources of support. This is especially valuable in the mental health journey where setbacks are a natural part of the process. Having a consistent ally can make a world of difference and enable seamless access to treatment providers when needed.

Clinical Structure

Manifesto employs a multidisciplinary clinical team of licensed/professionally-accredited mental health professionals including social workers and psychologists. Our peer support staff are directly supervised by our clinical team with decades-worth of expertise and are provided regular individual and group supervision.

Manifesto's solution is infused with evidence-based exercises, learning materials, resources, and practices. Specifically, support staff is trained by our clinical team in an integration of Acceptance and Commitment (ACT) principles and Motivational Interviewing (MI). These proven strategies help people stay on track, find meaning, and create a sense of purpose on their self-directed health and wellness journeys.

Higher Engagement, Healthier Employees

No amount of health benefits matter if no one uses them. Our platform was designed with the employee in mind — our digital experience is user-friendly, visually appealing, and readily accessible as a mobile app or website page. Manifesto's platform is easy to navigate and ensures that users don't

feel overwhelmed or frustrated. Intuitive design enhances user satisfaction and increases likelihood of consistent use.

Combining accessible technology with the human connection of peer support promises to amplify engagement rates and enable longer and more active participation of employees' unique health journeys.

Conclusion

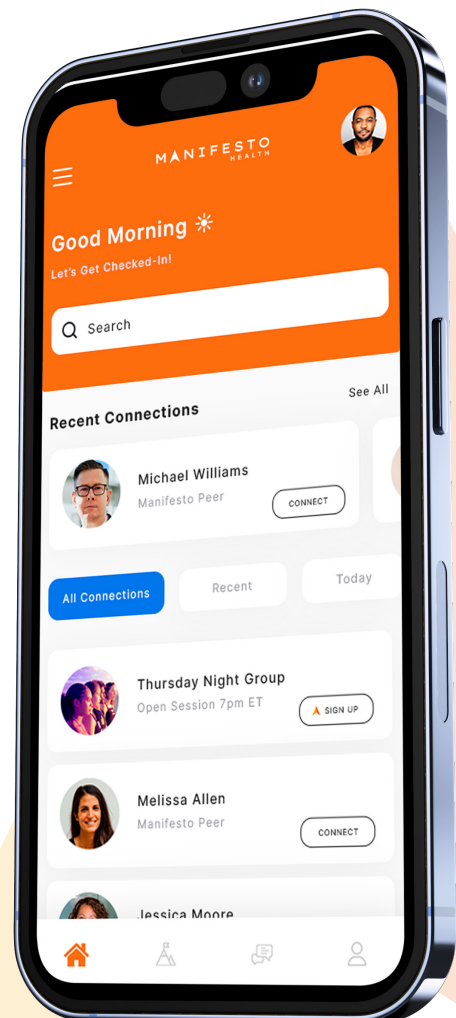
The future of employee mental health support will be heavily influenced by innovation. Innovation — such as Manifesto's peer support platform — means personalized mental health solutions through proactive, affordable, and effective subclinical support.

Manifesto's integration of technology and human connection brings convenience, accessibility, and personalization to the forefront. Our cost-savings method employs timely and effective support that avoids escalation to the costliest and highest levels of care. When referrals are needed, our peer-led integration is the ideal solution for helping people navigate the complex and fragmented system. The future holds the promise of a more interconnected, holistic, and proactive approach to mental well-being that will result in healthier and more resilient workforces — and Manifesto can lead you there!

Most employers recognize the importance of mental health, and genuinely want to make quality care and support available to their employees. However, they don't always know where to start.

Reach out to us for a discovery conversation to:

- Project potential direct and indirect savings by partnering with Manifesto
- Learn more about our proactive approach to employee well-being and how it could work for your organization



References

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²“Medical Costs of Substance Use Disorders in the US Employer-Sponsored Insurance Population,” JAMA Network, 2023

³“The Economic Consequences of Millennial Health,” Moody’s Analytics, 2019

⁴“Digital Peer Support Mental Health Interventions for People With a Lived Experience of a Serious Mental Illness: Systematic Review,” PubMed Central, 2020

⁵“Young People’s Online Help-Seeking and Mental Health Difficulties: Systematic Narrative Review,” PubMed, 2019

⁶“Evidence on Digital Mental Health Interventions for Adolescents and Young People: Systematic Overview,” JMIR Publications, 2021