

Workplace Mental Health

An Action Guide for Employers



www.corewell365.com

Too many employers say they support employee well-being, specifically mental health; but their initiatives and execution say and show differently. As it turns out, supporting and *really* supporting employee mental health requires a commitment and an organizational approach. Through the approach of Well365, our mental health solutions have proven that employers can see utilization, engagement, and behavior changes with their employees. We know that when organizations care about employee mental health, they put effective, helpful practices in place. A non-judgmental culture, combined with effective practices, can greatly improve employee mental health and lead to increased happiness, engagement, and job satisfaction.

Well365 truly believes that physical and mental well-being go hand in hand. Embracing employee mental health helps your employees and in return your business. But like any wellbeing initiative, if leadership does not buy in or continues to have the “checkbox” approach to what you have had in place for mental health for years is good enough, it may hinder progress and lead to stagnation. That’s why Well365 has created this guide to help you make a case for bringing a new, innovative, effective approach to mental health.

Let’s get started by talking about where we know where workplace mental health is at right now. Employee Mental Health used to be “nice-to-have.” From experience of working with employers for years, we know that most company benefit plans have had some sort of mental health services and that usually is the traditional EAP (employee assistance program) or coverage with maximums on the number of visits or costs. We hear day after day that the EAP is underutilized. Employees may be hesitant to seek help because they fear their personal information may not be kept confidential. Additionally, even if they do decide to seek counseling, the wait times to see a counselor can be discouraging. As workplace wellness became more of understanding the stigma around mental health, employers became more aware of depression, anxiety, and other struggles that needed to be addressed. But those services were still “nice-to-have”. There still wasn’t much hard evidence linking employee mental health to employee performance, so employers simply focused on the traditional model that has been around for years and partially why we are in the stigma around mental health today.



The issue with historical workplace mental health approaches is that they've been based on a survival mindset where disruptions are viewed as temporary crises or simple "hiccups" in the order of things. Once those disruptions are addressed, things are expected to return to normal. The approach taken by Well365 is viewed as reactive rather than proactive when it comes to addressing health and well-being. When disruption happens, organizations and employees in the survival mindset are in a constant state of anxiety, anticipating everything to return to how it was before. If this doesn't happen, it can lead to negative emotions such as disappointment, anger, hopelessness, and depression.

Thriving, on the other hand, is a mindset that views every disruption as a new reality, inviting new possibilities. It also views disruption as a given and a continuous state of change that can move an organization forward. The thrive mindset requires companies to adapt like humans have traditionally done, bringing a human touch back into the workplace. This mindset relies on the organization being authentic.

To make a shift in your overall mental and total well-being, consider the following:

Total Wellbeing at work: Establish all well-being initiatives to coincide with one another rather than placing mental health separate or on its own. You can do this by looking at all aspects:

- Individual: Establish opportunities for employees to set their own boundaries and communicate their personal well-being needs without judgment.
- Team: Encourage teams and departments to come together so they can learn, understand, and provide empathy with the well-being needs of their colleagues.
- Organizational: Trust both the individuals and teams/departments to perform when designing your total well-being initiatives, knowing that their well-being will contribute to the overall success.

Keep in mind that you will need to account for your culture and environment to ensure that there is the human touch and support to encourage work and well-being.

- Cultural: Build well-being into social behaviors and norms that can then be adopted at each level.
- Relational: Put strategies in place to support well-being in relationships among colleagues, both between peers and managers.
- Operational: Include well-being in management policies, processes, and programs.
- Physical: Design and encourage physical workspaces to facilitate well-being.
- Virtual: Make virtual workspaces available when employees and teams work remotely.



Organizational

Team

Individual

Build a Culture of Well-being

Mental Health and Well-being go hand in hand. Create a total well-being program.

Creaf opportunities for both remote and on-site employees

Be proactive about your well-being initiatives

Establish a Relationship Approach

Build teams within well-being initiatives based on personal work styles and needs.

