TAKE 5

A MOVEMENT FOR BETTER MENTAL HEALTH & WELLNESS

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Take 5 Movement Toolkit

A toolkit for employers and employees

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Orientation to the Take 5 Movement and this toolkit

Purpose of the Take 5 Movement

The purpose of the Take 5 Movement is to launch a new workplace benefit that offers a proactive, intentional, and ongoing mechanism to support employee mental health and well-being. Ultimately, the Movement seeks to decrease stigma around mental health issues in and beyond the workplace, and to result in positive outcomes for the employer such as improved employee productivity, a more satisfied and loyal workforce and thus reduced turnover, and reduced health care expenses.

This toolkit includes resources for both employers and employees to implement the Take 5 Movement within their organization.

Key elements of the Take 5 Movement

In order to implement the Take 5 Movement as designed, it includes the following core components:

- **Employee five-day break.** Every employee is eligible for an annual five-day mental health and wellness break in addition to other paid leave. Employees are encouraged to unplug from work – no meetings, phone calls, or emails if at all possible. Optimally, employees take a consecutive five-day break. In some organizations, it may be preferable to spread employee breaks over the course of the year while in others it may be preferable to close the office and make the breaks simultaneous. Employers can consider incentivizing employees to take this time off with investments in a *lifestyle spending account*.

- **Employee planning.** In order for a mental health activity to work, people must believe it will be helpful and they must have the time and resources necessary to do it. To assist with this planning, this toolkit includes a template roadmap to individualize and plan their week, a menu of possible activities, and a list of resources. It also includes a sample five-day plan and a template to plan activities beyond the break to support their own continued care. We also strongly encourage employers to provide a *wellness coach* to help support employee planning. *See pages 5-19.*

- **Employer commitment to ongoing wellness support.** To ensure everyone's success and to work toward destigmatizing mental health, employers will develop an aligned ongoing wellness program. This toolkit also includes a program template and ideas such as strategies for leadership to support their staff and company-sponsored wellness activities. *Employee Assistance Program* and forming a *worksite wellness committee* as part of these efforts. *See pages 20-25.*

- **Evaluation to prove effectiveness.** Employees and employers will be asked to participate in evaluation steps to capture results, assess effectiveness, and inform approach revisions. Pre and post surveys and other company records will assess level of workforce satisfaction, happiness, engagement, absenteeism, and retention. *See pages 26-27.*

Inspiration for the Take 5 Movement

The Take 5 Movement is the vision of David Moeller, a C-Suite Executive who had a personal experience with his own mental health that changed his life and fueled a passion to help others. With concerns about addiction to prescription medication, and a diagnosis of depression, he decided to seek professional help.

Thankfully, David had connections to people in the mental health field and the resources to pay for help. After a brief stay in a treatment center where he safely discontinued his prescription sleep medication and learned strategies to address his depression, **David dedicated the next five days to reflecting on his experience, writing his story, and charting his personal course for mental wellness.**

Upon reflection, he acknowledged that he had been just a little ashamed to admit he had a problem. He had wondered how he, a successful CEO who has most everything he needs, could suffer from depression. Yet, at the time, it had felt to him like no one cared, and that no one was really there for him, so he suffered in silence. Considering this, he wondered how many other people at his company may be struggling with something similar.

David was grateful to have had the resources, connections, and most importantly, the ability to take time to address his issues. He felt an urgency to help others and realized that offering this same gift of time to his own employees, along with tools and resources for using their time in a purposeful way would be a great place to start. He dove into researching whether other companies were offering anything similar.

He did find some companies that provide additional days off for when employees are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. At that time, he did not find any offering five consecutive days for proactive mental health and wellness each year, or any that offer guidance and tools for planning to use the time. David engaged the research and mental health experts at the Wilder Foundation in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to help build out his vision to help others.

Why the Take 5 Movement is important

Millions of people suffer from mental health issues. In fact, every year one in five adults in the U.S. have a diagnosable mental health issue, and one in 20 have a more serious condition (SAMHSA, 2016). In addition, more than half the population of the United States will have a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime (Kessler et al., 2007).

