45% of Workers “Too Busy” to Seek Help for Mental Health

A recent survey found that a further 25% were "too embarrassed" to do the same, while 22% said they can’t afford it.

A new survey of hundreds of HR professionals and full-time employees has found that while nearly two-thirds of workers are struggling with their physical and mental health, 45% say they’re “too busy” or “too embarrassed” to seek care.

Worryingly, even though the vast majority of employees report that their health has stayed the same or worsened in the past year, most HR leaders and decision-makers reported that their workforce’s health had improved.

The results are a reminder for businesses to ensure that their staff members feel able to take mental health sick days when they need to, and that everyone is set up with video conferencing, as well as other remote-working essentials, so they're able to work from where they feel the most comfortable.

Employee Well-Being: A Bleak Picture

Health and well-being company One Medical has surveyed 800 HR and employee benefits leaders and 800 employees working full time in the United States, with the help of data analytics and research firm Workplace Intelligence.

They found that 64% of employees are struggling with mental and behavioral health. 78% said they’d struggled for over a year with their issue/s, whereas 48% have had trouble dating back to over three years.

“78% of surveyed employees said they’d struggled for over a year with mental health issues. 91% reported this affecting their productivity; 45% claim it affects over 5 working hours a week”

The overwhelming majority of survey respondents – 91% – reported that they’re less productive when under intense mental or physical stress, and 45% said that this affects more than 5 hours of their work per week.


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Employee Struggles Not Relayed Upwards

Although 75% of employees surveyed reported that their mental health had worsened or stayed the same throughout 2022, 60% HR leaders thought their workforce’s mental health had improved during that twelve-month period, while 59% came to a similar conclusion about their physical health.

One Medical says that this “indicates that leaders may not appreciate the extent to which their team members may be struggling with their health”.

If a significant proportion of workers feel too busy and too embarrassed to even seek help in the first place, then this might explain why colleagues higher up the food chain have an inaccurate picture of precisely how much their counterparts are struggling.

Putting Employees First

One Medical’s survey results, although concerning, did provide some promising findings too. For instance, 45% of HR leaders said that “improving awareness and communication around their benefits is one of their top strategic priorities for 2023”.

You can provide as many formal benefits as you like, but important as they are, it will all be in vain if you fail to create an environment within which employees feel comfortable requesting the support they need to put their mental health first.

Ensuring employees have manageable workloads – and that there’s a fair process for adjusting them when necessary – will go some way to absolving the guilt or pressure some people feel to work beyond their means.

For businesses and staff alike, the post-pandemic era has been disorientating. Building trust through prioritizing the mental well-being of your workforce, however, is one way to create stability you can sustain. Making sure your employees know what resources they have access to, such as their EAP, can also go a long way to alleviating stress.

Solutions EAP provides free, short-term, and confidential counseling for employees and their families.

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