

Study Finds One in Three Workers Are Chronically Stressed, and It's All About the Company Culture

By Paige Towers • June 8, 2016 at 3:23pm

SHARE ON FACEBOOK TWEET TUMBLR EMAIL

Workplace wellness programs are quickly becoming a staple of the American workplace — perhaps your own office has introduced lunchtime yoga or a discount on insurance based on a health assessment. And while your workplace hopefully hasn't gone so far as to introduce a companywide weight loss competition similar to the one the characters from “The Office” endured during the fifth season (ridiculously extreme dieting measures were encouraged to the point where Kelly passed out during a weigh-in), these efforts to support employee wellbeing seem positive.

Yet, a new survey completed by the

American Psychological Association

found that, despite this increase in the amount of employers offering workplace health promotion programs or policies, employees are still widely underusing them. In fact, only one third of workers state that they regularly participate in the wellbeing programs available to them. So, can this pattern of workers consistently failing to take advantage of

<http://vanwinkles.com/workplacewellbeingprogramsarelargelyunderusedbyemployees> 1/4

these incentives simply be chocked up to people being disinterested and lazy — or is there a larger issue behind it?

Only 41 percent of the adults surveyed stated that they thought their senior managers were committed to wellbeing initiatives.

In the APA's survey, which was conducted online, 1,501 American adults provided responses to numerous questions regarding their satisfaction with their workplace. The results showed that less than half of those participants believe that their work environment supports employee wellbeing. What's perhaps even more distressing is that one in three people report being chronically stressed at work. But how does this stress and perceived lack of support relate to nonparticipation in wellness programs?

iStock by Getty Images

Well, as cited in the APA's on the survey, David W. Ballard, PsyD, MBA and director of the APA's Center for Organizational Excellence, stated, "Promoting employee well being isn't a singular activity, but is instead set up in a climate that is cultivated, embraced and supported by highlevel leaders and managers."

press release

So, in order for employees to take advantage of the wellness opportunities given to them, they may not just need the incentive; they may also need an environment that fosters a healthy worklife balance. Simply put, if employers create incentives for you to exercise but don't allow you enough out oftheoffice time to do so, or encourage you to maintain healthy blood pressure but create a highstress/little sleep work climate — that program may be less than successful.

Simply put, if employers create
incentives for you to

exercise but don't allow you enough outofthe office time to do so, that program may be less than successful.

What's also alarming is that only 41 percent of the adults surveyed stated that they thought their senior managers were involved in and committed to wellbeing initiatives, and only around half thought that employee wellbeing was a priority for their company. Considering these responses come during a time when health and wellness programs have become exceedingly popular for employers to initiate, it looks as if there's a breakdown between goals and reality.

As Ballard stated, "Many employers say they focus on workplace wellness, but what is put into place is too often individual programs or policies that aren't supported by the organization's culture. Employers who truly embrace well being as part of how they do business create a workplace where both employees and the organization thrive."

The struggle to maintain both a thriving workplace and thriving workers is real, but as Ballard stated, "When supervisors' actions match their words, employees notice."