



Revving Up Workplace Wellbeing



The Fast Track to Mental Health

WELCOME

- Chelley Jackson
 - Illinois State University
- Sarah Freestone
 - Iowa State University

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK



1 in 3 U.S. workers
say their job negatively
impacts their mental health.

Change starts with leaders who set
the tone and prioritize well-being.

Johnny C. Taylor, Jr., SHRM-SCP
President & CEO, SHRM



Inc.

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LEAD

You're Not Paranoid: Workplaces Are Getting More Toxic

Workplace hostility is on the rise, according to a new survey, and it's pushing workers to change jobs.

BY KET EATON @KETEATON

MAR 26, 2025

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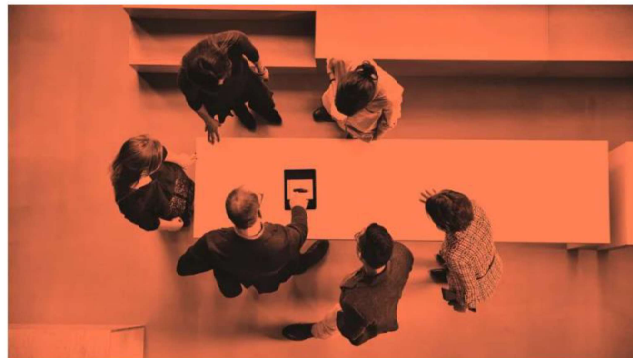


Photo: Getty Images



How would you rate your current workplace wellbeing on a scale of 1-10?

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Why did you choose that answer?

① The Slido app must be installed on every computer you're presenting from

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What would make it better?

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In this session, we'll explore

- Common **challenges**
- Key components of the **Workplace Well-being**
- Practical **Strategies**
- **Challenges** to implementing
- Ways to measure **effectiveness**

Common Challenges

- **Stress + Burnout**

- **high workload** > chronic stress & burnout
- **lack of control** > leads to increased stress levels



- **Poor Work-Life Balance**

- **long hours** > encroach on personal time, poor work-life balance
- **inflexible schedules** > hard to manage personal responsibilities



- **Lack of Support**

- **insufficient resources** > frustrating to try to perform tasks
- **poor management** > negative impact on morale



Common Challenges

- **Toxic Work Environment**

- **Negative culture** (bullying, harassment, discrimination) > severe mental health impacts
- **Poor communication** > misunderstandings & conflict



- **Job Insecurity**

- **Uncertainty** > fear of job loss, organization change creates fear/stress
- **Lack of career progression** > dissatisfaction & disengagement



- **Physical Health Issues**

- **Sedentary lifestyle** > back pain & obesity
- **Unsafe conditions** > poor ergonomics & injuries



- **Isolation**

- **Remote work** > isolation & disconnection



The Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being



<https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/workplace-well-being/index.html>

**2025 IASFAA
CONFERENCE**

**FAFSA
AND FURIOUS**

Protection from Harm

- **Overview**
 - Creating conditions for physical and psychological safety is critical for ensuring workplace mental health and well-being
- **Human Needs**
 - Safety
 - Security
- **Key Components**
 - Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
 - Enable adequate rest
 - Normalize and support mental health

**2025 IASFAA
CONFERENCE**

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AND FURIOUS**

Protection from Harm

- Strategies

- Review existing conditions to ensure compliance
- Design, implement, and regularly evaluate > REPEAT
- Schedule send emails if working outside normal hours
- Encourage people to take sick time to avoid getting everyone sick
- Make It Okay-<https://www.iowahealthieststate.com/make-it-ok>
- Ensure confidentiality and access for people to attend virtual or in-person appointments for themselves or their family
- Ask/ensure in 1:1 staff are taking PTO
- Reinforce in team meetings to take PTO and remind about a sick time for physical and mental health appointments
- Schedule meetings for 45 or 50 minutes to allow breaks
- Normalize respecting people's time
- Meeting free days and times (Mondays, Fridays, lunch hour)
- Help find a place for staff to eat lunch away from desks, invite them until it's normal



Reflection Question

What are workers saying they need to feel physically and psychologically safer in our workplace? How can we objectively assess their safety?

