



BOSTON COLLEGE
Center for Work & Family
CARROLL SCHOOL OF MANAGEMENT

Employee Well-being: A Comprehensive Approach

Enhancing the Employee Experience and Business Outcomes



Definitions of Employee Well-being

- Employee well-being --
the area of total well-being affected by work and
amenable to workplace initiatives
- Includes all life area -- work, relationships,
community environment, physical health,
emotional/mental health, financial health, spiritual
health



Definitions of Employee Well-being

Five essential elements that transcend culture and location:

- Purpose
- Social
- Financial
- Community
- Physical

(Gallup-Healthways Well-Being 5)



Definitions of Employee Well-being

Work & Well-being Research

- Advancement, managerial and physical workplace considerations
- Physical/psychological health

Mercer Report

- Sleep
- Resilience



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Organizational Culture/Climate

To build a healthy culture that promotes well-being:

- Determine and actualize core values
- Provide opportunities to refresh and recharge
- Create physical space where people can do their best work
- Encourage time off
- Promote professional development



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Organizational Culture/Climate

Critical for business leaders to take an active role in influencing employees' well-being:

- Identify how individual and family well-being can positively impact the organization
- Demonstrate a total commitment to well-being
- Communicate a clear definition of what well-being means to the organization
- Become a role model for healthy behaviors
- Measure the impact on business outcomes



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Organizational Culture/Climate

ROI estimates are substantial for companies that invest in employee well-being:

- \$6.00 in healthcare savings for every dollar invested (single employer cardiac intervention)
- \$2.71 (Johnson & Johnson)
- \$2.30 (PwC)
- \$1.50 (Rand Wellness Programs Study)

Value on Investment (VOI) - includes both the financial gains plus abstract benefits



Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Climate of well-being where:

- Links between organizational success and well-being are articulated
- Well-being efforts aligned with organizational objectives, values, and priorities
- Long-term commitment to employee well-being
- Champions identified with well-being as sole focus
- Employees at all levels are engaged
- Barriers to well-being are acknowledged -- solutions designed to meet business and personal needs



Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Supportive Work Environment/Culture where employees have:

- Meaningful work that recognizes them as unique contributors
- Positive relationships with supervisors and colleagues
- Opportunities for career advancement and professional development/growth
- Job satisfaction and a sense of purpose
- A safe physical environment that enhances productivity



Components that Align with the Research: Org Culture/Climate

Supportive Supervisors responsible for:

- Promoting and supporting employee well-being
- Engaging in and being a role model with their own well-being behaviors
- Supporting employees in their work and personal lives
- Focusing on performance/outcomes rather than face time

Supervisors and senior leaders are rewarded for support of well-being



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Physical Health

- Health status affects productivity and health care costs
- Employer health promotion programs can mitigate risk factors
 - Lower health care expenditures
 - Improve business outcomes -- less absenteeism, greater engagement, higher retention, viewed as employer of choice



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Mental Health

- Mental health problems:
 - Reduce employee well-being
 - Quality of life
 - Productivity at work
- Promote mental health:
 - Job conditions modified to reduce work demands + work-to-family conflict
- “Decision authority” increases job satisfaction + mental health, especially for older workers



Components that Align with the Research: Physical and Mental Health

- Coverage for mental and behavioral health assessments/treatment and mental health supports
- Health risk assessments/screenings/coaching and disease management programs
- Support groups, group fitness activities and opportunities to join with colleagues around well-being events
- Nutrition counseling including healthy foods at work
- Programs for substance abuse counseling, smoking cessation programs/monitoring and weight loss



Components that Align with the Research: Physical and Mental Health

- Employee Assistance/ Work-Life Programs offering resources and referrals
- Childcare referrals, on-site centers and back-up care
- Eldercare supports, resources and information
- Educational information/supports for children of all ages including college counseling
- Supports for parents advocating for children with special healthcare needs



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Financial Health

- Money, work and the economy: most common sources of financial stress that impact employee well-being
- Research indicates that access to financial education programs:
 - Lowers financial stress
 - Reduces absenteeism
 - Increases productivity/loyalty



Components that Align with the Research: Financial Well-being

- Financial education seminars/counseling
- Adequate compensation and regular performance reviews
- Job security transparency
- Retirement and other saving plans (older workers)
- Assistance with student debt (younger workers)



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Work, Family & Health Network (WFHN):
examined how both supportive supervisors and employee control over their work impacts employee well-being
- Organizational intervention (STAR) resulted in:
 - Reduced burnout, perceived stress, and psychological distress
 - Increased job satisfaction/likelihood to stay with employer over a three-year period



