

- Personnel management

Five ways to support employee mental health in the workplace

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Ensuring good mental health in the workplace benefits employees, employers, and society as a whole. An integrated approach that connects mental and physical well-being is essential.



Mental health awareness is growing, but conditions like depression and anxiety are still rising. Currently, 1 in 5 U.S. adults experiences a mental illness annually, and poor mental health could cost the global economy \$6 trillion by 2030.

Employees want employers to prioritise well-being with flexible hours, remote work, autonomy, recognition, and mental health support. Over 80% of job seekers consider mental health culture and benefits when choosing a company, making workplace wellbeing a key factor for business success.

According to Forbes, here are the five ways to support employee mental health in the workplace

1. Offer mental and physical health benefits

A comprehensive approach to health, focusing on both mental and physical wellbeing, can enhance employee engagement and productivity. Employers can support this by designating rooms for meditation and rest, offering free fitness classes in the office, forming exercise groups for social physical activity, providing therapy sessions and mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) programmes, and offering access to free or discounted mental wellness apps. These combined efforts show a commitment to employees' overall health and well-being.

2. Create regular check-ins and open communication

Quality relationships and transparent communication play a significant role in productivity and mental health. Employers can foster this environment by showing vulnerability, encouraging a safe space for employees to express concerns, and seeking feedback. This can be achieved by creating employee satisfaction surveys, scheduling regular check-ins with management and mental health professionals, and implementing feedback to address

dissatisfaction. These measures can help build trust and open dialogue, allowing employees to feel heard and supported.

3. Encourage autonomy and build a flexible workplace

Workplace flexibility and employee involvement in decision-making reduce stress and enhance mental health. Employers can foster autonomy by allowing employees to create their schedules, offering remote work options, experimenting with four-day work weeks, involving employees in decisions that affect them, seeking their opinions, recognising their achievements, and hosting employee appreciation events. These practices help create a sense of ownership and support within the workplace.

4. Reduce workloads and let employees unplug

Excessive workloads and the inability to disconnect contribute to burnout. According to a 2021 report by Indeed, over half of workers reported longer hours since COVID-19, with nearly 30% stating they can never unplug. Addressing burnout involves setting boundaries, such as restricting emails to work hours, discouraging overtime, hiring more staff to balance workloads, encouraging vacations, and increasing paid time off. Regular surveys to monitor burnout levels can help employers understand and mitigate stress factors, fostering a healthier work environment.

5. Implement education and training

Offering mental health benefits is effective when employees know how to use them. In-office mental health training can raise awareness and encourage utilisation. Regular training across all management and employee levels ensures that everyone is informed about available services and how to access them. This strategy can reduce the stigma around seeking support and promote a proactive approach to mental health.