

From the mailroom to the boardroom, it's easy to see the emerging impacts of mental and behavioral health around the world. Employers can better support expatriates and recognize the unique challenges that expatriation and travel brings in a normal world, let alone the world we're entering now as we come out of a pandemic event. The Q4 2020 Pulse Live webinar featured a discussion on behavioral health and the globally mobile. The panel included Dr. Kennette Thigpen, PhD, MSW, LCSW-S from Workplace Options and Dr. Damian Cornacchia, DO, GeoBlue's medical director. The discussion was moderated by Noelle Weinrich, GeoBlue's Product Manager.

Dr. Thigpen began by explaining the difference between behavioral and mental health. Behavioral health encompasses behaviors or actions that impact an individual's wellbeing, where mental health involves feelings and emotions that someone may have. Dr. Thigpen explained that while they are different, behavioral and mental health can be connected. There may be certain mental health stressors that can trigger behavioral health patterns in a person. Due to this, Dr. Thigpen and Dr. Cornacchia both agreed that it is important to include physical health as a component when treating one's mental and behavioral health. This holistic approach allows the individual to improve their health on all fronts and attack certain negative habits that could be attributed to behavioral and mental health.

Regarding mental and behavioral health treatment in the workplace, Dr. Thigpen highlighted the important role executives and managers play in providing support for their employees. It is not enough to just provide the financial resources necessary for treatment. Managers and executives need to play an active role in promoting and learning about why this support is valuable. In doing so, they can help encourage employees to use the resources when there is a need for them. [Our new e-book](#) is designed to open the dialogue about mental health and provide managers with practical tips and ideas for starting the conversation with their teams.

Behavioral and mental health issues are not uncommon among expats. Potential stressors expats may encounter include isolation from family and friends, language barriers or even something such as differences in cuisine. Seeking proper mental and behavioral health support may be concerning for expats because not all countries have adequate resources and support. This stems from the fact that many countries still have stigma attached to mental and behavioral health issues.

To help the globally mobile, the panel suggested the use of remote health services for mental and behavioral health support. By using telehealth services, the globally mobile have access to the resources and support they need, which may not be available locally in their host country.

Remote health services can also be used for other health concerns. Dr. Cornacchia stated that the convenience of telemedicine cannot be matched. Aside from the convenience, other positives of using telemedicine include avoidance of unnecessary trips to the ER or urgent care and the expenses that may come with it. The market share of telemedicine services continues to grow. With the acceptance and promotion of behavioral and mental health support, and the increased usage of remote health services, treatment continues to evolve in a positive way.

Behavioral health goes beyond mental illness, which traditionally has been associated with serious conditions and disorders. Behavioral health includes a full continuum of conditions, from the most severe to the everyday stressors. While it's important for senior leaders to be involved and creating dialogue, it's just as essential to give managers throughout organizations the tools and training to do the same. They must set the example with teams, be able to steer employees to resources when they need them and follow up to support them along the way. This is critical for reducing stigma and creating culture at the grassroots level.