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Participants in ROWE, a BestBuy intervention of team-level flexibility:
 - Increased the odds of quitting smoking, smoked less, reduced excessive drinking and had more time for healthy meals
 - Slept almost an extra hour each night, exercised more, visited the doctor when ill, stayed home when sick



Components that Align with the Research: Flexibility/Flexible Work Options

- Craft a work schedule that fits best with work style and job tasks
- Match job requirements/workload with lifestyle needs
- Have predictable schedules that can reduce stress
- Adjust working time to meet personal needs – self-care, medical/mental health appointments, and family care

Training on effectively working flexibly/managing flexible workers and teams



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

Stress: 75% of U.S. employers say it's the top health and productivity concern

- 36% of employees are stressed, highly stressed or extremely stressed
- 39% reporting moderate stress
- More stress = poorer sleep quality, more fatigue, lower productivity



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

- Employees response to stress is key - determines whether stress enhances or detracts from performance and well-being
- Positive self-care, particularly physical exercise supports resilience and enhances coping skills
- Mindfulness meditation can mitigate employee stress -- reduce anxiety (5-10%), depression (10-20%) and pain



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness

- Strategic renewal — daytime workouts, short afternoon naps, longer sleep hours, more time away from the office and longer, more frequent vacations:
 - Boosts productivity, job performance and health
- Recovery time is critical for successful personal and performance outcomes
 - Lack of recovery time costs companies \$62 billion/year in lost productivity



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Sleep

- Sleep quantity/quality critical for productivity, physical health, and psychological well-being
- 40% of Americans sleep less than the recommended 7-9 hours/night
- Workplace interventions can improve sleep
 - Employees with family-supportive supervisors + control over their work time = improved sleep quantity/quality



Components that Align with the Research:

Stress/Resilience/Mindfulness/Sleep Training, seminars and workshops on:

- What the organization looks like when everyone lives the core values of well-being
- The importance of resilience and recovery time
- Healthy behaviors and stress management/mindfulness techniques

Worksite spaces that encourage connections and conversations

Time-off for recovery/stress-reduction/vacation/illness



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Spiritual Well-being

Various perspectives on the meaning of spirituality in organizations:

- Treating colleagues with respect
- Being a responsible corporate citizen
- Integrating spiritual activities into the workplace



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Spiritual Well-being

- Spiritual well-being: Results in higher job satisfaction even in difficult and demanding situations:
 - Can cushion the impact of challenging workplace events
- Spirituality promotes mental well-being, reduces stress and exhaustion



Components that Align with the Research: Spiritual Well-being

Encourage opportunities to:

- Provide meaningful and purposeful work
- Feel connected with like others
- Share one's spiritual side, when appropriate

Question: ***Is your organization including spiritual well-being as a component of their employee well-being efforts?***



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Volunteering/Philanthropy

Research:

- Volunteers score much higher on emotional well-being/ personal independence/overall life satisfaction
- Volunteering and days of service improve mental/physical health and well-being



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Volunteering/Philanthropy

Survey says:

- >1,000 U.S. employees -- 61% said community service improves their sense of well-being and effectiveness at work
- >3,000 adults -- majority reported feeling mentally and physically healthier after a volunteer experience



Components that Align with the Research: Volunteering/Philanthropy

- Offer opportunities to volunteer in the community including employer-sponsored events/activities



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Technology

- Close to 1/3 of employees report that technology contributes to stress on the job
- More frequent use of technology is associated with:
 - Greater workload
 - Longer work hours
 - Increased pace of work demands
 - Interference in employees' personal lives



What Does the Research Tell Us?

Technology

- Almost 70% of employees report that technology use allows them to be more productive
- Using technology to connect with family/friends helps employees to better manage stress at work
- Health-related apps and devices: 23% of full-time workers say that mobile technology supports their wellness efforts (apps for calorie counting, healthy recipes, and fitness tracking etc.)
- Question? ***Anyone use an app for wellness tracking?***



Components that Align with the Research: Technology

- Provide clear guidelines on availability, workload and work goals with regular feedback
- Give employees explicit permission to disconnect during off hours
- Establish a protocol for urgent or emergency situations
- Encourage team-level communications on workload/work plans
- Determine how to best accomplish individual/team goals with an eye toward well-being



THANK YOU!

For additional information, please visit www.bc.edu/cwf
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