While the global stress of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more conversation about mental health and wellness, there remains a great deal of stigma for people who experience concerns, especially in the workplace. When people do feel comfortable acknowledging a concern, they often have no idea what to do – who to talk with, what might make a difference or where to seek resources and help. All the while, as people are coming to grips with having an issue and

then trying to figure out what to do, their mental health struggles are disrupting their family, their work, their entire life.

Benefit to employers and employees

Providing mental health supports to employees is not only beneficial to the employees themselves, but also to employers. Among various programs and interventions, employers who provided mental health supports to their employees saw increased productivity via reduced absenteeism and reduced presenteeism (being physically present at work but not psychologically engaged enough to perform job duties), an increased return on investment for employer-funded programs, increased job satisfaction among employees, increased retention, and increased organizational reputation (Gewurtz et al., 2020; Hargrave & Hiatt, 2005; Hargrave et al., 2008; Schulz, 2021).

In a randomized clinical trial, work-focused interventions (WFIs) for employed adults who showed signs of depression reduced presenteeism by 44% and absences by 53% in the treatment group as opposed to 13% and 11% reductions in the control group (Lerner et al., 2015). This reduction in lost productivity had a benefit-cost ratio of $6.19 USD for every dollar spent. Furthermore, one WFI demonstrated overall cost savings of $671-$979 per employee treated (Lerner et al., 2021). Investments in brief counseling through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) have also shown to help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression among workers. One organization yielded an estimated return on investment of $4.26 for every dollar spent on the EAP from avoided overall health care treatment costs for depression and avoided lost work productivity ($1433/case; Attridge & Dickens, 2022). Similarly, another analysis yielded a $3.25 return for each dollar spent for small employers in the U.S (Attridge, 2022). These findings suggest a positive return on investment for employers when investing in mental health resources for their employees.

Workplace mental health interventions have led to reductions in mental health symptoms, and mental health-related short-term disability. In addition, such interventions have led to employees being more likely to talk about mental health at work, and more likely to support coworkers who are dealing with mental health issues (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kangasniemi, 2019). Employee use of workplace-supported EAP services such as counseling have produced reductions in mental health symptom severity (Attridge & Dickens, 2022; Beyer & Dyme, 2021; Lerner et al., 2021). In one study, employees who used EAP services saw a 47% reduction in the severity of depression symptoms, a 44% reduction in the severity of anxiety symptoms, a 30% increase in life satisfaction, and an 11% increase in overall health status (Attridge & Dickens, 2022). Interventions aimed at increasing workers' autonomy have shown improvements in mental health, reductions in heart disease rates, and increased employee engagement (Kelly et al., 2021; Rollins et al., 2021).
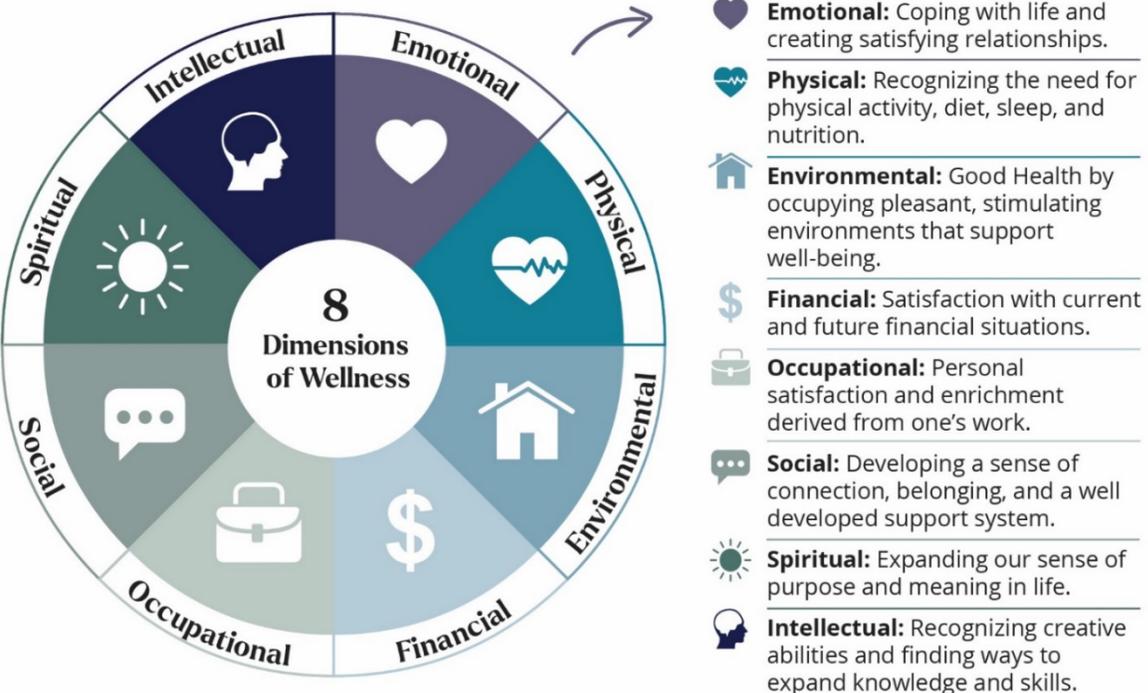
Employee toolkit and wellness roadmap

