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Are Your Organization's Emotional Wellbeing Initiatives Effective and Valued by Employees?

Ten steps for a cultural approach to emotional wellbeing

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It's no surprise that emotional wellbeing emerged as one of the most important components of all total rewards during the pandemic. With almost 70%¹ of leaders worrying about the impact of stress and burnout on their organizations, a sense of urgency developed to implement resources, awareness and education on overall wellbeing, and in particular mental health and emotional wellbeing.

Now, some organizations are realizing the resources implemented are underutilized and not valued as part of the overall employee experience. It's a good opportunity to step back and reevaluate your strategy and how to ensure a cultural approach to emotional wellbeing.

How should you approach such a daunting task?

1

UNDERSTAND CURRENT STATE:

Collect and analyze various data sources, key stakeholder insights and employee feedback to make informed decisions to ensure strategy meets business objectives and employee needs.

2

BUILD IT:

Build a strategy that reflects the unique generational characteristics and needs with measurable goals, objectives and performance metrics. Evaluate the vendor market to select partners that align with budget and culture.

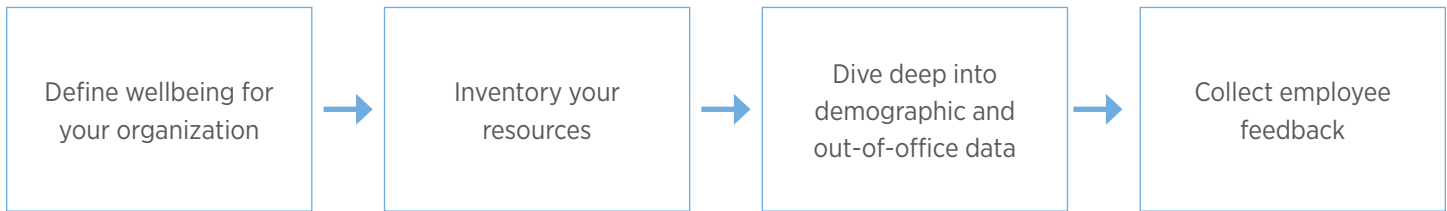
3

LIVE IT:

Implement a robust communications plan to bring visibility to resources, and to normalize and accelerate emotional wellbeing as a cultural imperative. Train managers on how to model positive behaviors and create an environment of psychological safety. Integrate and align the strategy with all existing processes and policies to ensure consistent messaging is threaded throughout the culture.

¹Internal data from Gallagher Workforce Trends Pulse Survey results. Oct 2021

UNDERSTAND CURRENT STATE



Step 1: Define wellbeing for your organization.

Invite key stakeholders to a collaborative “visioning” workshop to discuss and define wellbeing for your organization, what the pillars might be (physical, emotional, financial, career, social, spiritual, environmental, etc.), and identify any challenges or threats to success. Key stakeholder involvement from HR, Benefits, Leadership and Development (L&D), Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI), Wellbeing, Absence Management, Talent Acquisition, Safety, Occupational Health, Communications and any other area that touches the employee experience is critical to a cultural approach and will enable Steps 8 and 9.

Step 2: Inventory your resources.

Inventory all benefits and map them to the wellbeing pillars you’ve identified for your organization. This inventory is a good way to determine if you’re over or under-resourced in any one area, and also to identify if some longstanding benefits are no longer utilized/valued by employees and can be discontinued to create a budget for new benefits.

Step 3: Dive deep into demographic and out-of-office data.

Careful analysis of healthcare, disability and pharmacy data will identify areas of opportunity and solutions that will be most impactful in reducing risk and evaluating the effectiveness of implemented solutions. A review of workforce demographics will assist in understanding the unique generational characteristics, priorities and desired communication preferences. Data can also identify if any employees within your organization are being negatively impacted by the Social Determinants of Health (SDoH).

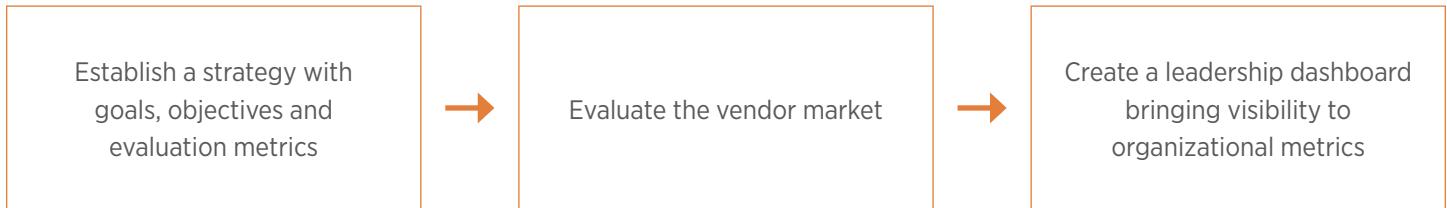


Watch for absenteeism trends (either up or down), which could be an indicator of employee mental health. When it comes to Family Medical Leave Act (FMLA), sick days and paid time off (PTO), absenteeism trends are key data points to keep an eye on that can correlate with emotional wellbeing. Some employers are including “mental health” specifically as the reason to take a sick day. Further, looking at PTO data can tell employers that their people are utilizing their PTO to rest, be creative, have some fun and take care of personal issues.

Step 4: Collect employee feedback.

