

The prescription you did not know you needed.

The Benchmark
Summer 2021



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“Upper management is being crappy”



Recently a team at a Burger King quit *en masse*. And the way they told their manager they were all leaving? They spelled out “WE QUIT” on the sign outside the restaurant.

Like a tiny crack in a dam which holds back water for an entire tri-state area, once a rebellion began, there was no holding back. Employees are fed up with bad management. With a 0% unemployment rate among information-based jobs, people can breeze into another role.

**Who isn’t looking for
people right now?**



During the last six-months we found that 80% of leaders in organizations are only paying lip service to the mental wellness of their team. This is putting their teams' retention, their budgets and their jobs on the line.

Currently organizations think of wellness as a nice-to-have, rather than a need-to-have. And as we begin the return to the post-pandemic office, our data indicates that smart leaders use wellness as a risk mitigation strategy. They know when their team members are unwell; they understand the damage of chronic anxiousness and/or burnout.

70%

of team members, approximately, are or will be prone to this in the next six months.

41%

of these employees will leave their employer in the next year

The book *Message Received* lays it out: you can change this.

What we have found

Bureaucratizing wellness doesn't work

When you reframe wellness as a communication issue, you increase retention and reduce threats (eg turnover, low productivity).

Every employer in our study has been offering wellness tips to their staff: drink more water; hold smarter meetings; sleep more; (and our personal favorite) hug a teddy bear. (Yes, for real.)

But none have offered immediate relief. What we are hearing from employees is this: “Why don’t they give me something that I can use to reduce my stress?” Immediate relief is key to a workforce coming to terms with going back to the office full time.

The micro interventions we deploy from The Digital Wellness Center combat chronic anxiousness and help reduce burnout. Like a liquid Tylenol to a headache.

Employees in organizations that are not framing wellness as a risk mitigation strategy are reporting 75% bad days versus good days. But those at organizations deploying wellness as a risk mitigation strategy? Those employees are reporting 75% good days versus bad. It's the exact inverse.

The four pain points of work

When employees report more good days than bad, it indicates they're able to cope with what we define as the four pain points of work: relationships, finances, resentment, and loneliness.

All four of these are based in miscommunication and all four have been on the rise since lockdown. Reframe wellness as a communication issue and you're able to pinpoint the pain and stop it.

Happy employee, happy life

Post-traumatic growth is a theory that states that after a period of struggle or trauma, people throw out old expectations about how life will work and discover great new paths for themselves. It typically occurs after people suffer from natural disasters.

We have adapted this term, first developed by psychologists Richard Tedeschi, PhD, and Lawrence Calhoun, PhD, for what we are seeing in the workforce post-pandemic.

Employers who are using wellness as a risk-mitigation strategy are using soft-skill tools like communication training to help their employees unlock their post-traumatic growth.

When team members experience post-traumatic growth, they are 80% more willing to stay with their employer, (more on mentoring). They experience increased happiness in their personal and work lives, and they spend less time online and more time fully engaged with their team and their culture.

Our clients achieved 75% more good days than bad when we implemented learning and micro-interventions to increase post-traumatic growth.

To duplicate our success with your team, start with these recommendations:

1. Build in buffer time
2. Practice the 80/20 rule
3. Beat the blues and host a WHOA party
4. Crappy bosses, crappy life

Pain Point #1:

Build in buffer time

Build in extra time to your meetings for employees to go grab a coffee or a snack. It's time we've lost during the pandemic because we all feel obligated to show up on Teams or Zoom and pay attention at our full capacity.

When you were at your desk, you could go for a walk or even stand outside for a few minutes. At home we often don't get this opportunity. Your employees need these breaks.

We tested buffer time with our meeting intervention system, that began with Desktop Detoxes ([Video](#)). Since June 2020 these short quick interventions at the beginning or end of a meeting have helped people transition into a meeting or out of a meeting resulting in a 10% increase in productivity and 10% less stress.

Pain Point #2:

Practice the 80/20 rule

Vilfredo Fe Pareto was a true renaissance man. He was an Italian civil engineer, he dabbled in sociology, and was a brilliant economist, great political scientist, and a philosopher. He created the Pareto principle or what we know today as the 80-20 rule.

This is the idea that suggests that 80% of results come from 20% of effort. When team members put 20% effort into learning they are 34% happier. They are 34% more engaged with their team, and they're less stressed and therefore able to cope with the curve balls life throws their way.

With our mentoring system, we found that when mentees spent 30 minutes a month in a mentoring session, they stated they were 80% more likely to stay with the organization during COVID than team members who weren't involved in mentoring.

Learning enables people to shift the positive experiences into normal patterns of behavior. This is particularly useful as we return to in-person work.

Using our free mentoring resource, ([free resource](#)), set up mentoring circles with three mentees and one mentor. Enable people to learn from each other and benefit from 80% work and 20% mentoring.

Pain Point #3:

Beat the blues and host a WHOA party

Before COVID, work often felt like a surrogate family. Today our perception is that we are alone at work, and we don't like it.

Orson Wells said “We're born alone; we live alone; we die alone. Only through our love and friendship can we create the illusion for the moment that we're not alone.”

During the slow return to work each generation we studied indicated that loneliness is a big problem. We especially heard this from Millennials and Gen Z.

We learned 40% of participants wanted to make new connections at work and valued this over more money; they want to learn from others, and their leaders, but their managers weren't enrolling them in programs.

And not having learning opportunities at work is a stress trigger for Millennials and Gen Z ([stress triggers chart](#)).

To help with the transition and to lay the path to normalcy host a WHOA party once a month. Buy pizza and your choice of beverage and invite team members to meet or reintroduce themselves to five new team members. Use our WHOA ([WHOA questions sheet](#)) questions to help team members find out about other people within the organization at work and make new connections that challenge and enlighten them. Gamify it and create a networking leaderboard.

Pain Point #4:

Crappy bosses, crappy life

You may not think the Burger King story could affect you, but our data indicates 70% of North American teams are at risk for burnout. Mental health and wellness are as important as air-conditioning in a fast-food kitchen on a summer day.

Employees whose managers invest in them are cool, and able to do their job. Those who are forced to work in the heat, and suffer from crappy bosses, react, appropriately, like hot heads. Ask yourself do you want to be the Burger King of your work?

Join Dr. Mary

To learn more about post-traumatic growth, join Digital Wellness Center Founder and CEO Dr. Mary Donohue on Tuesday, July 20, 2021 at 1PM EST.

ADD TO CALENDAR

Data collection and benchmarking began in 2013. Our cohort has grown to over 28,000 people. This longitudinal study samples employees from organizations across North America who have attended workshops, lectures, focus groups, and/or are part of The Digital Wellness Center



Thank you!

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