

The importance of self-care

If you're feeling emotionally drained, having trouble concentrating or losing interest in activities you once enjoyed, you're not alone. Between 22% and 35% of U.S. employees often experience these symptoms of depression as they live through the current health crisis, according to new research from the Society of Human Resource Management. One way to help alleviate these feelings is through self-care, which can help improve overall well-being. And, you can help your employees by encouraging self-care in the workplace.

Self-care is doing what you need to be your most constructive, effective and authentic self. While many self-care practices are done during personal time, it's important to practice good self-care at work, too. Each positive action or behavior we adopt can make a difference in our well-being.

Encouraging self-care during work hours can help your employees practice good health, avoid burnout and increase productivity. According to the World Health Organization, self-care activities can help people establish and maintain their physical, mental and emotional health.

There are a number of things you can do to bring self-care into the workplace. It's important to offer activities that will energize your staff in different ways so they can find what helps based on their personality needs and time availability. Self-care doesn't have to be time consuming, physically draining or costly. In fact, sometimes it's the quick, simple things that are happening on a regular basis that keep us rejuvenated. Here are some ideas:

- Offer meditation options, either onsite or virtually.
- Make changes in your workplace to help employees gain mental clarity. Let employees decorate their workspace with art and pictures, and place plants (real or artificial) throughout the office to create a peaceful environment.
- Encourage employees to take time to recharge. Offer exercise classes onsite, or give them time to take a walk during their lunch period or breaks.
- Create self-care challenges, such as drinking enough water or getting enough sleep.
- Encourage your employees to watch Virtual Well-Being webinars on Thursdays at noon, or on-demand at bluecrossvirtualwellbeing.com. They can also find health coach videos and meditations on that website.
- Help your employees have fun. Set out jigsaw puzzles or adult coloring books employees can work on during breaks, or hold ping-pong or foosball tournaments.

Also, don't forget the power of leading by example. When your employees see their leadership prioritizing self-care during the work day, they know their well-being activities will be supported, too.

Sources: [psychcentral.com](https://www.psychcentral.com)*, [psychologytoday.com](https://www.psychologytoday.com)*, [shrm.org](https://www.shrm.org)*, [lifeworks.com](https://www.lifeworks.com)*

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