Protection from Harm



Reflection Question

What opportunities exist for rest within our work schedule and workplace? Are they adequate? How do we know if they are adequate?

Protection from Harm



Reflection Question

How can our workplace better support both the physical and mental health needs of all workers?

Protection from Harm



Reflection Question

How does our workplace prioritize DEIA policies and initiatives? Do workers recognize it as an organizational priority?

Protection from Harm



Connection & Community

- **Overview**

- Foster positive social interactions and relationships in the workplace

- **Human Needs**

- Social Support
- Belonging

- **Key Components**

- Create Cultures of Inclusion and Belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork







Connection & Community

- **Strategies**

- Model prosocial behaviors (welcoming, helping, reassuring others)
- Protect against bias, discrimination and exclusion
- Reinforce expectations of inclusion & address exclusionary behavior
- Organize regular team building activities
- Use Peer Support Programs or create teams, committees, task forces
- Campus Mentors
- IASFAA/MASFAA Mentors
- Encourage staff to take breaks together
 - lunch, walks, breaks, webinars, campus wellness
- Normalize walking meetings and walking to meetings together
- Celebrate holidays together – while respecting everyone (New ‘fiscal’ Year, Start of Term)
- Celebrate each other’s accomplishments and innovation
- Don’t cancel 1:1s or team meetings – use that time for team building
- Shark Tank – break into teams to develop and implement solutions, present to office
- Team shirts



<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How do workers describe feeling included (or not) in our workplace?</p> <p>Connection & Community</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we facilitate respectful, friendly working relationships between coworkers?</p> <p>Connection & Community</p> 
<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>What do individuals and teams say they need to make collaboration more effective?</p> <p>Connection & Community</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we create moments for social connection before or after our formal meeting agendas?</p> <p>Connection & Community</p> 


Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Work-Life Harmony

• Overview

- Integrating work and non-work demands

• Human Needs

- Autonomy
- Flexibility

• Key Components





- Provide autonomy over how, when, and where work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

Work-Life Harmony

• Strategies

- Increase worker control over scope, process, scheduling, location
- Offer workflex or hybrid/remote options
- Build more trust
- Provide consistent scheduling for workers
- Offer flexible start and end times
- Don't penalize workers for personal, family needs, or emergencies
- Encourage people to stay home when sick
- STAY HOME WHEN YOU ARE SICK
- TAKE YOUR OWN PTO
- Set, respect, and model clear boundaries between time on and off work
- Limit digital communication outside work hours (schedule send)



<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How are we ensuring that no one needs to work during their off hours?</p> <p>Work-Life Harmony</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>Do the leaders in our workplace model healthy behaviors and boundaries?</p> <p>Work-Life Harmony</p> 
<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we give workers more autonomy or a bigger voice in their duties?</p> <p>Work-Life Harmony</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>What would it look like for workers to manage their own time in our workplace?</p> <p>Work-Life Harmony</p> 

Mattering at Work

- **Overview**

- People want to know that they matter to those around them and that their work matters.

- **Human Needs**

- Dignity
- Meaning

- **Key Components**

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission




Mattering at Work

- **Strategies**

- Hold an all staff retreat and include everyone in brainstorming start-stop-continue
- Hold skip-level meetings to collect feedback, then act on it
- Build habits of recognizing people contributions and wins (gratitude notes, shout-outs, sticky note wall)
- Ask staff, “What is one thing I can do to support you right now?”



<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>What opportunities are there in our workplace to meaningfully recognize and appreciate workers' efforts?</p> <p>Mattering at Work</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>Does every worker understand our organization's mission and how their work contributes to achieving it?</p> <p>Mattering at Work</p> 
<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we create a culture of gratitude and affirmation amongst all levels of our organization?</p> <p>Mattering at Work</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we more transparently share results from worker surveys and follow through on their ideas?</p> <p>Mattering at Work</p> 

 Office of the U.S. Surgeon General

The U.S. Surgeon General's framework for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Opportunities for Growth

- **Overview**

- Create more opportunities for workers to accomplish goals based on their skills and growth

