How to promote wellbeing in the workplace

As an employer, how do you ensure your employees' wellbeing?

Mental health is a hot topic, and rightly so. It is widely recognised now that being open about our mental health is generally a good thing and can help us overcome issues that we are all likely to experience at some time in our lives. **But what about your employees? Would they feel comfortable in opening up to you, and would you be supportive?**

Here's our brief summary of a very useful guide written by MIND, the mental health charity, that we think you will appreciate. If you like this article, look out for part two soon —Tackling The Causes of Mental Health Problems in the Workplace

Research shows that when employees feel valued and supported, they tend to have higher wellbeing levels, are more committed to the organisation and they perform better too. By supporting staff wellbeing you can reap the benefits through better morale, loyalty and commitment.

Open and supportive workplaces benefit everyone – employees, employers and the bottom line.

Lead from the top

Employers should send a clear message that staff wellbeing matters. Colleagues take cues from how leaders behave. Show the organisation's commitment to staff wellbeing by simple actions such as supporting a campaign to encourage all staff to take lunch breaks and to work healthy hours.

Raise awareness

Too often, employees are scared to talk to their manager and problems can spiral. Raising awareness and promoting discussion of mental health and wellbeing can start to challenge this harmful culture.

Involve staff

When staff feel involved and well informed about what's happening in the organisation it increases motivation and helps people understand how their role fits into the bigger picture. Try to be as open as possible about strategic vision and direction and involve all staff in decisions.

Some ideas for you to introduce:

- Include availability of mental health and wellbeing support in induction and training
- Invite a speaker on mental health to an event
- Use your internal communications channels
- Encourage mental health champions to send a clear message that you will get support if you're experiencing a mental health problem
- Sign the Time to Change pledge to make a public commitment to tackle mental health stigma and discrimination

Some ideas for involving staff:

- Staff surveys and focus groups
- Staff forums and diversity networks
- Engagement steering groups
- Regular performance review meetings
- Improvement or planning 'away days'
- Regular group problem-solving meetings
- Work-stream groups that bring together different parts of the organisation
- Feeding back board decisions to all staff
- Effectively using internal communication channels

A culture of openness

Speak regularly with team members to check how they're doing and to reflect on what might be causing them stress. You can do this at a team level by adding a standing item to team meetings where people talk about wellbeing and stress as a group.

Two-way communication

Poor communication can be a significant cause of stress. Where communication is clear, open, effective and responsive, staff will be able to access all the information they need while avoiding overload.

Work/life balance

In the short term long hours might seem manageable, but sustained pressure and a poor work/life balance can quickly lead to stress and burnout, reducing levels of employee productivity, performance, creativity and morale.

Flexible working, in terms of working time, location or the pattern of working, can support healthier and more productive ways of working for all staff.

Learning and development

Give staff development opportunities where possible. This can be done in a cost-effective way by using skills and knowledge within the organisation to develop coaching, learning, training and job-shadowing opportunities. Managers should also make themselves available for regular work-related conversations with employees.

Encourage your staff to:

- Work sensible hours
- Take full lunch breaks
- Rest and recuperate after busy periods
- Avoid working at weekends
- Take their full annual leave entitlement

Flexible working benefits employees and employers alike:

- Employers benefit from increased morale, commitment and productivity as well as reduced sickness absence
- Employees are able to fit their lives around their work, helping them balance busy lives while remaining healthy and focused
- Flexible working can be a vital early intervention to prevent mental health problems from getting worse

Peer support, buddy systems and mentoring

In some cases, people find it easier to speak to someone who isn't their manager. Mentoring and buddy schemes can help new staff to understand your organisation faster and can support all staff to gain confidence and develop new skills.

We hope you found this brief guide useful and informative

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