

# Importance of the GAD-7 Assessment:

## ***What is Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD)?***

According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), people with GAD experience frequent symptoms of anxiety for months, if not years. It's noted that GAD develops slowly and often starts around age 30, with the disorder being more common in women than in men.

## ***Who is Affected by GAD?***

There are more people than you might think who struggle with anxiety. The National Health Interview Survey from 2019 indicates that about 19.5% of adults aged 18-29, 16.6% of adults aged 30-44, 15.2% of adults aged 45-64, and 11.2% of adults aged 65 and over have experienced mild, moderate or severe symptoms of anxiety in the past 2 weeks.

## ***Why Offering the GAD-7 Assessment Matters:***

**Early Detection and Intervention:** The GAD-7 is a quick and effective screening tool for identifying symptoms of anxiety disorders. Early identification through tools like the GAD-7 paired with an employer who follows the recommendation in the Recommendation Report Checklist can lead to timely intervention, which may reduce the progression of symptoms of anxiety that could develop into more severe conditions in your employees.

**Impact on Productivity:** Employees who often feel nervous or anxious may miss work more often or come to work but not be fully focused. A study from the World Economic Forum shows that anxiety disorders lead to significant productivity drops. Studies have indicated that workers with untreated anxiety disorders experience more absenteeism days and are less productive while at work. By applying the recommendations in this GAD-7 Recommendation Report Checklist, you may be able to mitigate these losses by providing support or accommodations where needed. A happy and healthy employee is a productive employee. The economic case to invest in mental health is compelling: For every dollar invested in treatment for depression and anxiety there is a \$4 return in better health and productivity.

**Health Care Costs:** The economic burden of untreated anxiety on employers is significant. One study from the National Institute of Mental Health suggests that anxiety disorders cost the U.S. economy billions annually in lost productivity. By offering the GAD-7 to your employees and following the recommendations in the Recommendation Report Checklist, you can help manage these costs by giving your employees the resources for them to facilitate early treatment.

## ***Why Offering the GAD-7 Assessment Matters (cont.):***

**Employee Retention and Satisfaction:** When employees feel their mental health is valued, job satisfaction increases, which can lead to higher staff retention rates. The GAD-7 can also be part of a broader holistic wellness initiative, signaling to employees that their well-being is a priority. This can enhance loyalty and decrease turnover, which is costly in terms of recruitment and training.

**Universal Accessibility:** The GAD-7 is user-friendly, making it accessible to all employees regardless of their educational background. Its seven simple questions can be completed in a couple of minutes, with scoring ranges from 0 to 21 to assess severity. The participants can also check their score on their own with a number of online tools to check their progress. This ease of use ensures high participation rates, providing a broader view of mental health needs within your organization.

**Legal and Ethical Responsibility:** There's a growing recognition of the employer's role in mental health care. Implementing tools like GAD-7 and following the recommendations on the Recommendation Checklist can align with legal obligations to provide a safe and healthy work environment, potentially reducing liabilities related to mental health issues.

### ***Summary:***

By adopting the GAD-7 assessment, your organization can not only foster a healthier, more empathetic work environment but also directly contribute to the bottom line by reducing healthcare costs and improving productivity. Let's commit to making mental health as integral to our workplace as physical health.