Employee needs and expectations have changed dramatically during the past three years. Collecting employee feedback through employee engagement surveys, benefit preference surveys and focus groups is key to understanding employee challenges and creating a strategy that will be relevant and valued. Further, asking employees to provide feedback also includes them in creating solutions, enhancing accountability and loyalty.

BUILD IT



Step 5: Establish a strategy with goals, objectives and evaluation metrics.

With all of the data and insights collected to date, establish a clear strategy on what goals you're trying to achieve, the objectives for how you will achieve the goals and the metrics to evaluate progress. While this step is basic, it's often overlooked in an attempt to quickly get resources in place. Over time that can lead to difficulty in knowing what resources to put in place, if the resources in place are valued and utilized, and what impact they may or may not be having on the population.

Step 6: Evaluate the vendor market.

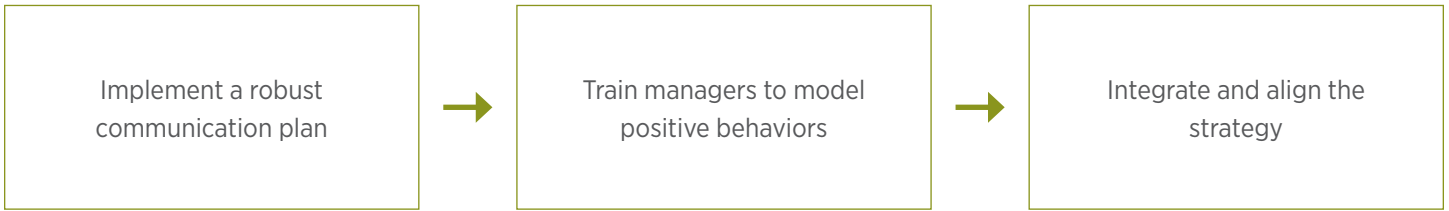
Assess the market to identify appropriate vendors to help execute the strategy. This strategy could include building and deploying a request for proposal (RFP), assessing bidders, and selecting, contracting and implementing the right vendor solutions.

Step 7: Create a leadership dashboard bringing visibility to organizational metrics impacted by employee wellbeing.

Think broadly about measures within each area of your defined wellbeing pillars. Some examples may include:

- Resource utilization/participation
- Specific utilization and costs related to stress, anxiety, depression, burnout and substance treatment
- PTO utilization
- Change in absenteeism and disability costs
- Employee engagement
- Leadership trust
- Turnover
- Retirement plan participation
- Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) metrics
- DEI metrics

LIVE IT



Step 8: Implement a robust communications plan.

A multi-channelled approach helps normalize and accelerate emotional wellbeing as a cultural imperative. Campaigns, leader messages, TikTok-like videos, and print and digital messaging can reduce stigma and promote benefit utilization while helping to build trust within the organization.

Step 9: Train managers to model positive behaviors.

Spouses and managers are tied at having the most significant impact on employees' mental health, and unfortunately 35% of employees say their manager fails to recognize the impact they have on their team's mental health.² Additionally, even when employers invest in mental health resources, only one-third agree that their managers are well-equipped to refer employees to the resources.¹



Step 10: Integrate and align the strategy.

Integrating and aligning the strategy with all existing processes and policies can ensure the strategy is consistently threaded throughout the culture. This connects back to the first key theme, where the input from key stakeholders is critical to building the vision and identifying how their unique area will support on-going success. This cultural approach is validated by the recent US Surgeon General's Advisory Warning on how workplace culture impacts wellbeing—specifically, that toxic workplaces can negatively impact both physical and mental wellbeing, while strong cultures can have a positive impact.

Having managers who are trained in how to model positive behaviors, have conversations around mental health, create an environment of psychological safety, and know how to effectively refer employees to resources can be the difference between an effective and ineffective strategy, regardless of what resources are in place.

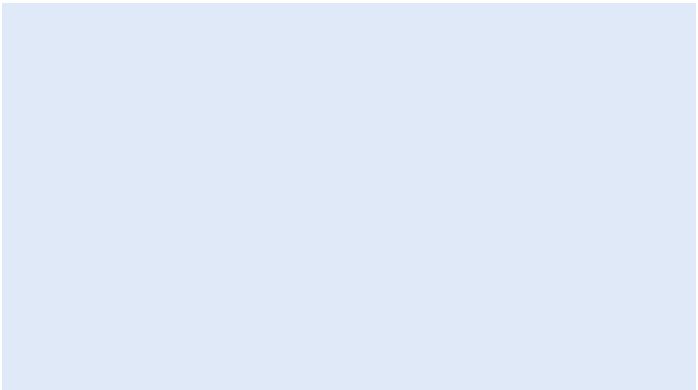
¹"Mental Health at Work: Managers and Money,"The Workforce Institute at U.K.G. Jan 2023. PDF download.

HOW CAN GALLAGHER HELP?

When people thrive at work, they're more likely to feel physically and mentally healthy, and to contribute positively to their workplace. At Gallagher, we approach organizational wellbeing holistically, understanding the impact of culture on employee behavior and, ultimately, business and people outcomes. As you explore ways to promote mental health awareness and mental health action at your workplace, Gallagher is here to help.



Contact your Gallagher Consultant today to learn more about how we can help you provide the physical and emotional wellbeing your people need to thrive in your organizational culture.



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