

BENEFITS

Insights



5 Mental Health Employee Benefits Trends for 2022

Mental health has been a hot topic recently, thanks to the COVID-19 pandemic. Over the past two years, so many people have experienced issues such as burnout, depression, anxiety and substance addiction. In fact, 40% of U.S. adults said they have struggled with mental health or substance abuse during the pandemic, according to a Jellyvision survey.

In 2022, mental health will continue to be a top concern for workplaces, and employers are taking notice. Over 30% of employers have added new mental health benefits within the past year, according to McKinsey and Company. Yet, despite increased efforts, nearly 25% of employees still don't feel supported when it comes to their mental health.

With that in mind, employers will need to evaluate their mental health strategies and consider how they can best help maximize their employees' overall well-being. To help with this, employers can consider the following trends that may influence workers' mental health in 2022.

1. More Mental Health Programs

Employers should expect to see more mental health programs cropping up in the new year. The vast majority of employers (90%) said they would be increasing their investment in mental health programs, according to a Wellable Labs survey. Of those employers, 72% expect most or all of those mental health solutions to be digital. These may include mindfulness or meditation programs, stress management classes or other online offerings.

2. Increased Scheduling Flexibility

Scheduling flexibility remains a top workplace desire for employees. During the pandemic, many employees were sent home to work remotely for the first time; now, many want to retain that perk at least some of the time.

According to a Lyra survey, nearly 70% of employees said work-from-home days and flexible scheduling options are "very important." That's because having work flexibility allows employees to better manage their personal responsibilities, creating a better work-life balance.

Employers are expected to increase scheduling flexibility in 2022, whether it's through remote or hybrid work scheduling. A Mercer survey found that 73% of employers plan to implement a hybrid work environment if they haven't yet done so. This illustrates how important having remote options will be to stay competitive, improve mental well-being and attract employees in 2022.

3. Expanded Virtual Doctor Visits

Remote access to mental health professionals can be critical for employees who may otherwise not have time to seek help. Such specialists can often be accessed through telemedicine resources, which have been gaining significant popularity recently. Telemedicine is shown to be so popular that 80% of employers intend to invest more in the solution in 2022, according to Wellable Labs. Employers can consider how providing access to on-demand health professionals may benefit their employees.

4. Greater Mental Health Education

While mental health concerns have risen dramatically in recent years, education on such topics hasn't always kept pace. Employees might be feeling burned out or depressed and not understand why or what to do about it. This demonstrates the need for greater mental health literacy. In 2022, employers can expect a greater focus on education in this area.

Examples of mental health education include:

- Training managers to spot employees who may be struggling with their mental health
- Providing employee communications that address and help explain mental health issues
- Offering seminars or educational sessions that explain signs of mental health issues and what to do about them

Employers should consider what resources or solutions may best serve their employees in the new year.

5. Improved Focus on Individuals

Mental health needs to be nurtured, just like physical health—it's impossible to improve something overnight. Employers are understanding this and taking steps to address issues before they worsen.

For instance, over 50% of employees reported experiencing burnout in 2021, according to Indeed. Employers are trying to curb this trend by checking in with employees more frequently about how they're feeling. Instead of annual or quarterly one-on-one meetings, managers are being encouraged to touch base more regularly. Having this candid communication can help address mental health issues before they get worse.

Summary

Mental health is a serious concern for employees and their employers. Not addressing mental health issues can lead to a host of other problems down the road, including burnout and depression.

In 2022, employers should be ready to help their workers with their mental health. This means educating employees and managers about these issues and providing solutions for individuals to seek professional help.

Reach out to VCG Consultants for help securing pertinent employee communications.