

Seven Tips for Companies To Support Employee Mental Health



It's May, and that means it's Mental Health Awareness Month. This is a time to spotlight and raise awareness about the importance of good mental health. As we continue to drudge through the pandemic, social unrest, and other stressors, more and more business leaders are making mental health in the workplace a priority. Companies are recognizing that employees' moods, thinking patterns, and behaviors impact everything from productivity and communication to safety.

Supporting your employees while they focus on their mental health could be one of the most important steps any employer can take to improve an individual's well-being and the entire organization's health. Here are seven ways business leaders can create a mentally healthier workplace.



Encourage a Healthy Work/Life Balance

Achieving a healthy work-life balance is essential to keeping employees engaged and inspired at work. Encourage your employees to take regular breaks. Praising employees for working extra hours often backfires because it raises turnover rates and lowers staff morale, productivity, and negatively impacts company culture. Prevent burnout and the negative consequences associated with it, such as a 50% decrease in shared performance goals. Meet regularly with your employees to discuss ways to avoid burnout—such as encouraging workers to share their ideas or asking for anonymous input through an online survey.

Companies fight burnout by encouraging remote work opportunities. Remote work relieves stress, increases productivity, and helps employees maintain a healthy work/life balance. Managers are also checking in with individual employees or groups to see how they're doing outside of work and in it. Allowing managers to ask questions about what's happening in an employee's life shows genuine interest in them and makes them feel important. There are several ways companies fight burnout. The most important is allowing employees to take a vacation or personal time when they need it to recharge and return to work refreshed and ready for action.

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Make Mental Health Part of Company Culture

91% of employees believed that a company's culture should support mental health. As a leader, you can encourage and reinforce good mental health at work by making it part of your company culture. By developing a culture to help those who struggle and communicating how they can receive it, you'll create a supportive workplace environment. Making mental health part of company culture looks like having an open and safe place where employees can raise any concerns or talk about difficult issues in or out of the workplace. A simple way to start this process is to make time in one-on-one meetings with your employees. These can occur every week, every other week, or once a month.

You can also hold workshops to discuss topics such as managing stress, time management, conflict resolution, and communication skills. Allowing employees to learn new skills will enable them to feel more confident when dealing with challenging situations at work. This can strengthen relationships between employees and employers and allow both parties to communicate more effectively.

Offer Mental Wellness Tools

Many mental issues go untreated because employees do not recognize the signs and symptoms of mental illness. To help raise awareness and encourage employees to get help, many companies offer screening tools and resources. If your company does not provide mental health benefits, consider adding these services to boost employee morale and help people who need support. Apps such as Calm for Business or Headspace for Work can make emotional wellness more achievable for your employees.

Mental Health America offers free screening tools to help employees anonymously assess their risk factors for common mental health conditions like depression or anxiety. Employees who recognize that they are at risk for such issues may be more likely to seek treatment. Mental Health America has tools, such as blogs on how to live mentally healthy, recovery guides, and support tools which can be found on their website under the "live mentally healthy" tab.

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Highlight EAP Benefits

Offering EAP (Employee Assistance Program) benefits that allow employees to access a handful of free therapy sessions is essential. However, many companies fail to spend enough time reminding employees how they can access and use these services. It's crucial employers take steps to ensure their workers get the help they need.

While employers cannot force employees to use EAP, they can encourage them. When you remind your employees how much the program benefits them also remind them it's free and confidential. Reminding your employees that they have access to EAP is one way to ensure that they take advantage of this valuable resource.

Prioritize Wellness

Employee health is a top priority for many employers. 54% of employees believe that their companies are focusing on mental health equally or more than other priorities. When employees feel good, they are more productive and tend to miss less work. Some companies promote employee wellness, such as meditation, fitness centers, or by providing healthy snacks and drinks. Some companies even offer lunchtime yoga classes or meditation sessions before meetings so employees can clear their minds and reduce the buildup of stress.

Employers who want their employees to have a healthy work-life balance should exemplify how it's done. Setting boundaries as a boss will show your employees that it's essential to have time away from work and not expect immediate responses during non-business hours. For example, don't email after working hours or make requests on weekends. By setting boundaries, you are encouraging other people to do the same.

Offer Growth and Development Training

Employers should provide their employees with personal growth and development training. This is especially important for employers who want to keep their staff healthy and happy. To keep your employees happy and engaged, give them personal growth and development training. It's vital for employers to recognize the effects of stress on their employees.

The more your team members know about self-care and resiliency strategies, the less likely they are to be stressed out or burnt out by work. For example, a few half-day workshops held throughout the year on balancing your work and personal life, stress management, or goal setting will go a long way towards preventing problems and emphasizing the importance of building healthy strategies in your daily life.

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Reduce the Stigma of Mental Illness

Many companies reduce this stigma by promoting open conversations about mental health, offering health care benefits, encouraging employees to take time off if they need it, and providing resources like confidential counseling sessions. Companies can help reduce this stigma by taking action, such as discussing mental health benefits in company-wide emails or during all-hands meetings and creating ongoing mental health awareness campaigns.

Companies can help reduce this stigma by keeping it simple and taking action within the office. Discussing mental health benefits in company-wide emails or during all-hands meetings is an effective way to communicate that seeking mental health care isn't a luxury or sign of weakness or create ongoing mental health awareness campaigns, or offer trainings and workshops that educate employees about mental illness and encourage them to seek help.

Mental illness is a serious issue and can affect anyone at any time. Organizations are increasingly showing concern for their employees' well-being by offering access to mental wellness tools, making mental health part of company culture, offering EAP benefits, and prioritizing wellness. By removing the stigma around mental illness, showing concern for your employee's well-being, and providing resources they need to maintain their mental health; you can help them feel comfortable seeking care without fear of judgment.

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