H2O

FOR EMPLOYEES:
KEEP YOURSELF HYDRATED!

The Human® ELEMENT

BCon

H2O For Employees: Keep Yourself Hydrated!

Well-being, happiness, and health are words that have been tremendously discussed over the past few years. With the pandemic arising over the past two years, this has given rise to even more needs for workplace well-being. Hence, workplaces and leaders have been working hard to provide employees with necessities that keep them healthy, happy, and open about themselves. Yet, is it only the workplace and leaders' responsibility? Through this e-book we cover the two sides of the coin: what not only leaders need to do, but what employees need to do for themselves as well. A shout out to all employees out there: Keep yourself hydrated! Keep yourselves: Healthy, Happy, and Open! Your H2O is your responsibility.

Workplace Happiness in Numbers [1]

"Happiness counts," says Dr. Sonja Lyubomirsky, a world specialist on happiness and Vice-Chair of Psychology at the University of California, Riverside. According to his research, happiness is a cause of success: happy people get more positive ratings at work, are more productive and creative, earn better salaries, and are less prone to burn out or miss work. Happier people are more likely to get and keep jobs.

Isn't it simple?

Isn't it simple? However, the truth is that not everyone is as happy as possible. 62 percent of 5,000 U.S. workers stated that they are happy at work "most of the time," but 96 percent of those who disagree believe it is possible to be happy at work most of the time, either to a considerable extent (57 percent) or to some level (96 percent) (39 percent).

Meanwhile, not only do most of our respondents (68%) agree with Dr. Lyubomirsky that happiness leads to success, but 88%say that seeing people happy at work is an essential factor in

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[1] Indeed, 16 March 2020, Indeed Editorial Team, Introducing the Indeed Work Happiness Score, Accessed 31 Jan 2022, <https://www.indeed.com/lead/work-happiness-score>

deciding whether or not to work for a company. Research findings also show that a lack of happiness is why people consider quitting their jobs.

When it comes to what motivates people to be happy at work, "being stimulated" is critical. Meanwhile, this emotion is a result of feeling challenged at work (43 %), being inspired by the people around them (37 %), or looking forward to their work environment, rather than "conventional" evaluation metrics such as work/life balance or salary (39 %). With 63 % stating work is one of their most significant stressors and an even higher percentage, 84% indicating their job happiness influences their mood at home. With this, we still have a long way to understand workplace happiness.

Mental Health At Work [2]

Among the chaos and trauma of the COVID19 crisis, one silver lining is normalizing mental health difficulties at work. Employers were only beginning to recognize the prevalence of mental health issues in 2020, and mental health support has gone from a nice-to-have to a serious business need. By 2021, the stakes have been raised even higher, thanks to an improved understanding of the workplace conditions that might lead to poor mental health. Employers' measures such as mental health days or weeks, four-day workweeks, and increased counseling benefits or apps have been implemented, yet insufficient. Employees demand and expect long-term, mentally healthy environments, which necessitates tackling the difficult task of culture transformation. It's not enough to just provide the most up-to-date apps or use euphemisms like "wellbeing" or "mental fitness." Employers must link what they say and what they do.

As a result, Harvard Business School researchers recently updated their 2019 Workplace Mental Health report to include implications for 2021. They also provide more insights into how leaders

[2] HBR, 4 Oct 2021, Kelly Greenwood and Julia Anas, It's a new Era for Mental Health at Work, Accessed 31 Jan 2021, https://hbr.org/2021/10/its-a-new-era-for-mental-health-at-work

might better assist employee mental health, in addition to an update on how policies have changed since 2019:

1. *Changes in culture are occurring*. Leaders must approach mental health as a top priority for the company, with measures in place to hold them accountable, such as regular pulse surveys and clear ownership. It should not be left to HR alone.

2. *Training.* Leaders, supervisors, and all employees must be trained on how to negotiate mental health at work, have difficult conversations, and build supportive environments.