In this toolkit, you will find background information about mental health and wellness, recommended activities to address the different dimensions of wellness, resources, and materials to plan your own Take 5 break. This initiative is intended to improve employee wellbeing and protect employees from more serious mental health issues or provide tools if more serious issues arise.

What is wellness?

Wellness is deeply personal to each of us and may look and feel differently depending on who you are. In general, wellness is simply the state of being in good health – feeling that you have a purpose, having satisfying work and personal lives, quality of relationships, feeling good physically and emotionally. In general, feeling happy. Besides being happier, being and feeling well can literally extend your life!

Dimensions of wellness

While there are many different ways for all of us to think about wellness, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), our country's national authority on mental health, developed eight general dimensions of wellness that have been found to contribute to people having fuller and happier lives:

Emotional: Coping with life and creating satisfying relationships.

Physical: Recognizing the need for physical activity, diet, sleep, and nutrition.

Environmental: Good Health by occupying pleasant, stimulating environments that support well-being.

Financial: Satisfaction with current and future financial situations.

Occupational: Personal satisfaction and enrichment derived from one's work.

Social: Developing a sense of connection, belonging, and a well developed support system.

Spiritual: Expanding our sense of purpose and meaning in life.

Intellectual: Recognizing creative abilities and finding ways to expand knowledge and skills.

Note: The 8 dimensions of wellness image and associated definitions was developed by SAMHSA, and adapted from Swarbrick, M. (2006). A wellness approach. Psychiatric Rehabilitation Journal, 29(4), 311-314.

Dimension	What Helps
Emotional	Understanding your feelings, having trusted people with whom to share your feelings, maintaining positivity in your life
Spiritual	Increasing your connections to self, nature and others; take time to think about or discover your most important values and/or faith
Intellectual	Life-long learning that expands your knowledge and curiosity about things that are important to you or that you want to learn more about; exploring hobbies; having creative outlets that stimulate your mind
Physical	Engaging in physical activity according to your abilities to strengthen your body, getting enough quality sleep, choosing healthy and nourishing food
Environmental	Creating/finding/being in environments that encourage physical and mental wellness (e.g., safety, calm, nurturing)
Financial	Understanding your financial situation, supporting/establishing good financial habits and being able to plan for the future
Occupational	Feeling satisfaction in things you're passionate about through work, school, volunteering and other opportunities
Social	Having a sense of belonging and a reliable support system; healthy relationships with others; making regular social connections with others

Wellness isn't a one-time thing

People who pay attention to taking care of these dimensions of wellness overall have happier, more productive, and healthier lives. Wellness isn't a one-time thing —for most people, this is a marathon, not a sprint. While there are eight different dimensions of wellness identified above, it's not practical or healthy to try to tackle all eight dimensions all at once. Read through these dimensions to see where you're feeling satisfied, where you may be feeling you need more support, or where there's room for improvement. You can also use the Employee Roadmap Template to help you identify an area or areas to start with your own wellness journey. Below are suggestions of different activities that support these dimensions of wellness in different ways to help you consider what might be helpful to you. Making changes to support wellness can be big or small. What's important is that whatever you do, whatever path you choose to begin your wellness journey, that it's a doable and sustainable one for you.

