



Enhancing Emotional Fitness for Improved Workplace Well-Being



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The wellbeing of employees is an organizational issue rather than just an individual's personal issue. There are countless factors that influence and impact it, including the culture within your team, your manager, your workload, and flexibility. While employees may not have the ability to switch their boss or organization, there are a few things they can practice daily to improve their emotional fitness and wellbeing.

Emotional fitness is defined as the skill of creating a supportive relationship with oneself, one's emotions and thoughts, and other people. When a person aims to improve physical fitness, he or she improves the physical ability to handle physical challenges. The aim of improving emotional fitness focuses on enhancing the ability to handle emotional challenges with less stress, struggle, and overwhelm.

Here are six surprisingly powerful yet simple emotional practices that can help employees improve wellbeing and better manage stress:

(1) Take a moment each day to reflect on yourself

Ask yourself questions: How am I feeling? How am I doing today? Do not immediately try to fix how you are feeling, and do not judge your answer. This practice is intended to increase self-awareness. Research supports the notion that people who practice emotional awareness tend to report greater wellbeing. Awareness of difficult feelings reduces the degree to which one experiences them, providing an opportunity to support a person in

feeling better. Instead of being consumed by the difficult feelings of burnout or stress, emotional awareness helps develop the ability to become self-aware and feel more in control.

(2) Make time for a few short, quality breaks during the day

The term "quality" is key here. It is about refueling and recharging, which means indulging in an activity that disconnects you from work. Catching up on your to-do list or scrolling through social media is not a quality break at all, nor is reading a newspaper.

The human brain needs a break every 90 to 120 minutes to avoid accumulated stress and overwhelm and to function at its best. A large-scale study conducted by Microsoft found that taking short breaks of 5 to 10 minutes reduces accumulated stress, burnout, and overwhelm while helping to improve focus. A short walk outside can help disconnect from work during the day. It motivates, improves focus, boosts mood, and provides numerous benefits if done consistently.

(3) Embrace acceptance and direct your energy toward what lies within your control

Practicing acceptance includes two actions: First, recognize the context of the situation with clarity and focus on the facts you know to be true. Second, determine one step you could take to move forward with less struggle and stress.



The fact that overthinking stressful situations drains our energy is often underestimated. Embracing these two steps of acceptance when you find yourself stuck in a loop of negative thoughts helps divert your attention to what you can control and take productive, positive action—however small. These small wins provide a sense of progress to the brain and motivate you to find other helpful and useful steps you can take. This can be a go-to skill during uncertain and challenging times at work. It's about pausing, taking a deep breath, and asking yourself what steps you can take to move forward, given how things are and what is in your control.

(4) Make small, meaningful moments of connection with fellow employees a priority

A very important point is to greet your coworkers and fellow employees with genuine enthusiasm when you see them for the first time during the day. As human beings, we are all wired to connect; feeling connected and having social support reduce anxiety and stress while improving mental health. Take the initiative and prioritize daily micro-moments of connection with fellow workers. It does not take much time or effort but helps you feel uplifted and can also help the other person feel less alone.

(5) Develop attitude of gratitude to counter brain's negativity

If you do not have an attitude of gratitude, create one. It can be cultivated through a daily gratitude practice, such as simply writing down three things you are thankful for each morning or evening. A grateful mindset is vital for well-being, especially during challenging and uncertain situations. Uncertainty is the hardest thing for the human brain to tackle, and it can be extremely stressful and energy-draining. Whenever your brain encounters an uncertain situation, it enters "fight or flight mode" to protect you. This response can lead to overthinking and

increased anxiety about worst-case scenarios and negative outcomes.

A gratitude practice encourages the brain to broaden its perspective and direct attention toward things that are more comforting, meaningful, or positive. The goal is not to deny the difficulties you might be facing but to remind yourself that they are not the sum of your life. "This too shall pass." Practicing gratitude improves resilience and fuels emotional energy, enabling you to adapt positively to challenging situations.

(6) Engage in intentional, restorative activities outside of work

Lastly, it is essential to practice active rest outside of work by engaging in things you love. Try creative activities like writing, painting, or water coloring. Dedicate some time to gardening or reading. It's about spending time on your favorite hobbies. Active rest is not about zoning out in front of Netflix for extended periods, although watching your favorite show or season from time to time is a good option. The key is to indulge in activities that actively fuel your energy and nurture parts of you beyond just your work self.

Taking time for activities outside of work allows you to completely disconnect from your job and nurture your creative side, which can improve your well-being. Employees who engage in restorative activities during their time off—whether by spending time with family and friends or pursuing hobbies—are less likely to experience burnout compared to those who do not disconnect from work after their job is done.

There's truth in the saying, "You're more than your job." Even if you love what you do, it's important to make time for activities you enjoy outside of work. If your mind resists this idea because it's always focused on productivity, remember that taking time to recharge is an investment in yourself. It enables you to perform at your best and sustain your effectiveness over the long run. Ultimately, well-being is a shared responsibility. Organizations must foster a supportive culture, while employees should actively pursue their emotional fitness to promote overall well-being. This balance of organizational support and personal effort is crucial for maintaining an engaged, motivated, and resilient workforce.

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