3. *Putting money into DEI*. Employees should be given the authority to form mental health employee resource groups (ERGs) and other affinity groups, serve as mental health ambassadors, and initiate peer listening activities.

4. *Workplaces that are more environmentally friendly*. Promoting autonomy, setting boundaries, and establishing norms around communication, responsiveness, and urgency can help create a mentally healthy culture.

5. *Creating Deeper Connections*. Employers should support continuing, more profound one-on-one talks between managers and direct reports and between coworkers by providing opportunities for connection across the organization.

Creating a Culture of Wellness [3]

Job Satisfaction: When we are involved in meaningful and authentically linked work with our beliefs and objectives, job happiness and longevity increase, as do overall mental health and self-esteem. Assist people in developing a feeling of purpose and autonomy in their work and professional lives. Create a collaborative environment in which employees can share their ideas, collaborate with colleague mentors, and promote others' professional development. Provide

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[3] Psychology Today, 5 Jun 2021, Lindsay B. Jernigan PhD., The Mental Health Crisis: A ToolKit for Business Leaders, Accessed 31 Jan 2022, https://www.psychologytoday.com/intl/blog/license-shine/202106/the-mental-health-crisis-toolkit-business-leaders

continual learning opportunities in areas of employee interest. Additionally, show employees how their activities contribute to the company's bigger aims, beliefs, and global effect.

Time spent outside relaxes the central nervous system, decreases anxiety, and triggers the production of "feel-good hormones" such as dopamine and adrenaline, which can help fight depression. Consider providing attractive outdoor locations where employees can go for breaks or solo or small group work sessions. Build walking pathways if you have adequate property; the mix of fresh air, sunlight, and exercise is the mental health Holy Grail. Create an incentive scheme to entice staff to go for a local walk during their breaks if you're a small business without land or financial resources or if your employees work remotely.

A healthy work-life balance decreases stress, increases positive work engagement, and allows for sleep, which is essential for good health. The amygdala, a region of the brain that regulates mood and emotion, may not operate effectively when we are sleep deprived, making us subject to despair and anxiety. Late-night work hours, especially those involving screen time, disrupt our natural circadian rhythm by inhibiting melatonin production and replacing it with adrenaline and cortisol. Examine your cultural expectations. Is there an unspoken or explicit expectation that staff reacts to messages or emails at all hours of the day or night? Are people rewarded for working longer hours and putting work above family, recreation, and sleep, either implicitly or explicitly? Employers may view increased short-term employee productivity as a positive. However, maintaining mental health—and the financial and productivity benefits that come with it—is a marathon, not a sprint. So, whenever possible, create a culture of daily balance, and provide enough vacation time and PTO to ensure long-term balance. Finally, evaluate your own behaviors; actions speak louder than words, and leaders' behavior sets the tone. Demonstrate that balance is valued, rewarded, and regarded best practice from the top down.

Connection is preferable to isolation, support is preferable to humiliation, and knowledge is preferable to ignorance. Many people are afraid of being criticized or perhaps professionally penalized if they freely discuss their problems. When mental health issues are hidden, they worsen, and remedies become much more difficult to find. As a result, it's vital to minimize

mental health stigma in your workplace. Companies, large and small, are discovering that discussing mental health openly pays off. Provide expert-led workshops and seminars and opportunities to share their personal experiences. Top-down modeling is also helpful in this case. Employees feel encouraged to disclose their mental health issues and accomplishments when their leaders do so. We thrive on relying on one another and knowing that we are not alone. Normalize mental health issues by creating programs that allow people to talk about their personal experiences. Not only will emotional pain be reduced, but so will creativity, productivity, longevity, and organizational loyalty. There are a variety of readily available, innovative resources you can use to publicly highlight and de-stigmatize mental health—some are more general, while others are targeted at specific groups, such as BIPOC personnel in the workplace. There are many solutions available, and you may locate resources that meet the demands of your company and, most importantly, your employees.

