



The Leading Edge

3rd Quarter 2015 Manager Newsletter



It pays to help your employees stress less

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Create a culture of mental wellbeing

What do you do to encourage wellness for your team? Mental health is an important part of physical health. And mental health concerns can impact your organization. In fact, untreated mental illness can account for approximately \$105 billion in lost productivity each year in the United States. **More...**



Hire for today and tomorrow

If you're looking to add to your team, you might be inclined to choose a candidate who can hit the ground running. And there's nothing wrong with that approach. Just be sure to think about how each candidate on your short list will fit in with your organization in the long term, too. **More...**

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Did you know that stress costs businesses in the United States more than \$300 billion dollars each year?¹ These costs come from absenteeism, turnover, productivity issues and medical expenses. Some stress originates at work, while some comes from home or other sources. But no matter where it starts, you can have a positive impact on your team's stress level.

Here are some ways you can help:

Ask for input. If you give your employees permission to tell you how their stress level could be improved at work, you might be surprised how much you can do. Challenge everyone on your team to think of three changes that would reduce their stress, then hold a brainstorming session together to talk about which suggestions can be put into practice.

Communicate good news at least as often as not so good news. Let your employees know when they do things right. It not only improves morale; it also reinforces the behaviors you want to see repeated.

Build relaxation into your culture wherever you can. Employees can only work faster than full speed in small, tiring bursts. Be sure your culture allows for some downtime. If business needs dictate that's only possible on breaks, it can help to promote a culture in which your team members hold each other accountable for taking their breaks rather than working through them.

Show you value your team's work-life balance — and your own. Conflict between work and family responsibilities — and enjoyments — can cause stress. Fostering a culture that values personal time for rejuvenation means your staff can find ways to cover business needs without missing important family events or earned time off. Be sure to value your own work-life balance, too. It'll help you feel better about your job and set a positive example.

Offer a financial wellness program. Did you know 64 percent of Americans say money is a "somewhat or significant source of stress?"² A financial wellness program can help with a variety of services such as personalized coaching, resources and tools for meeting financial goals. **Click here to sign up for a free webinar about financial wellness programs.**

Forgive mistakes as much as possible. Unless you're in a high-stress profession in which an error can endanger your staff or the people you serve, mistakes make for great learning opportunities. By creating a forgiving environment, you allow for innovation and help team members identify and correct problems. Keeping the focus on making things right for the customer rather than assigning blame can do wonders for your staff's stress levels.

While some stress can be good for motivation, too much for too long can be unhealthy for your employees and your bottom line. Give some of these ideas a try, and see if you can come up with even more ways to help your team stress less!

¹www.businessnewsdaily.com

²www.apa.org

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The impact of stigma

Even though mental health issues are widespread, there's a lot of misinformation. And many believe mental illness is a sign of weakness or makes people dangerous.¹ It's not uncommon to hear the media reference mental illness in relation to horrific crimes.

Considering this stigma, it's no surprise that people are afraid of being judged. They may be afraid of missing out on opportunities in the workplace. And people sometimes internalize these stigmatizing beliefs, thinking of themselves with pejorative labels such as "crazy."

Worst of all, stigma prevents people from seeking help for their mental health problems. In fact, up to 75 percent of people with a mental health issue don't seek professional support.²

Lead the way

As a manager, you're in a unique position to set the tone when it comes to health and wellness. You don't need to diagnose or solve problems (in fact — you shouldn't for liability reasons). But you can help reduce stigma and point your staff toward resources.

A healthy workplace is a productive workplace. Think of the ways you support physical health initiatives. And remember — mental health is a critical piece of overall health. You can't be healthy unless you're emotionally and mentally well.

¹www.psychologytoday.com

²www.healthline.com

Spread education and reduce stigma

But maybe you don't know where to start. How do you support mental wellbeing in your workplace while avoiding issues of liability? One of the best things you can do is create opportunities to learn about mental health issues. Consider these programs:

- **Stamp out stigma.** Find out about mental health issues and pledge to help reduce stigma at www.stampoutstigma.com.
- **The campaign to change direction.** Learn five of the signs a person might be suffering emotionally and how you can show compassion at www.changedirection.org.

Get certified

Chances are, you provide your staff with training to help them manage life and work. It may be stress management training or a seminar on new work technologies. But did you know you can schedule Mental Health First Aid training for your staff? Similar to First Aid, this training gives participants information and skills to help those in emotional pain.

Mental Health First Aid is an evidence-based program that helps participants:

- Better understand mental health and substance abuse
- Build confidence in skills that can help others
- Decrease stigma
- Increase positive beliefs about treatment
- Know about available resources and support options

You can learn more about Mental Health First Aid by going to www.mentalhealthfirstaid.org. Or see how we can help you schedule a Mental Health First Aid training that's matched to your industry and policies by talking to your account executive.

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If you're looking to add to your team, you might be inclined to choose a candidate who can hit the ground running. And there's nothing wrong with that approach. Just be sure to think about how each candidate on your short list will fit in with your organization in the long term, too.

It can help to consider:

Your interview questions. Will they be able to elicit the information you need to make the best decisions? Go over them before starting the process so you and your hiring team can identify any potential gaps.

Your goals for your team. Which candidate can best help your team meet its goals and commitments? Which one is most likely to fit into your team's culture?

Your organization's vision. It's possible that the person you hire might go on to work for your organization in another capacity. Depending on your environment, that could even be the ideal outcome. Is your top candidate's vision aligned with the organization as a whole?

Interests as well as skills. Where is each candidate's passion? If there's a good deal of overlap between interests and job duties, that can be a good indicator for high motivation.

References. Do the references reflect a perception that matches what the candidate presented during the interview process? If something feels different it might be worth looking into further.

Potential. Everyone has potential, so it's not a question of "if" but of "how". Which candidates are looking beyond the immediate future? Which might contribute solutions for your organization's challenges?

Team orientation. Does the candidate use words like "we" and "our team" a lot when talking about past successes?

Engagement. What questions did the candidate have for you? Is it clear the person is thinking about where he or she will fit in with your organization both right now and a few years down the road?

While you're looking for the best potential employee for right now, be sure to consider who'll also be the best candidate for the future. This approach can help keep your team's turnover low while morale and engagement run high.

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