

A 3-STEP PLAN TO HELP YOUR EMPLOYEES REDUCE STRESS AND ANXIETY AT WORK



In a study (conducted pre-pandemic) by the *American Psychological Association* and the *American Institute of Stress*, the top three causes of stress in the U.S. were identified as job pressure, money, and health. Add COVID-19 and heightened job insecurity to the mix, and it's easy to understand why more of your employees may be struggling with emotional or mental health issues. As an employer, you want the best for your team. Being aware of potential warning signs and providing resources and support will help your employees to lead happier and more productive lives – at home and at work.

1

STEP ONE: IDENTIFY THE WARNING SIGNS

Providing help means first identifying an issue. If an employee is exhibiting one or more of the below behaviors, they may be struggling with depression or anxiety:

- Decrease in or lack of productivity
- Absenteeism
- Physical symptoms—headache, digestive disorders, sore muscles/back
- Changes in behavior—frustration, withdrawal, cynicism

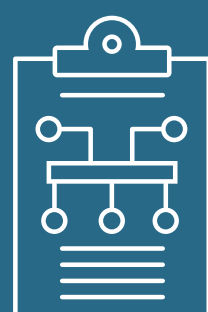


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STEP TWO: DEVELOP A PLAN OF ACTION

The more prepared you are to support your team, the better chance you have of building a culture that values communication, empathy, and proactive problem-solving skills. You can start by:

- Increasing awareness / erasing the stigma surrounding mental health
- Encouraging communication / being accessible
- Training managers to spot warning signs
- Establishing proactive check-in meetings (in person or remote)
- Promoting a culture with work/life balance
- Providing avenues for anonymous feedback



3

STEP THREE: IMPLEMENT COMPREHENSIVE WELLNESS INITIATIVES

Putting a proactive plan in place is a good start, but to give your employees the best chance of managing, or even avoiding the type of stress and anxiety that impacts their work and home life, it's best to get specific. That means establishing companywide initiatives, gathering and disseminating helpful information, and/or providing or connecting employees with resources focused on complete wellness: mental/emotional, physical, social, and financial. The best part? This can be accomplished with any size budget.



MENTAL/EMOTIONAL HEALTH



The "Why"

Learn to cope with stress and challenges in a healthy, productive way that encourages:

- Self-esteem and self-acceptance
- Self-care
- Optimism and positivity

The "How"

Can be suggested tips or employer-provided resources/activities:

- Plan and schedule work tasks
- Focus on one thing at a time
- Stress-management classes
- Meditation and breathing exercises
- Yoga or meditation classes
- Spend time outside
- Connect with others
- Get distracted (read; knit; exercise)
- Set limits on news and social media
- Practice gratitude (journal)
- Listen to music

PHYSICAL WELLNESS



The "Why"

Physical health is strongly associated with mental health, so physical activity and exercise can help to improve your emotional state of mind.

The "How"

Can be suggested tips or employer-provided resources/activities:

- Exercise
 - Workout classes (virtual or in person)
 - Fitness tracker reimbursements
 - Companywide health challenges
 - Health fairs (virtual or in person)
- Nutrition
 - Nutrition classes (virtual or in person)
 - Email/post healthy tips and recipes
 - Health coaching with a certified nutritionist
- Sleep
- Medical, Dental and Vision Care
 - Teladoc services
 - Informational session on company benefits
- Avoid Harmful Substances
 - Smoking cessation classes

SOCIAL WELLNESS



The "Why"

Humans are social beings, and introverts and extroverts alike need to feel a sense of belonging and community to be able to develop and nourish healthy relationships. How this manifests in your workplace is critical to the success of your organization.

The "How"

Social Wellness Tips and Activities

- A company culture that values social wellness often has:
 - Strong social networks for support and guidance
 - Community / service opportunities
 - A focus on teamwork
 - Good communication
 - Regular office bonding
 - Virtual lunch / team-building activities
 - Recognition programs / employee spotlights

FINANCIAL WELLNESS



The "Why"

A *Bank of America – Workplace Benefits Report* published before the COVID-19 pandemic stated that more than 50% of employees said they are stressed about finances. This distraction by financial issues can be problematic for employees and employers.

The "How"

Financial Wellness Tips and Activities

- Provide financial resources and education to help employees:
 - Understand their current situation
 - Develop a healthy relationship with money
 - Manage debt
 - Budget
 - Plan for the future
- Offer company sponsored retirement plan
- Email/post financial/budgeting tips



BENEFITS OF IMPLEMENTING A HEALTH AND WELLNESS PLAN

For Employees

- Reduced anxiety and depression
- Improved self-esteem
- Increased productivity
- Improved physical health
- Happier and more fulfilled
- Positive role model

For Employers

- Higher productivity
- Reduced absenteeism
- Decrease in workplace injuries
- Reduced healthcare costs
- Improved recruiting and retention
- Improved culture and job satisfaction