Emotional Health and How it Impacts our Physical Health [4]

Your thoughts can jump right to the physical when you think of health; but here we are talking about mental health, which is built pretty much around emotions. Emotions have a significant part in happiness. According to studies, there is a link between regulated mental health and physical health. The mind-body link and the state of your mind and body will be considered in a more holistic health approach.

What Exactly Is Emotional Well-Being?

One facet of mental health is emotional wellbeing. It refers to your ability to manage both happy and negative emotions, as well as your knowledge of them. Emotionally healthy people have effective coping methods for bad feelings and know when to seek expert help.

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[4] WebMed, 25 Oct 2021, Dan Brennan. Md, What to Know about emotional health, Accessed 31 Jan 2022, https://www.webmd.com/balance/what-to-know-about-emotional-health
NHS News In Health, Accessed 31 Jan 2022, https://newsinhealth.nih.gov/2015/08/positive-emotions-your-health

Physical and emotional well-being are intertwined. People under a lot of stress and have a lot of negative emotions are more likely to have other health problems. Behaviors create these issues that destructive emotions can affect due to a lack of emotional regulation rather than negative feelings. Some people, for example, find that smoking cigarettes or drinking alcohol helps them relax. These practices, however, are only for the very short term and they come with a higher risk of cancer, heart disease, and other diseases.

Experts claim that emotionally healthy people experience less unpleasant emotions and recover more quickly from setbacks. Resilience is a term used to describe this characteristic. Holding on to positive emotions for extended periods and appreciating the good times is another marker of emotional wellness. Emotional wellness is also aided by developing a sense of meaning and purpose in life and focusing on what matters to you.

According to research, a cheerful mental state has been linked to enhanced health, including lower blood pressure, a lower chance of heart disease, a healthier weight, better blood sugar levels, and a longer lifespan. However, many studies have been unable to discern whether pleasant emotions produce greater health, whether being healthy causes positive emotions, or whether other factors are at play.

How do leaders contribute to Employee's Health?

Previously, organizational leaders treated employee wellbeing as an afterthought. As the wellness movement gained traction, companies began to offer internal training programs, access an employee help program, and construct onsite amenities to promote physical fitness. Yet, maintaining and sustaining employees' health and wellbeing requires deep approaches that dig deep into the culture.

According to The Human Element theory, leaders need to build a culture around three critical dimensions:

Dimension 1: Openness

According to THE (The Human Element theory), the definition of Openness is:

"Openness is the depth of interaction with other people. Expressing feeling, thoughts, and beliefs".

Hence, Openness is the extent of trust the organization creates within its culture, which enables employees to choose to open up and express their thoughts, feelings, and beliefs.

How are Openness and trust related to health and wellbeing? Is there a relationship?[5]

Workplaces that are great aren't defined by extravagant perks, salaries, or benefits. Rather, these places of business have a culture of trust. The Great Place to Work Institute (GPTW) has defined and measured what it means to work in a high-trust environment. Trust-based cultures not only create superior corporate success but also foster employee wellbeing, according to GPTW's research.

Given that many organizations are attempting to move beyond standard occupational health, safety, and wellness by embracing a more holistic definition of employee wellbeing, this link between trust and wellbeing merits closer examination.

"All aspects of working life," according to the International Labour Organization, "from the quality and safety of the physical environment to how people feel about their work, their working environment, the climate at work, and work organization."

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[5] HR Professional Now, Feb 2019, Graham Lowe Phd., Accessed 1 Feb 2022, https://www.ab.bluecross.ca/pdfs/workplace-wellness-resources/high-trust-workplaces-promote-employee-well-being.pdf

Employers may promote employee wellbeing by encouraging physical, psychological, and emotional health and safety integrated and comprehensive. An essential factor is executives' demonstrated commitment to improving employee wellbeing and incorporating this aim into the company's culture.

GPTW's research demonstrates how this occurs. Employees have faith in supervisors who care about their well-being. Trustworthy managers are open and honest about change and listen to and respond to employee opinions. Strong core values, such as fairness, respect, and integrity, positively guide day-to-day interactions among coworkers, managers, and employees and interactions between employees and their customers or clients, suppliers, business partners, and the greater community. Employees take pleasure in their work and have a strong bond with their coworkers. Collaboration, creativity, and invention are sparked by the synergy of trust, pride, and companionship. Employees thrive as a result, and their overall work experiences are favorable.