Practices that support wellness

Although not exhaustive, below is a list of different things you can try to support each of these dimensions. Many of these activities cross more than one dimension (which is a bonus!). For additional examples, please follow this link:
https://store.samhsa.gov/sites/default/files/d7/priv/sma16-4958.pdf

Dimensions	Example Activities
Emotional	• Yoga, meditation, or other calming and mindfulness-based activities • Develop a gratitude list • Connect socially with one person each day • Meet with a mental health professional to talk about how you feel and what's on your mind—they can also help you develop your wellness plan.
Spiritual	• Meditate/pray • Spend time outdoors, going on walks, exercising, or just sitting and enjoying nature • Talk to a spiritual or religious leader • Attend a spiritual or mindfulness retreat
Intellectual	• Learn something new • Take on a new hobby/rediscover an old hobby • Take a class/seminar/watch a documentary or Ted Talk about something you've always wanted to learn more about or something you always thought would just be fun • Do something creative • Learn or play a musical instrument • Listen to a podcast or series • Read a good book

Physical	• Get 8 hours of sleep/night
	• Yoga
	• Join a gym and/or hire a personal trainer
	• Find fun ways to move your body—walk/run/dance
	• Garden
	• Take a healthy cooking/eating class
	• Get a thorough physical—talk with your doctor
	• Go to bed 30 minutes earlier
Environmental	• Create an environment in your home that feels good to you, such as a restorative space to get rest or alone time when needed
	• Connect/find a space that nourishes you that you can get to regularly (e.g., library, coffee shop, zoo, arboretum, park)
	• Organize your space
	• Use scents (if appropriate) in your work or personal space to help you relax
Financial	• Understand how you spend your money and set goals for how you'd like to spend your money, such as by developing a budget
	• Invest in your future by saving money in your company's retirement plan (if available)
	• Talk to a financial counselor and/or a financial advisor, which often times is included in your EAP
	• Review or develop short- and long-term financial goals
	• Take a class on managing finances
Occupational	• Volunteer to benefit both your community and yourself
	• Take on an exciting project
	• Work with your manager on creating a plan for your career path
	• Connect with what you're passionate/joyful about at work—what makes you feel good/proud about your work?
Social	• Do activities above with friends
	• Reach out to people you haven't seen in a long time
	• Plan regular get-togethers with friends
	• Join a club/team (online works too!)
	• Participate in a support group
	• Spend quality, uninterrupted time with loved ones
	• Go on a date

Suggestions to continue your wellness journey

- Have an accountability partner—someone you can check in regularly with to talk about how you're doing (and vice versa!).

- Tell the people you trust and who care about you what you're doing. Letting those closest to us know we're on a particular journey often helps us stay on track and it allows those closest to us to also support our journey.

- Make a gratitude list and read it every single day. Expressing gratitude actually changes your brain structure for the better. People who make being grateful and expressing gratitude a regular practice are happier, reduce their stress, and improve their physical and mental health.

- Journal. For those of you who like to write, write about your journey! For the rest of us, doing quick two-minute gratitude journals can also be effective. Take two minutes at the end of every day to write about one thing that went well during the day and one thing you are grateful for. There are also a variety of gratitude journals that you can purchase that give you different prompts to answer.

- Do something to move you toward your goals every day. It doesn't have to be big—it may even be better if these changes are small and doable because that will keep you on the path.

- Celebrate both small and large wins on your wellness journey. Set realistic goals and reward yourself.

- Review your wellness plan regularly and make adjustments as needed. If appropriate, review with a wellness coach or qualified professional such as a mental health professional.

Starting your gratitude journal or list

Search for "gratitude prompts" and you will discover endless lists on the internet to use either in a daily journal, or to start your gratitude list. Remember, being grateful and expressing gratitude not only makes us feel good and appreciate what we do have, it can literally change your brain chemistry and position you for a happier, healthier life (Kyeong et al., 2017). Below are some sample prompts, but please do your own searches and use the prompts that appeal the most to you. There are also numerous gratitude journals available online or for sale that also provide prompts.

