

Headspace & Duval County Public Schools



Headspace helps Duval County Public Schools provide flexible access to therapy and psychiatry to remove barriers of cost and availability for quality mental health care.

ABOUT

Duval County Public Schools (DCPS) is the 20th largest school district in the U.S., serving more than 130,000 elementary, middle, and high school students in the Jacksonville, Florida area. The district's 12,000+ teachers and staff are driven by a shared mission of inspiring students and preparing them for success in adult life.

CHALLENGE

Educators have a unique set of mental health challenges, as they must help their students navigate the ups and downs of life while simultaneously managing their own well-being. By monitoring mental health indicators such as medical claims data, Jackie Watkins, Executive Director of Employee Services & Risk Management at DCPS, noted an increase of behavioral health diagnoses among employees, as more individuals were seeking mental health care.

“Oftentimes teachers and staff are taking care of everybody else and fail to take care of themselves.”

— Jackie Watkins, Executive Director of Employee Services & Risk Management

DCPS needed to find a way to provide teachers and staff with affordable access to qualified mental health care professionals, but as a public organization, funding was limited. Access was, too: Despite the clear need for mental healthcare, Florida is one of the lowest-ranking states in terms of available care providers.

Determined to overcome these challenges, the DCPS Employee Wellness Team built a business case for implementing a mental health benefits package that would increase access to qualified professionals, remove the barriers of cost and availability, and provide free self-guided tools for on-demand support.

HEADSPACE APPROACH

In 2022, DCPS secured a federal grant designated to support employee mental health. Using those funds, DCPS partnered with Headspace to deploy Headspace Care, a suite of convenient and confidential mental health services for employees, at no cost to them.

HEADSPACE RESULTS

12,000

lives covered

4.8

average clinician rating out of 5 stars

86%

of members with moderate or severe depression at intake had improved symptoms after care*

83%

of members with moderate or severe anxiety at intake had improved symptoms after care*

81%

of employees have returned to use the Headspace Care app

With Headspace Care, DCPS employees get access to therapy and psychiatry with on-demand coaching and meditation through one seamless and human-centered experience. This tailored member experience was critical for DCPS, as every employee has specific mental health needs. "I like to think of mental health as a soundtrack, because life can be like a soundtrack," says Watkins. "There are ups and downs. You can have happy moments and sad moments, and not every person needs clinical support at all times. That's why the Headspace model is so beneficial to us, because the team-based care delivers the right care at the right time."

Another integral component of DCPS' mental healthcare implementation is the inclusion of on-demand mental health coaching. Mental health coaching takes a goal-oriented approach to tackling a range of life's everyday challenges, from sleep issues and creating healthy routines to communication and stress management. DCPS members have 24/7 access to chat-based coaching with Headspace, which increases ease-of-use. "Having a coach is like GPS—it guides you to where you need to go," says Watkins. "In partnership with Headspace's self-guided tools, mental health coaching encourages members to stick to their goals and fosters health responsibility. So it is truly beneficial to all of our employees."

Finally, the DCPS Employee Wellness Team has delivered a strategic communications plan, which has driven program engagement and enrollment across the organization. DCPS has integrated mental wellness education into the workplace by scheduling monthly "Motivational Monday" and "Wellness Wednesday" events to highlight pertinent topics in mental health and self-care, in addition to hosting workshops that demonstrate the benefits of mindfulness and meditation.

DCPS also utilized strategic "Reach the Teacher" communications campaigns to intentionally promote these mental health resources and offer a variety of workshops and online training to keep these benefits top of mind. Bolstered by Headspace's brand recognition, the DCPS communications strategy has helped to reduce the stigma of accessing mental health resources.

"The branding of Headspace has absolutely been our way of destigmatizing the mental health benefit."

— Jackie Watkins, Executive Director of Employee Services & Risk Management

RESULTS

DCPS's investment in mental health programs has dramatically boosted awareness and access to care from qualified professionals. By reducing the financial and accessibility barriers, as well as the stigma associated with mental health, employees feel empowered to take charge of their well-being in and outside of the workplace. Headspace's evidence-based tools and resources help educators and staff manage everyday stress, prevent burnout, foster meaningful relationships, and inspire students to be the best they can be.