

Achieving Wellness In The Workplace

Do you ever wake up feeling that you dread going to work? Do believe that another day at the office is just grinding you down? Do wonder how many more work days you can take?

That your health and mental wellness are suffering because of what might be considered an “unhealthy” workplace is a common condition in the modern world. For some, they simply hate what they do, and wish they can do something else. However, for many others the workplace environment is not conducive to feeling good about being there.

Let’s consider what an unhealthy workplace looks like, and then let’s look at what YOU can do to make a difference, not just for your own benefit but also for your colleagues.

What makes an “unhealthy” work environment?

Here are some thoughts that you might consider in assessing the “health” of your workplace:

- Do your colleagues greet you with smiles and welcoming words when you walk in, or do they ignore you? What is your demeanor when you arrive at work? Do you wear a hassled, grim look on your face, or arrive with a relaxed but professional posture and a genuine smile?
- Are your colleagues happy, or unhappy? Are they willing or resentful workers?
- Is the office clean and well-maintained, or is it scuffed up and dirty?
- Do you have an ergonomically designed office desk and chair, to maximize comfort and posture, or do you feel uncomfortable and stressed out from bad posture?
- Are there snacks and beverages supplied? Are they low grade coffee and sugar filled doughnuts or are they herb teas, mineral water, and fresh fruit?
- What is communication like? With your colleagues? With your boss? Do you find everyone approachable and exclusive, or is there backbiting? Is your boss supportive or dominating and intimidating?
- Is there fresh air in the building or are all the windows tightly locked?

Just like a healthy lifestyle, workplace wellness is all about balance.

How can you achieve a balance between the demands of your job, your personal health, and the quality of your inter-personal relationships?

- Bring a smile to work. Greet your colleagues with cordiality and respect. If this is something new to you, try it for a week. Notice what changes this activity brings about. Do your colleagues respond in kind? How does this make you feel?
- Take a minute or two every hour to stretch, breathe, and reposition your body. Get up and walk around during this time. This will help your mind to relax and rest and then to achieve more efficient focus for the next hour's work.
- Try to get fresh air in the building and if there is none, try to get outside and breathe the fresh air during your lunch break.
- Check in with your colleagues. Communicate. See how they are doing. Compare notes. Discuss possibilities for collaboration or support whenever possible. What would that look like?
- Know that your inbox will never be empty! Just take each task one at a time, focus on the moment, and try to let go of the whole picture. This way you can avoid the feeling of overwhelm.
- Practice “inclusiveness” at work. Involve everyone whenever possible or appropriate and make sure you do not engage in any “cliquey” or “exclusive” behavior, which can cause bad feelings and resentments to fester.
- If you do have an issue with someone, talk to him or her as soon as possible. Apologize if you are in the wrong. Try to understand the other person's point of view. Listen without judgment. Aim for a win-win solution. If you cannot resolve the issue, seek help from a supervisor.
- If your chair is causing you back pain, talk to your boss. Explain you will be a more productive worker if they can invest in an ergonomic chair for you.

These are just a sample of small, actionable steps YOU can take to improve your quality of life and positive experience in the workplace. All this is simply a start.

Perhaps after you make these changes and begin to see some improvements in your personal well-being at work you can have a conversation with your boss and colleagues about what you can do collectively to achieve wellness in the workplace, which in turn will enhance productivity, reduce illness and absenteeism and benefit your company's profits in the long run.