

# Headspace & bartaco



Headspace helps bartaco provide flexible, accessible, stigma-free mental healthcare in the fast-paced restaurant industry.

## ABOUT

bartaco is a restaurant where fresh street food meets timeless coastal vibes — it's a place where anyone can come for a fun atmosphere to escape the day-to-day. Whether you're a guest enjoying tacos at one of 30+ locations across the US or a team member working at any level of the company, you can expect to be surrounded by infectious energy, vibrant culture, and good people.

## CHALLENGE

The restaurant industry is notoriously fast-paced and high-intensity — and yet it also carries a deep stigma around seeking mental health support. "There is a perception that no one wants to show their weakness in a restaurant," explains Scott Rodney, Payroll & Benefits Manager at bartaco. "TV shows like *The Bear* show a culture where restaurant workers want to work hard, they don't want to complain, they want to grind, and they just want to get in and out."

When the HR team at bartaco set out to design their benefits package, they wanted an EAP partner that could break through these barriers and provide meaningful support to their team members.

**"Historically, no one put restaurant workers and mental health together."**

— Scott Rodney, Payroll & Benefits Manager

bartaco needed a solution that could normalize the benefits of mental healthcare and reduce the stigma around seeking support. With a highly diverse workforce, reducing mental health stigma was a prerequisite for program accessibility and utilization. bartaco also needed a solution that was flexible and appealing to all team members, inclusive of recent graduates working their first job to single parents balancing multiple responsibilities to career managers and prep cooks who have been with the company since its founding.

## HEADSPACE APPROACH

bartaco rolled out Headspace EAP to all salaried team members and any hourly team members enrolled in their medical plan, including their dependents. Headspace brings the human touch to mental health support, with an EAP replacement tailored to meet the needs of the modern-day workforce. Headspace EAP includes therapy, critical incident support, work-life services, coaching, and 3,000+ guided meditations.

## HEADSPACE RESULTS

13%

enrollment within 6 months of implementation

5.0

clinician rating (out of 5 stars)

100%

of teammates engaged in clinical services have returned after intake

Mental health should be accessible and approachable for all, yet today's healthcare system creates barriers to care and a fragmented experience. Rodney values that Headspace is not only convenient for team members, but it also reduces barriers to care by making mental health support available 24/7/365 – a crucial feature in the always-on service industry.

He also loves how easy it is to explain Headspace to his employees. "The biggest challenge to me as an HR benefits professional is effectively communicating and making sure people understand available benefits. I find traditional EAPs very clunky: There's so much being offered that people get lost and don't know what to do with it," Rodney says. Headspace's offerings, he notes, are much more streamlined and clear.

**"Headspace doesn't feel like a standard mental health company. It's fresh and outside of the box."**

– Scott Rodney, Payroll & Benefits Manager

Rodney also utilizes Headspace's marketing toolkit, which includes onboarding emails and seasonal and thematic graphics, to educate managers about the EAP benefit so they can easily share them with their teams. However, Rodney's favorite enablement strategy is personal conversations. Rodney can always be found carrying a QR code that links directly to the Headspace enrollment site, allowing team members to sign up on the spot when he senses they might benefit from the service.

The flexible, personalized nature of Headspace's offerings makes it easy for Rodney to guide teammates to the right care when they need it most. For example, if a new parent is struggling to get rest, he can direct them to sleepcasts in the Headspace app or remind them that they can talk to a mental health provider if they need personalized support. Access to work-life services also means that team members can access financial or legal resources, or elder care and childcare for family members.

What especially gives Rodney peace of mind is knowing that his teammates from all experiences and backgrounds can connect with high-quality providers trained in evidence-based care. Culturally competent care is at the heart of Headspace's care philosophy with coaches and therapists from various identities and experiences. bartaco team members can develop a trusting relationship with Headspace clinicians to break down the stigma of mental healthcare and make treatment outcomes more effective.

**"One challenge with traditional EAPs is that you talk to a different person every time. I love the program with Headspace because it connects you with one individual coach unless you ask for a new one. Having that relationship with one person really goes a long way."**

– Scott Rodney, Payroll & Benefits Manager

## RESULTS

Rodney loves being able to pull weekly engagement data from the Headspace dashboard and has been pleased to see enrollment steadily growing. But as data-driven as he is, Rodney is just as focused on the qualitative impact Headspace has on his team.

"Everyone wants to see a return on investment. When you're thinking about mental health, numbers are great, but you also have to ask: How has this actually impacted our team members? Are they showing up to work in the best headspace (no pun intended) and able to be the best person at work?" he says. The positive feedback from team members who have used Headspace is just as meaningful as the data.