

Wellness in the workplace

Wellness in the workplace has been a hot topic for some years now. The wellness of employees can affect a company's bottom line in many ways. Happy and healthy workers can help increase productivity, decrease absenteeism and presenteeism, reduce costs and staff turnover and raise employee morale. Realistically, on average, adults spend one third of their life at work, which means a working environment can play a big part in health and wellbeing. It also means a business has a large responsibility for creating an environment that is happy and healthy.

As an employer

YouGov survey data from more than 4000 employees forms the basis of the [Mental Health at Work 2019: Time to Take Ownership report](#). The report shows that progress is being made in many areas, however it does also highlight that, disappointingly, some employers are still contributing to mental health problems experienced by their staff through poor business practices and culture.

In 2019, 39% of the employees surveyed experienced poor mental health due to work, or where work was a contributing factor. This figure was 36% in both 2017 and 2018. The three main causes of work-related poor mental health are too much pressure; workload impacting on ability to take leave; and a lack of support.

Employers need to take the opportunity to make direct changes to the way they think about and tackle mental health issues, and furthermore recognise employee wellbeing as a critical component of a responsible and successful business.

Some ways that employers and businesses can relieve pressure for employees are as follows:

1. Acknowledge and support poor mental health, whatever the cause
2. Publicly report your wellbeing performance
3. Equipping line managers with the correct training and make wellbeing an 'everyday' part of the business
4. Providing and promoting access to a diverse range of inclusive mental health services and facilities
5. Make wellbeing a corporate objective

There are many programs, initiatives and new companies who aim to improve employees' well-being. They come into a business and can help with training and awareness and provide excellent wellness schemes. Other options include using a company like Perk Box, who claim they help businesses attract, engage and retain their best talent with all the things that make winning company cultures, including perks, employee benefits, rewards and so on. Whether this is providing healthy snacks, group exercise sessions, cooking classes, mindfulness or meditation sessions – the options are endless.

When it comes to recruitment, if you already have a wellness scheme in place or have measures in place to look after employee welfare, make sure you emphasise this in your recruitment campaigns and adverts. Today, a candidate will be scrutinising the company and what is on offer for them, just as much as the job description. We discuss this further in our blog post on [the job hiring process being a two-way relationship and making sure a company presents themselves the right way](#).

As an employee

Do you know what your company offers in terms of well-being and mental health support? Or if job hunting, make sure you ask what is on offer at a company and don't be scared to bring this up at an interview.

If you are not feeling 'well' in your current role, could you be on the road to 'burnout'? Everyone has heard this term, in fact [the World Health Organisation recently updated its definition](#). Burnout is now formally recognised as a "syndrome conceptualized as resulting from chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed."

Some tell-tale signs of burnout at work are:

1. You can't get excited about work anymore
2. You've stopped putting in the effort
3. Your performance is slipping
4. You're totally exhausted

Perfectionism is often closely linked with burnout. Recognising this and then removing some of the self-imposed pressures can help you breathe a little easier at work (and hopefully feel a little less stressed on a daily basis). The second change is to decrease your volume of work. Burnout can happen when you simply have too much on, and in those cases what you really need to do is lighten your load. Approach your manager to have a conversation about the fact that you feel overworked and identify ways that you can manage a more reasonable workload moving forward. Your well-being should be the top priority for your boss.

In conclusion, feelings of wellbeing at work are influenced by day to day experiences with colleagues and management, how purposeful employees feel and the work that they complete. Employers can have a major influence on an individual sense of wellbeing, which can have a multitude of benefits for the organisation itself.