Sample gratitude journal prompts

- Today I am grateful for…
- Something that I learned was…
- Something really good that happened today…
- When I go to bed tonight, the positive feelings I want to continue to hold are…

Sample gratitude list prompts

- I am grateful for…because…
- These things make me smile…
- This is what I really love about my job…
- My [list your choice if important people in your life] is/are really great because…

Resources

Mental health and substance use

In a given year, according to John Hopkins Medicine (2022), an estimated 26% of American adults are dealing with a diagnosable mental health disorder. Mental health is simply the state of feeling healthy mentally and emotionally; both foundations for feeling and being well. It's common for many of us to feel different levels of stress at different points in our lives. If you are feeling overwhelmed by what's happening around you or would like to explore what extra support with a mental health provider would look like, please connect with your health insurance provider for resources. Most health insurance cards have a customer service number you can call for more information. In addition, you can also reach out to your human resources department for information on your workplace's Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Getting a mental health assessment is as important as getting a physical health assessment, and a conversation with a mental health professional can be a great start.

In addition to mental health, it's also important to occasionally take stock of your use of substances, including alcohol, medication, and other substances both legal and illegal. This is especially important if you have ever wondered whether you may be overusing/overindulging in substances or if you've ever been given that feedback by others. Talking to a qualified professional who understands substance use and abuse can help you better understand and monitor your own use and decide whether you want to make changes in your life.

Many individuals who develop substance use disorders also have mental health disorders like depression or anxiety, and vice versa. Findings from the 2018 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH) show that about one in four individuals with serious mental illnesses also has a substance use disorder. While one does not necessarily cause the other, mental illness can contribute to substance use and addiction, and substance use and addiction can contribute to the development of mental illness. In addition, shared risk factors such as stress and trauma can contribute to both substance use and mental health concerns (National Institute on Drug Abuse, 2020).

General information on mental health

There is a plethora of mental health information on the internet, and it's important that your information is coming from trusted sources. Below are websites that can help you learn more about mental health and substance use concerns. This is to build your knowledge and should not replace a conversation with a professional.

- General Mental Health Information - https://www.mentalhealth.gov/ (hint: start with the "Basics" tab!)
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (national) - https://nami.org/Home
- National Alliance on Mental Illness (Minnesota) - https://www.namimn.org/
- Suicide and Crisis Lifeline – call or text 988

Finding help

Besides talking with your health insurance provider, Employee Assistance Program and/or human resources department, many people may also find these resources helpful in accessing mental health help:

- Psychology Today therapist finder - https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/therapists
- General resources – https://www.findhelp.org/
- General resources for Minnesota - https://www.211unitedway.org/ or call 211

Apps

As the development of apps has progressed, many people have found benefit in using different apps to support their wellness journey. While apps do not replace a health assessment and treatment with a qualified provider, there are multiple benefits to using apps to support wellness, including helping monitor your wellness, personalized feedback, convenience, and accessibility. Below are examples of some highly rated apps that address a variety of different areas of wellness.

- Moodfit (overall wellness)
- MoodMission (learning coping skills)
- Sanvello (stress relief)
- Calm (meditation, sleep, relaxation)
- Happify (fun)
- Depression CBT Self-Help Guide (depression)
- Todoist (ADHD)
- Noom (weight loss/healthy eating)
- Headspace (mindfulness, sleep, stress reduction)
- Exhale (emotional well-being for and by BIPOC women)
- Meditopia (meditation to address stress, anxiety, happiness, motivation, focus)
- Results Wellness Lifestyle (overall wellness including workouts, healthy recipes)
- Deliciously Ella (healthy plant-based recipes)

- Sleep Cycle (tracks sleep to help understand and improve quality of sleep)
- Smoke Free (tracks craving/progress for those wanting to stop smoking)
- Sleep Cycle Alarm Clock (addresses sleep patterns)
- Streaks (helps you set and meet daily goals)
- Drinkaware (tracks alcohol use)
- Able (health goals, building healthy relationship with food, weight loss)
- MyFitnessPal (weight loss, fitness)
- FitOn (workouts)
- StepsApp Pedometer (tracks steps)
- Fitbit & AppleWatch apps (tracks different components of fitness; requires appropriate equipment)

Career resources

Feeling good about our work is a key area of wellness. Below are some websites that address different components of career satisfaction.

