



## Help your employees find balance

### 7 ways to foster mental wellness in the workplace

Canadians spend a lot of time at work. So naturally, job satisfaction is a key ingredient in a healthy, balanced life. Supporting employees in feeling their best is one of the most important steps you can take towards creating workplace well-being; healthy, fulfilled employees not only create a positive environment, they're also more productive and engaged.

Whether your company has five, 50 or 500 employees, you can help keep them happy and productive. Here are seven simple ways to foster mental wellness in your workplace.



#### 1. Create a supportive community and culture

Not everyone's an extrovert, but no one should feel completely isolated at work. Promote cross-company interaction by introducing **Yammer** (it's like Facebook for your office!), town hall meetings or a social committee. Ask managers to create more open and supportive relationships with their direct reports; for example, by scheduling regular touch-base meetings to discuss work and life.

#### 2. Raise the resiliency bar

Sometimes we miss the mark at work or home; we're only human. But highly resilient people bounce back from losses, adversity and change quicker. Offer training courses and programs that will help your staff thrive personally and professionally, so they can contribute to a new level of organizational resilience.

#### 3. Celebrate achievements

Showing appreciation for your employees' hard work can help create a culture of stronger engagement, motivation and job satisfaction. Ask your employees how they'd prefer to be recognized and make it a common practice in your organization to distinguish people for their contributions.

#### 4. Find out what's keeping them up at night, then tackle it

Aside from a looming work deadline, do you know what's worrying your employees? Maybe it's anxiety about retirement, taking care of elderly parents, buying a home or navigating a blended family. Each are examples of emotionally-taxing life circumstances that can take a toll on work performance if left unaddressed.

Survey your employees to find out what their concerns are and bring in local experts to talk about the most common themes during optional lunch-and-learn sessions. Staff will gain coping tools, meet like-minded folks and benefit from peer support.

#### 5. Know and address the signs of burnout

We've all been there: We think we have it all together, and then suddenly we don't. Job burnout is physical, mental and emotional exhaustion caused by overwork, and it can lead to depression. Ensure managers are aware of the three classic signs:

- Exhaustion leading to a lack of focus
- Cynicism or irritability
- Excessive self-doubt

To combat burnout, in addition to a reduced workload, give managers the authority to offer their staff ad-hoc work flexibility, such as working from home, flex hours, or taking a few paid personal days.

#### 6. Promote "al fresco" brain breaks

Encourage employees to make a habit of taking a walk or getting fresh air when they're overwhelmed. Exercise is an excellent remedy for the over-capacity, stressed mind. Plus, a change of scenery helps produce fresh ideas and leads to efficient problem solving, further reducing stress.

#### 7. Keep them challenged

Doing the same thing every day isn't just boring, it hinders employee motivation and engagement. Empower managers to create stretch assignments for those in need of a challenge. Along with boosting engagement, it will harness and cultivate talent through continuous learning, helping you nurture and retain strong employees.

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