

the ADVISOR

RESOURCES FOR SUPERVISORS, MANAGERS, AND HUMAN RESOURCES PERSONNEL

Creating a “Well” Workplace

Is your workplace a well one?

This may sound like an odd question. After all, the point of a workplace is to conduct business and serve customers. However, the average worker spends roughly one-third of their time at work. Doing so in an environment that prioritizes the wellbeing of both employees and customers is a key intangible in maintaining productivity and retaining key contributors.

So how do you create a “well” workplace? Try these tips:

- ▶ **Consider what makes a “well” workplace.** Often, when people hear the term “wellness,” they think of diet and exercise. Yet wellness typically encompasses multiple components, including:

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- Physical and mental health
- Social connections
- Work
- Community
- Finances

Wellness is when all of these aspects are in balance. A well workplace is one that values its employees, not just for the work they do, but for who they are as people, and that encourages growth and development in all areas of their lives.

- ▶ **Focus on health.** Rushing through a busy day may lead employees to neglect their physical health. Simple ways to make sure employees are taking care of themselves include:

- Provide bottled water and healthy snacks at meetings
- Hold “walk and talk” meetings (be sensitive to the needs of those with disabilities)
- Provide flexibility where possible to allow for medical appointments
- Encourage those who are visibly ill to stay home





► **Prioritize mental and emotional health.** Mental health issues affect an estimated 20% of the population at any given time. In addition, employees are often coping with life events that may be stressful, such as the loss of a loved one, a difficult living situation, or an unexpected bill. Remind your team that LifeMatters is available to provide 24/7/365 assistance with any concern. In addition, encourage your employees to practice good self-care and establish a reasonable work-life balance.

► **Foster a sense of purpose.** People who feel as if their efforts are worthwhile are more likely to stay engaged in and enthusiastic about their work. Create a sense of purpose by establishing con-

crete, achievable goals that align with your team or organization's mission statement. In addition, develop criteria that will help team members manage competing priorities. For example, the phrase "customers first" is a good way to remind your team that a customer waiting for assistance takes priority over other responsibilities.

► **Express appreciation.** When someone has done a good job with a project or gone above and beyond to meet a customer's needs, say so. Reminding employees of their value on a frequent basis will help maintain morale and keep your team invested in their work. If some of your team works remotely, acknowledge their efforts through

a phone call or text. Consider having a monthly pizza party or team lunch to celebrate both individual and collective successes.

► **Have fun.** While the work you do may be serious, there is always room for laughter and appropriate levity. Sharing a viral video before a team meeting makes for a good icebreaker, as does allowing a few minutes for people to talk about weekend plans. Laughter promotes a sense of camaraderie, so encourage people to take joy in their work and their interactions with each other.

► **Role model healthy behaviors.** How you behave sets the tone for your entire team. Set a good example by making healthy choices in your own life and creating a reasonable work-life balance. Prioritize respectful behavior in your workplace interactions, and be open to suggestions for improvements in both work processes and the workplace's physical environment.

Maintaining a healthy, positive work environment is not only good for morale, but may lead to decreased absenteeism and increased productivity. Both your team and the organization will benefit.

For more ideas on how to create a "well" workplace, contact the LifeMatters Management Consultation Service. Help is available 24/7/365.

How Do I Say That? Excessive Negativity

Is one of your direct reports consistently negative? While an occasional dose of cynicism is sometimes helpful in blowing off steam, a constant stream of negative comments or a perpetual focus on the worst-case scenario could affect the mood of the workplace and bring down morale.

If the negativity of one or more team members is becoming a distraction, try these tips:

- 1. Consult with Human Resources.** HR can help you review relevant policies and provide suggestions for how to address your concerns and get the

employee back on track. If overall team morale is poor, they may suggest training or teambuilding solutions. LifeMatters can also offer consultation and guidance.

- 2. Schedule a private meeting with the employee.** Explain why the employee's negative comments are creating tension.

Sample language: "When you take a negative approach or shoot down ideas, it's disheartening. Your colleagues may question whether their ideas matter or struggle to stay engaged."



- 3. Listen.** Ask the employee to explain her or his behavior. If the employee's negative approach is due to workplace circumstances (such as a logjam in production), ask what suggestions he or she may have to improve the situation.

Sample language: "I'd like to look at ways to streamline things so it's less frustrating for you and the rest of the team. Please tell me where problems are occurring."

- 4. State your expectations.**

Explain what behavior changes you would like to see.

Sample language: "I would like you to take a more positive approach to problem solving. This doesn't mean I don't want you to point out flaws in logic or potential problems. But I would like the emphasis to be on how we reach a solution."

- 5. Make a referral to LifeMatters.** If the employee indicates that a personal concern may be affecting his or her mood, make a





referral to LifeMatters. If the employee's behavior has become disruptive, consider making a performance referral.

Sample language: "LifeMatters can help you improve your communication skills, as well as address any personal concerns. Call 24/7/365."

6. Follow up. Schedule a follow up meeting with the employee to review her or his progress and discuss additional improvements. If

the employee is struggling to meet performance expectations, consult with Human Resources.

Sample language: "Let's talk again next week. In the meantime, please come to me with questions or concerns."

If, after the employee's negative behavior has been addressed, you still have concerns about morale, you may want to consult with the LifeMatters Management Consultation Service. Help is available 24/7/365.

Management Consultation

LifeMatters is available to help with:

- ▶ Confronting an employee about performance issues
- ▶ An employee's personal problem
- ▶ Suspected drug or alcohol use on the job
- ▶ Interpersonal conflicts between team members
- ▶ Establishing clear, attainable expectations for performance
- ▶ Addressing crisis situations, such as a violent incident, the death of an employee, or a natural disaster
- ▶ Your own personal concerns
- ▶ Any other work-related issue

LifeMatters offers professional management consultation when you need it, as often as you need it. Call anytime.

Call the **LifeMatters®** by Empathia Management Consultation Service toll-free anytime. **1-800-367-7474**

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