- Career OneStop: career exploration, training, local resources - https://www.careeronestop.org/

- CareerAddict: comprehensive career development - https://www.careeraddict.com/

- Career Contessa: career website focused on women - https://www.careercontessa.com/

- The Interview Guys: content on a variety of career-related issues - https://theinterviewguys.com/

- Ask A Manager: insight about management issues - https://www.askamanager.org/

- CareerBliss - https://www.careerbliss.com/

Sample Take 5 days

Everyone's situation is different. Some people may need more scheduled days whereas others may just need an overall plan of what they want to do each day. What is important is that you are intentional about how you want to spend these five days. We recommend trying a variety of activities, even if not all of them work. This is an opportunity to refine what works and what doesn't for you for ongoing care and/or future wellness breaks. Below are some examples to help you think about how you want to use your five days, and making your plan work for how you work. A wellness coach can help you develop your schedule, if available.

Option 1: For those who prefer or require more structure

Day 1

- 8:00 – 10:00   Work on Employee Roadmap Template exercise
- 10:00 – 12:00   Hobby time
  - Write down all the hobbies you have/had interest in over the years, but never got into, and then write the pros and cons for each to determine which is best for you. You can then try out some of these hobbies throughout the rest of the week or beyond.
- 12:00 – 1:00   Lunch
- 1:00 – 3:00   Journaling instruction and writing time
- 3:00 – 5:00   Relaxation time (meditation, yoga, rest, etc.)

Day 2

- 8:00 – 9:00   Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30   Meditation
- 9:30 - 12:00   Hobby time
- 12:00 – 1:00   Lunch
- 1:00 – 2:00   TedTalk
- 2:00 – 3:00   Family hike
- 3:00 – 4:00   Gratitude list and journal

Day 3

- 8:00 – 9:00   Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30   Meditation
- 9:30 – 11:30   Yoga class (with travel time)
- 12:00 – 1:00   Lunch
- 1:00 – 3:00   Hobby time
- 3:00 – 4:00   Gratitude list and journal

Day 4

- 8:00 – 9:00   Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30   Meditation
- 9:30 – 12:00   Volunteering
- 12:00 – 1:00   Lunch
- 1:00 – 3:00   Nature walk
- 3:00 – 4:00   Gratitude list and journal

Day 5

- 8:00 – 9:00   Breakfast
- 9:00 – 9:30   Meditation
- 9:30 – 12:00   Therapy/support group (with travel time)
- 12:00 – 2:00   Lunch with a friend
- 2:00 – 3:00   Read
- 3:00 – 4:00   Gratitude list and journal

Option 2: For those who prefer or need more flexibility

Things I plan to do each day:

Day 1

- Walk
- Volunteer at shelter
- Gratitude journal

Day 2

- Therapy
- Yoga
- Journal

Day 3

- Attend church
- Read
- Gratitude journal

Day 4

- Lunch with friend
- Health seminar
- Journal

Day 5

- Time in nature
- Support group
- Journal

Employee roadmap template

What does wellness mean to me?

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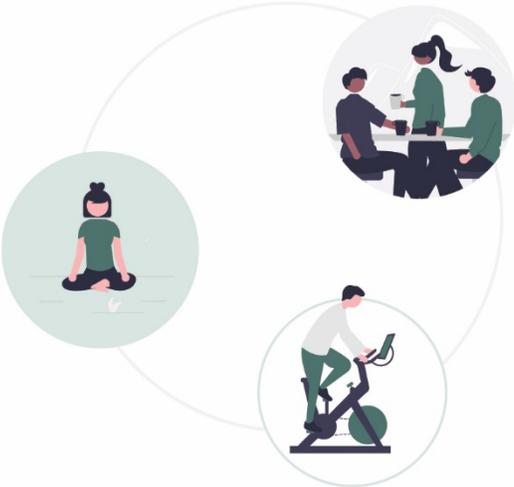
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What does my body or mind feel like or look like when I am feeling well? What signs can I look for in myself?

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This is how I would rate my own satisfaction level on each of these dimensions of wellness:

1 = I am very unhappy with this part of my life.
3 = I have some pretty good things happening here, and there are some things I could work on to make it better.
5 = I feel fulfilled/good about this part of my life.

