

PRESENTEEISM

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What is it?

- Showing up for work but dealing with personal problems instead of working.
- Coming to work sick, injured, stressed, or burned-out.
- Putting in excessive work hours primarily to give an impression of job commitment or as a way of coping with job insecurity.

What leads to presenteeism?

- Stress/Burn Out – The cumulative impact of difficult working conditions where, for example, a heavy workload and chronic understaffing contributes to poor morale and employee dissatisfaction.
- Medical Illness – There is overall less productivity when an employee goes to work ill compared to when the employee takes the appropriate time off to get well or manage the medical condition.
- Emotional Problems – Depression, substance abuse, financial stress, and family problems contribute to a less productive work force.
- Mergers and Downsizing – There is a noticeable downturn in productivity during structural changes in an organization, as employees are concerned with job loss or fearful of the impact due to changes in management.

Employees need a forum in which to express their reasons for presenteeism. Employee satisfaction surveys are an excellent vehicle for management to obtain such information.

What can employers and employees do about presenteeism?

EMPLOYERS

- Make sure clear and adequate sick leave policies are in place.
- Promote a culture that encourages employees to stay home when they are sick. This is to minimize contagion, but also promotes safety in the workplace.
- Assure adequate staffing and reasonable work expectations, which will decrease employee stress and improve performance and morale.
- Minimizes heavy overtime. Longer hours don't always equal greater productivity.

EMPLOYEES

- Use preventative healthcare maintenance strategies. Eat well, exercise, rest and balance work and play.
- Use (not abuse) allowed lunch breaks, personal and vacation time to refresh yourself.
- When you get sick, keep your germs or poor concentration at home. Use earned sick time when you are sick!
- Use your Employee Assistance Program benefit for support and to develop strategies to manage life issues contributing to presenteeism.

How to contact your EAP

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