Related Articles: For more on Openness and how to build cultures of trust.

Dimension 2: Inclusion

According to THE, the definition of Inclusion is:

"Inclusion behavior refers to people coming together, being excluded or included, belonging, and togetherness."

Let's explore then the relationship between Inclusion and Employees Health[6]

To explore this, we need to define Emotional Tax as we will refer to it soon. Emotional Tax is defined as *"the heightened experience of being treated differently from peers due to*

[6] Forbes, 2 Jun 2021, Neha Merchandani, The Key to Employee well-being:start with Inclusion, Accessed 1 Feb 2022, https://www.forbes.com/sites/forbeshumanresourcescouncil/2021/06/02/the-key-to-employee-well-being-start-with-inclusion/?sh=14e36d334b11

Lifeworks, 26 April 2021, Thushyan Kayilas, The Link Between Employee Wellbeing and Diversity, Equity and Inclusion, Accessed 1 Feb 2022, <https://wellbeing.lifeworks.com/blog/the-link-between-employee-wellbeing-and-diversity-equity-inclusion/>

race/ethnicity or gender, triggering adverse effects on health and feelings of isolation and making it difficult to thrive at work ."[7]

Employee mental health is inextricably related to workplace experiences of Inclusion and diversity. The issue of "Emotional Tax" is one of the most severe risks to wellness. When employees are in a setting where they feel different from their coworkers owing to gender, color, or ethnicity, they pay an Emotional Tax at work. This Emotional Tax has a significant negative influence on mental health and happiness. An inclusive workplace is one in which every employee feels appreciated and welcomed. Many well-intentioned DEI initiatives backfired because they failed to develop an inclusive culture first. Diversity cannot thrive without inclusiveness.

Wellness is, at its most basic level, inclusiveness. In the workplace, true diversity, equity, and Inclusion are about acknowledging each employee's unique history and experience and helping them on their path to wellbeing.

Read Relationships at work for more tips on Building Inclusion through THE.

Inclusion in the workplace should establish a sense of financial security for underrepresented groups through equal pay, equal opportunity, and access to benefits, tools, and resources. Employers must make concessions and provide access to ensure that employees from underrepresented backgrounds may confidently use their resources.

Dimension 3: Control

According to THE, the definition of Control is:

"Control behavior relates to the decision-making process between people and the areas of power, influence, and authority."

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[7] Accessed 21 Feb 2022, < https://www.bloomberg.com/company/stories/understanding-the-emotional-tax-on-black-professionals-in-the-workplace/#:~:text=This%20emotional%20tax%20is%20defined,difficult%20to%20thrive%20at%20work.>

How is Control related to employees Health? [8]

Employees who have more control, which is an essential predictor of job quality, report better overall health and job happiness.

In recent years, academic, practitioner, and policy debates have centered on techniques for enhancing job quality and the relationship between job quality and health.

A was published in the journal Work and Occupations, looked at changes in reported health in relation to degrees of control and autonomy over two years of data from the Understanding Society survey, which included 20,000 employees. According to this study, persons in management had the highest degrees of autonomy at work, with 90% reporting 'some' or 'a lot' of control in the workplace. Professionals report having less Control over the pace of their job and their working hours. According to the report, other employees had significantly lower autonomy, with about half of lesser-skilled employees having no authority over working hours at all.

Greater levels of control over work activities and schedules can potentially provide significant benefits for the employee, as evidenced by reported levels of health well-being, according to the findings of the study.