Establish team functions at the department/team level

Check in frequently with individuals

Well-being policies & procedures

Establish workplace well-being through policies, rewards & recognition

Allow teams to establish well-being initiatives that best suit them and their department

Encourage individual well-being participation and encouragement of self-care

Design the physical workplace for well-being

Design a workplace to embrace the physical, mental and emotional health needs

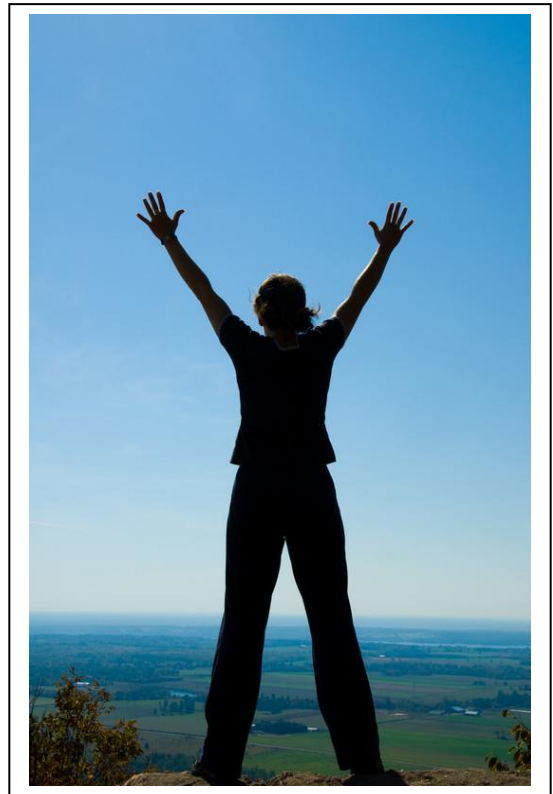
Leverage workspace to encourage collaboration and performance

Provide individuals a judgement free zone in all areas of well-being



Be the BEST you can be! Workplace development should account for not only the nature of both but also the employees themselves who are executing the work. In a survival mindset, leadership decides the necessary skills for employees and enforces top-down training. This approach may force employees into unsatisfying roles and ensure retention.

We all know there are people who are promoted to management positions but clearly do not enjoy it or are honestly not very good at it. With the right approach, employees are empowered to identify the skills and areas of development that align with their interests and passions. From there, employers can help people grow into the positions at which they'll be skilled *and* enthusiastic, which is a winning recipe for excellence and for an enhanced emotional and mental well-being.



Companies that are serious about adapting their culture to be more human focused have the opportunity to also improve their workplace wellness programs. We've compiled some of the key points you'll want to consider when adjusting your workplace wellness program.

Creating Workplace Employee Mental Health: We have all heard this before, but to truly have an any effective well-being program, it **MUST BE** championed by your leadership, your mid-level leadership and adapted by your employees. The message comes from top-down and this holds true for an effective mental health initiative. In addition to implementing [best practices in your wellness program](#) you also need to have a process for measuring success. Most importantly, you need to make sure your company mindset is prepared, and this is from the top down.

Evaluate Your Company Policies and Culture: Organizations can't talk the talk if they don't walk the walk. Start by taking a hard look at your policies and procedures. Are they flexible and human-centered? Are you empowering your employees and teams? Is there an open and honest dialogue available to employees that they can access anonymously? Your leadership plays a key role in modeling behavior and directing things from the top-down. Even one supervisor or manager who is dismissive or acts cruelly in response to an employee's mental health needs can undo your efforts.

Create a Non-Judgement and Safe Place for Employees with Mental Health Issues: Employers that demonstrated transparency, empathy, and flexibility during COVID-19 experienced a smoother transition than companies that weren't attentive to workplace culture. In particular, the successful companies created a safe and welcoming environment where employees felt supported and understood. Keep in mind these suggestions when establishing your mental health strategies:

- Hire and train supervisors, leaders, and managers on how to embrace emotional and mental health support. Well365 provides a series of workshops, training, and presentations to support this initiative.
- Encourage employees to talk to their supervisors (and encourage supervisors to listen with flexibility and an open mind) about any job-related stress that can be an area to revamp for them.
- Add regular employee check-ins.
- Make employee recognition a regular practice.
- Overcommunicate and remind employees about the mental health resources you have in place.
- Offer paid mental health days if you don't already. Leadership should encourage employees to use these days. Encourage leadership to take mental health days themselves, and to be open about it when doing so.
- Increase the number of covered mental health visits allowed either with your mental health partner, EAP or health plan. Understand that every situation and every person is unique. What might be best for one individual, may not be for the next, so allowing a flexible approach to best support your employees is key.

