

Taking care of **employee health and well-being** in times of change



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Most organizations are in the midst of a lot of disruption. Supporting employee health and well-being is challenging even in the best of times. In times of change and uncertainty, this initiative can be even more difficult. Many employees are experiencing additional anxiety, undergoing a substantial change in diet and exercise habits and adapting to a new way to get work done.

Times of change can make it tough to support the health and well-being of your employees, but there are steps we can take as leaders.

Consider burnout. Many assume that burnout is caused by too many hours worked. Although this can be the case – and working constant 70 to 80 hour weeks would likely lead to burnout for most – other factors actually better predict whether or not an employee feels burned out.

What are these other factors? And what can we do about them?

The inability to find meaning in work better predicts burnout than does the number of hours worked. In a healthy workplace culture, people feel like their job matters and see how it connects to larger organizational goals. They also believe their company is socially responsible and value its mission.

Be transparent with your employees about the mission of your organization and how it's still relevant and important, even in these changing times.

This can be especially important for employees who are now working from home and may have lost some of the inspiration they used to receive from their coworkers or by physically being in a workspace.

In addition, employees who report being in a work culture that supports their health are also at least twice as likely to feel:

- **their manager understands them**
- **their ideas are taken seriously**
- **confident the good work they do will be recognized**
- **their job challenges them to push their limits**

Encouraging leaders to manage their teams by listening, challenging (when appropriate), empowering and recognizing hard work can be the right way to support and engage employees during these times.

Empathy rules all, especially during times of change. Many of the steps outlined here come down to simply imagining our employees as complexly as we view ourselves – as humans that need meaning, belonging and validation. We of course cannot control all that is happening, but maybe we can move the needle a bit in the right direction by simply trying.

By taking these steps, we can do our part to prevent burnout in our employees, resulting in them feeling better physically, mentally and emotionally.