- **Human Needs**

- Learning
- Accomplishment

- **Key Components**

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

Opportunities for Growth

• Strategies

- Use mentoring on campus, IASFAA, MASFAA, etc.
- Encourage and reward credentials and certifications
- Support professional development
- Work with IASFAA to develop training and development opportunities
- Be open and clear about opportunities for advancement
- Recognize that not all employees want to ‘climb the ladder’; be prepared with alternate
- Complete performance evaluations and check-ins to acknowledge growth, plan and track goals
- Shadowing & job sharing – everyone needs a backup



<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How might we provide equitable learning and development opportunities to all workers?</p> <p>Opportunity for Growth</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>What does mentorship look like in our workplace? How could it be improved?</p> <p>Opportunity for Growth</p> 
<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>How can we facilitate more opportunities for timely and fair feedback for workers and leaders?</p> <p>Opportunity for Growth</p> 	<p>Reflection Question</p> <p>What factors might be limiting our workers' growth?</p> <p>Opportunity for Growth</p> 

Challenges to Implementation

- Resources
- Consistency
- Cultural barriers
- Stigma
- Complex
- Subjectivity
- Privacy
- Confidentiality
- Perception
- Bias
- Support



Ways to measure effectiveness

- Define clear objectives
 - make smart goals
 - align with organizational objectives &/or departmental goals
- Use a variety of metrics
 - comprehensive approach – qualitative and quantitative
 - regular surveys/check-ins
- Ensure data privacy
 - confidentiality
 - anonymity
- Engage employees
 - involve employees in the process
 - regular communication



Ways to measure effectiveness

- **Monitor & adjust**
 - continuous monitoring
 - feedback loops
- **Leadership Support**
 - top-down commitment
 - model healthy behaviors and participate in wellness programs
- **Promote positive culture**
- **Provide resources**
 - Support
 - Training & development



Key Takeaways & Resources

- **Protection from Harm:**
 - Tune up your workplace safety protocols to ensure a smooth ride.
- **Connection and Community:**
 - Build a pit crew of supportive colleagues to keep your team running at peak performance.
- **Work-Life Harmony:**
 - Find the perfect balance between the fast lane of work and the scenic route of personal life.
- **Mattering at Work:**
 - Ensure every team member feels like a champion, recognized and valued for their contributions.
- **Opportunities for Growth:**
 - Accelerate your career with continuous learning and development opportunities.



Five Essentials for Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being

Centered on the worker voice and equity, these five Essentials support workplaces as engines of well-being. Each Essential is grounded in two human needs, shared across industries and roles.



Components

Creating a plan with all workers to enact these components can help reimagine workplaces as engines of well-being.

Protection from Harm

- Prioritize workplace physical and psychological safety
- Enable adequate rest
- Normalize and support mental health
- Operationalize DEIA* norms, policies, and programs

Connection & Community

- Create cultures of inclusion and belonging
- Cultivate trusted relationships
- Foster collaboration and teamwork

Work-Life Harmony

- Provide more autonomy over how work is done
- Make schedules as flexible and predictable as possible
- Increase access to paid leave
- Respect boundaries between work and non-work time

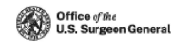
Mattering at Work

- Provide a living wage
- Engage workers in workplace decisions
- Build a culture of gratitude and recognition
- Connect individual work with organizational mission

Opportunity for Growth

- Offer quality training, education, and mentoring
- Foster clear, equitable pathways for career advancement
- Ensure relevant, reciprocal feedback

*Diversity, Equity,
Inclusion & Accessibility



MENTAL HEALTH AWARENESS MONTH

Mental Health Checklist

EVERY DAY I WILL:

- ☐ Move my body
- ☐ Take a screen-time break
- ☐ State 3 things I am grateful for (write down or say aloud)
- ☐ Eat fruits and vegetables
- ☐ Sleep for 7-9 hours a night

ONCE EACH WEEK I WILL:

- ☐ Connect virtually with a friend or family member
- ☐ Plan an outdoor activity, like a picnic, hike or bicycle ride
- ☐ Set a new goal, like finishing a work, school or home project
- ☐ Claim a win for the week: It can be big or small. Celebrate with a reward or an act of kindness towards yourself!

