

Promote Mental Wellbeing In The Workplace

March 8, 2021

in [CWA Blog](#)



It's hard to believe we have been staying home, wearing masks, and social distancing for a year. As vaccines roll out, many of us may feel like we're coming around the corner with the COVID-19 pandemic. Still, it is essential to remember that the pandemic's effect on mental health and wellbeing can go beyond the initial immediacy of the crisis.

Everyone has been affected differently. Many gym staff members have pivoted from their usual roles, picked up more responsibility, or are still furloughed due to state restrictions on gym operation. Many have lost love ones to COVID-19. The weight of such an uncertain time can be heavy and significantly impact our mental health.

It's not all bad news, though. It's not uncommon for a well-run climbing gym to feel like family because, in a lot of ways, it is.

Gym staff work together and often play together too — the nature of climbing involves trusting a partner with our lives. This dynamic can mean we are more casual with our supervisors and employees than your typical corporate or nine-to-five job. Working with your friends has its perks.

Here are a few tips for recognizing and promoting mental wellbeing in the workplace:

Recognizing Common Signs and Symptoms of Workplace Stress

Reduced Performance

An employee who is generally efficient and good at their job suddenly seems unmotivated, slacking off, or underperforming. Is the coach who is usually laughing with the team kids sitting off to the side? Is the passionate routesetter suddenly missing work without explanation? We're not talking about the occasional bad days – everyone has those. This point refers to a trend of behaviors that are not self-correcting over time.

Increased Emotional Fatigue

Many gym employees work in a public-facing role in customer service, coaching, and community-building. *This can drain someone's social battery, leaving employees feeling drained, unable to cope, and chronically fatigued.* This can cause stress and social burnout for gym employees facing personal strife induced by the pandemic.

Alienation

Individuals experiencing high levels of workplace stress may begin to view their jobs as increasingly frustrating and grow cynical. They may begin to distance themselves or disassociate to feel numb emotionally.

In 2016, The World Health Organization estimated that depression and anxiety cost the global economy \$1 trillion per year in lost productivity. On an average year, one in five adults in the U.S. will experience mental illness.

What Can Gym Leadership and Managers Do?

Understand How Mental Health Impacts Your Employees

Establish and build a culture of consistent check-ins. Communicate more than you think you need to. Go beyond the usual, “how are you doing,” and ask more specific questions to understand how your employees are doing, such as:

- “How are you feeling about coming to work these days?”
- “On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate your stress level at work?”
- “I noticed something different about your performance. Is there anything going on that I’m not seeing?”

Model the Healthy Mental Wellbeing You Promote

There is nothing worse than a manager who says you should have a good work-life balance and sends you a task to do at 7pm.

Share what you are doing to prioritize mental health, like taking a day off self-

care into your daily routine or going to a therapy appointment. Normalize taking mental health seriously.

Encourage employees to turn off work communication channels when they are not at work. In the age of rapid information delivery and communication systems like Slack, email, and text, it is easy to feel as if you are never away from work.

Implement Policies of Flexibility

Know that the situation, your employee's needs, and the needs of your gym will continue to change. Give your employees more control over how they carry out work tasks. Many staff members have extra caregiving responsibilities, such as providing care to a sick loved one or overseeing virtual learning. Be ready, understanding, and flexible with schedules as circumstances and needs change.

Everyone Handles Stress Differently

It is important to remember that everyone handles stress differently. Mental illnesses may not always present themselves with readily well-defined symptoms. Workplace burnout can present as slacking off, apathy, or even physical symptoms like headaches and intestinal issues.

In today's uncertainty and any other day, for that matter, always communicate with your staff and keep an eye out for signs of unhealthy stress levels.

About the Author



Holly grew up in Taiwan, a tropical island smaller than the state of Colorado where she often dreamed of living somewhere colder. She began working in publishing at a young age, authoring a National Best Seller in her home island at the age of 17 before moving across the Pacific to attend the University of California, Santa Cruz. Her professional interests lie in communications, brand strategy, and using written and visual storytelling to inspire creation and recreation.



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