How do Employees Contribute to their Own Health and Well-being? [9]

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[8] HR Zone, 3 May 2018, Daniel Wheatley, Autonomy In the Workplace has positive effects on wellbeing and job satisfaction, Accessed 1 Feb 2022, < https://www.hrzone.com/perform/people/autonomy-in-the-workplace-has-positive-effects-on-wellbeing-and-job-satisfaction#:~:text=Employees%20who%20have%20higher%20levels,higher%20levels%20of%20job%20satisfaction.>

[9] The Human Element, Leaders Manual, Will Schutz

We've discussed the leader's role in building a culture that promotes employees' health and well-being. Yet, do you think employees themselves play a role in being healthy? Are some health problems a manifestation of the deep inner self?

To answer these questions, we will use the guidance of THE: the Human Element Concept.

According to THE, We use our bodies to deal with unconscious problems or unacceptably negative feelings about ourselves. If we don't want to face a conflict, we can "embody" it. The idea here lies behind the concept of "Choice" within THE.

Choice

People make decisions on a daily basis, such as what to say, where to go, and what to do. As a practical tool, choice refocuses our concentration on understanding our choices and making intentional decisions that help us reach our objectives.

Hence, based on the Concept of Choice, <u>In many cases, we choose our sickness, especially when they are periodical (go and come back).</u>

<u>"We are not talking about tragedies here or heavy diseases we are born with".</u>

You may be surprised now. How is this possible? Don't we just become sick? Well, the answer is Yes, and No.

We assume, without assigning blame, that we choose to be unwell, that we pick the form of illness to give ourselves, and that we have the potential to heal ourselves once we are sick because we are examining the ramifications of the choice assumption. This decision can be made consciously or unconsciously. We assume complete responsibility for disease for pragmatic reasons, just as we do with the concept of choice. We are not claiming that we are responsible for all of our illnesses. We have no idea. We are sure that when we choose to be responsible for it, we are motivated to find a solution or a cure to heal our sickness.

On the contrary, our victim mentality kicks in when we assume no responsibility. Thus, our motivation is low in trying to stop our illness, as we did not start it from the choice (a.k.a responsibility) perspective. When we opt for the option of "choice": I choose to be ill, it is not a choice of accusation or self-blame. It doesn't also mean I am bad, evil or careless. It only means I made a choice. It is an invitation to pursue an explanation within myself and to understand what's going on deep inside me, and what might have happened. I can see illness as a learning opportunity if I see it as a choice.

Self-Awareness

When we speak about choice, it's about acknowledging two or more options, then making a decision and choosing among them. Hence, what precedes making a correct choice is "Self-Awareness." How can you decide if you are not aware of your preferences and their basis inside you? Therefore, being self-aware is at the heart of making choices.

When being conscious and self-aware, I can choose whether I should be ill or not, or whether I could heal myself. Illness is my body's method of informing me that there is a conflict within myself that I am not recognizing. There is no need for my body to represent the conflict if I am aware of it and deal with it consciously, and I may be on the road to healing myself. Like all of the other phenomena addressed thus far, illness is fundamentally linked to one's self-concept. If I don't feel adequate in one area, I believe I won't be able to deal with it successfully. As a result, I try to avoid or misrepresent it. FOR EXAMPLE, if I don't feel important, I may feel frustrated and neglected, which I repress (put "out of my mind"). Physical symptoms may appear as a result of this. Suppose I can come to terms with my feelings of significance, hence becoming aware and conscious of my feelings and thoughts about my significance. In that case, I will deal with them directly, eliminating the need for repression and disease. Realizing that there is a physical equivalent to all of my inner difficulties within my body is the key to understanding which sickness I will choose. The muscular and neural systems that regulate my body, for example, mirror my

struggles to control my reality. Understanding why I chose specific illnesses requires lining up which organ systems connect to which life difficulties.

Just as we addressed the Three THE Dimensions to building a healthy culture, we will use those three exact dimensions to address how their absence within us can impact our health and wellness.

The aspects of Inclusion, Control, and Openness can be used to categorize issues. There is a basis for identifying which sickness we pick if we look at our relationship with our body in the same way we look at our relationship with others. Suppose we use our bodies to communicate an unconscious struggle regarding Inclusion. In that case, one or more of the organ systems that deal with incorporating our bodies into the world will become ill.