ONCE THIS MONTH I WILL:

- ☐ Finish reading a book
- ☐ Take a 1-day break from all social media and news
- ☐ Try a creative activity
- ☐ Help someone or complete a community service project

Choose 2 more activities that are personal and meaningful to your mental health:

REFLECTIONS:

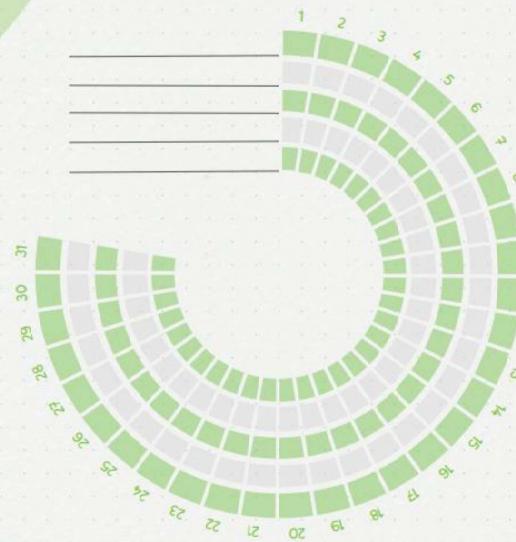
♥ **MENTAL HEALTH TIP:** Check-in with how you are feeling often! "Labeling your emotions is key. If you can name it, you can tame it." — Marc Brackett, Ph.D., Yale Center for Emotional Intelligence

Make It OK

MakeItOK.org/IOWA

Make It OK habit tracker

"Our habits shape who we are."



<https://www.iowahealthieststate.com/s/Make-It-OK-Habit-Tracker.pdf>



Healthiest State
INITIATIVE

#makeitokIOWA

Rate each with a ✓ on a scale of 1-5 (1 is low, 5 is high)	1	2	3	4	5
Example				✓	
I know what is expected of me at work.					
I have the materials and equipment and training I need to do my job right.					
At work, I have the opportunity to do what I do best every day.					
In the last 7 days, I have received recognition or praise for doing good work.					
My supervisor or someone at work seems to care about me as a person.					
There is someone at work who encourages my development.					
At work, my opinions seem to count.					
The mission or purpose of my company makes me feel my job is important.					
My colleagues or fellow employees are committed to doing quality work.					
I feel included at work.					
I have a friend(s) at work.					
I am encouraged and supported to collaborate with my colleagues.					
My colleagues and boss are friendly and respectful.					
In the last six months, someone at work has talked to me about my progress.					
This last year, I have had opportunities at work to learn and grow.					
I feel safe at work (physically and mentally).					
I feel like it's okay to take breaks and rest.					
I feel like my life outside work is respected.					

Sample Check-in Questions:

- I accomplished these things in the last year:
- I wanted or planned to accomplish:
- Solutions I'd like to see and issues I'd like addressed:
- Parts of my job I would change:
- Challenges I'd like to have:
- Ways I would like to be recognized:
- How can we be more staff-ready (we are working on being student-ready, but what about staff? What can we do to be caring and ready to meet their needs so they can serve our students well):
- Start, Stop, Continue
- [State department goals] Goals that align with department goals

Free Resources

- <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/reports-and-publications/workplace-well-being/resources/index.html>
- job satisfaction surveys:
 - <https://www.shrm.org/topics-tools/tools/forms/employee-survey-job-satisfaction>
 - <https://forms.office.com/Pages/DesignPageV2.aspx?subpage=design&tryout=true&linkorigin=Bot&contentsource=SatisfactionSurvey>
 - <https://www.workhuman.com/blog/employee-survey-questions/>
- apps:
 - Calm.com
 - Headspace
 - Healthy Minds Program
 - BetterHelp
 - Use fitness tracker, apple watch, calendar reminders to move every hour
- <https://workwellbeinginitiative.org/employertoolkits/Overview>
- <https://www.ihl.org/resources/tools/what-matters-you-conversation-guide-improving-joy-work>
- [What employees want versus what employers think they want](#)
- <https://workfamilyhealthnetwork.org/toolkits-achieve-workplace-change>