The simple act of letting an employee know they matter and that their manager cares can make a world of difference when it comes to mental health.



Mental Health Concerns: What to Do! It's completely normal to feel uncomfortable or unsure how to handle situations as they arise when an employee indicates they are struggling with their mental health. How the conversation is handled can truly help what and how the individual does or does not proceed to gain support.

Here are some steps you can take to help an individual who is struggling:

- ✓ Ask open-ended questions.
- ✓ Listen, without any distractions or interruptions.
- ✓ Validate the individual's feelings.
- ✓ Empathize with the individual and express understanding to the employee.
- ✓ Share resources your company has in place and ask to assist them in getting further support.
- ✓ Reassure the individual that they have your support as well as company support.

Examples of Everyday Questions You Can Ask Your Team:

- ✓ How are you doing?
- ✓ What are you feeling overwhelmed about related to projects or work?
- ✓ Are there any specific things I can do to make this meeting as productive as possible?
- ✓ What are some of the successes you are proud of as we work on this project?
- ✓ How are you managing the challenges of the work we've had to do over the past couple of weeks?
- ✓ What are you doing for self-care?
- ✓ Are there recent accomplishments you'd like to share with the team to celebrate and recognize your efforts?
- ✓ What or who are you thankful for?
- ✓ What else can we do to keep our mental health and well-being in mind as we look ahead?

The old way of working just doesn't work anymore. And honestly, let's be real: did it ever? The stigma around mental health led to employees bottling up and hiding their mental health issues until they reached the crisis point. Using this guide as a starting place, you can work with your leadership to re-evaluate your company's mindset, how your employees rate their work environment as it relates to mental health, and how to adapt your workplace wellness platform to position your company as a great place to work. If you would like assistance in evaluating your workplace wellness program and making it work better for your organization and your employees, contact Well365. Well365 has worked with companies of all sizes, in all industries for over 20 years and has an abundance of experience to support you. Why re-invent the wheel when Well365 has best practices and solutions in place!

Some of the trainings and presentations Well365 offers includes:

1st Aid to Mental Health in the Workplace	Remembering Your Why
Mental Health: Let's Talk About It	Silence Quitting at Work
Problem Solving That Will Help YOU SOAR	Addressing Burnout
Making Decisions to Meet Your Goals	Parenting Through the Storm
LONELINESS: Feeling Lonely in a Crowded Room	Parenting in the Age of Anxiety
Empowering YOU In Your Relationships	The Truth About Teens
Communication That Builds YOU	Resiliency Superpower
Being the Best You: Overcoming Stress & Anxiety	12 Days to Overcoming Stress
Substance Abuse Training in the Workplace	Self Development & Self Care
Reasonable Suspicion Training	Medication Diversion
Stress vs Anxiety vs Depression	Being the Best Me Today and Tomorrow
De-escalations in the Workplace	Harassment, Sexual Harassment & Discrimination

Well365 Employee Assistance Program

Are you looking for an EAP or a complement to your existing EAP, Well365 provides flexibility with options to best suit your employees? Our EAP is designed to provide 1-on-1 counseling and assist in problem solving, or identify new ways to cope with common, but several life problems, stress reduction counseling, crisis and conflict resolution and substance abuse.

Well365 1-on-1 Employee Counseling

Counseling is flexible with virtual, on-site, in-person and telephonic options. Counseling allows your employees to receive a personal approach to areas they are struggling with and overcome them. We meet individuals where they are and provide confidential support.

Contact Trisha to learn more about
Well365's Mental Health & Well-Being Workplace Solutions

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