Dimension 1: Inclusion Illness

Illness of Inclusion

On a physical level, the barriers between us and the rest of the world are referred to as Inclusion. As a result, it largely concerns:– our body's periphery (skin, sensory organs—eyes, ears, nose, and mouth). The body's systems interact with the surroundings (the respiratory system that takes in oxygen and gives out carbon dioxide, the digestive-excretory system that exchanges food and body remains with the environment).

Our feelings, like these organs, are linked to how we feel about being accepted by others.

Skin, senses, respiration, and digestion-excretion illnesses might be the outcome of my unspoken battles regarding Inclusion.

We may acquire hives, pimples, shingles, or rashes if we are unconsciously disturbed about Inclusion. This deters people from approaching us. If we are uncomfortable being close to others, we may not notice them until they are 10 feet away, causing us to become farsighted. If we feel at ease with close friends but terrified of strangers, we may be able to see objects clearly up to a

few feet away before becoming nearsighted and seeing only a blur—that is, we become nearsighted. We might go deaf if we don't want to hear what others have to say. Before they become deaf, many deaf persons did not listen. Low Inclusion is linked to many more illnesses, such as some digestive problems and even some types of cancer.

Hence, as earlier suggested, health and well-being in organizations start from Inclusion. Because if people do not feel included, they are susceptible to a wide array of illnesses. However, as mentioned, it is a personal choice. Sometimes, organizations will go the extra mile of creating a culture of Inclusion, yet some people will consciously or unconsciously reject it and choose to see themselves as excluded. Hence, like all life aspects, Feeling Inclusion is a matter of choice.

Dimension 2: Openness Illness

Our bodies express Openness and likability through love (the heart) and sex (the genitals). Our mood of fondness is reflected in our circulatory system. The heart's and circulatory system's relationship with affection explains why everything seems to work when love is excellent and why, when love is terrible or missing, nothing seems to work. • Our blood circulation nourishes our entire body. Our entire organism has problems getting food if it is confined. Our entire self is properly fed if blood flows freely through an open heart.

Heart disease and heart failure are two sad diseases of Openness. When we're conflicted about romantic relationships, we're prone to heart attacks. This realization does not prohibit others from feeling sorry for us if we get a heart condition. The fact that we picked this occurrence unintentionally suggests that the illness can be converted into a valuable learning experience. Our bodies are telling us that we're not conscious of a conflict in the area of Openness and likability. Awareness could lead to a better understanding of ourselves and more Control over our life.

Dimension 3: Control Illness

As the name implies, this dimension is the amount of control you have over your illness. It's about you making choices, hence being aware of your body, thus, your thoughts and feelings that contribute to your illness. Therefore, having Control brings back full circle to where we started: Choice.

Knowing the cause of your illness, absenteeism, and lack of energy at work may all be reduced if you knew what was causing it. Early detection of sickness signs, as well as knowledge of strategies for determining the cause of illness, may help to reduce the frequency of your illnesses. A more fundamental application of this knowledge is to teach yourself to be aware of your feelings at all times so that you can deal with issues as they emerge rather than being enmeshed in them. Of course, this necessitates a boost in self-esteem so that you are not afraid to confront any thoughts or feelings you may have. You prefer to stay healthy because you believe in the notion of choice. You prefer to do so because you are happy and want to stay healthy. This is your road to perfect health.

Furthermore, you have a tremendous amount of untapped potential that you are only beginning to understand how to tap into. Because your mind has such a powerful and easy influence over your body, it is obvious to you that you can change and control how your body functions, and so have a significant impact on your own health. You are in control because you have a Choice.

Taking care of ourselves, and our health is our own responsibility. No matter what leaders, organizations, and health plans try to do for us, we remain with the main responsibility. Taking care of our thoughts, and feelings is a choice we make, not only daily but every second. The more we are aware and conscious, the more we are able to make better choices and decisions, hence, the more control we have. That is the place of Self-awareness we want to be because, at the end of the day, it all leads to greater Well-being