Dimension	Satisfaction Level	What would increase this score (if less than 5)?
Emotional		
Spiritual		
Intellectual		
Physical		
Environmental		
Financial		
Occupational		
Social		

These are the things I want to try or commit to addressing for my Take 5 journey (suggest you start with no more than 1-2 areas):

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At the end of my 5-day journey, I hope to:

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The practices/experiences I would like to try during my 5-day journey that support my wellness in these areas include:

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AFTER the Take 5 break:

1. How do you feel?

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2. What did you think about during your five days?

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3. Did anything surprise you?

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4. Over the next year, this is what I plan to do in order to continue my wellness journey:

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5. These are the people, supports and resources I can count on/use to help me on this journey:

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Employer toolkit and roadmap template

In order for the Take 5 Movement to be effective, it must be part of a larger effort by employers to create a culture of openness and support for employee mental health and wellness. Workplace culture plays a significant role in determining employees' health and well-being (Menon et al., 2021). In a recent study, employees were asked what resource they most wanted in order to support their well-being, and the most common response, with about one-third of employees requesting it, was "a more open culture around mental health" (Greenwood & Anas, 2021). An important aspect of this culture change is that it doesn't rely on the employee to self-disclose or to practice self-care, but it creates a stigma-free environment in which all employees feel that their mental health and well-being are valued (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Nogues & Finucan, 2018). It can also be beneficial to connect workplace mental health to organizational objectives (Kangasniemi et al., 2019). The ultimate goal is to create a company-wide culture of empathy, compassion, and acceptance (Lorenz et al., 2021; Schulz, 2021). The following information includes recommendations from the literature for specific approaches or strategies that employers can implement to promote this workplace culture.

Examples of other organizations offering mental health breaks

In the last two years, several businesses have begun giving their employees a week off specifically for mental health and well-being breaks (Archibald, n.d.; Colvin, 2021; Kelly, 2021; Schulz, 2021). Specific organizations currently offering this benefit include: LinkedIn, Bumble, Hootsuite, HubSpot, Mozilla, Spotify, Marriott, and Marvin windows. In most cases, employers offer this time to most of their employees at the same time (e.g., the office closes) to cut down on the self-induced pressure to keep working during the additional time away from the office (Colvin, 2021; Kelly, 2021). Companies who have tested this idea have found that the time off is most successful if it is mandated or rewarded (such as getting a bonus for taking the time), communicated broadly and repeatedly, and modeled by leaders also taking the time off (Schulz, 2021). In addition, Archibald (n.d.) emphasized that offering the time off must be part of holistic efforts to address larger company culture and offer ongoing resources to support employee mental health and wellbeing. Examples of these efforts are detailed below.

Examples of other support and interventions from employers on mental health

Existing research indicates several supports and types of interventions employers have provided in the past including:

Education to raise awareness and encourage open communication

- **Promote awareness about the importance of mental health and stress management.** In order to build a culture supportive of mental health and employee well-being, it can be

important to build staff mental health literacy (Nogues & Finucan, 2018). Specifically, it's important to build employee awareness of the signs and symptoms of poor mental health and ways to access treatment, including the specific benefits offered by the organization and those in the surrounding community (CDC, 2021; Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Murphy, 2000). In addition, staff could benefit from learning about resiliency and stress management techniques, such as mindfulness, breathing, and meditation (CDC, 2021). Finally, it can be helpful to train staff on ways to support colleagues around mental health and wellness (Murphy, 2000).

- **Leadership training in workplace mental health.** Because leaders often set the tone for the organization, it is important to train managers and supervisors to navigate mental health at work (Gayed et al., 2018; Greenwood & Anas, 2021). This includes helping leaders recognize the signs and symptoms of mental health concerns and stress in their staff (CDC, 2021; Menon et al., 2021). It is also important that leaders learn about their influence on their staff's well-being (Murphy, 2000) and how to have effective conversations and open dialogue with their staff, including providing appropriate referrals (CDC, 2021; Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Menon et al., 2021; NAMI, n.d.). Finally, leaders need to have a clear understanding of the organization's policies and practices around mental health and wellness so they can encourage their staff to use the benefits, as needed (Archibald, n.d.). One study found that companies with a positive return on their investment tended to be "more focused on training leaders, while those that have not yet demonstrated a return are investing more in training employees" (Kangasniemi et al., 2019).

- **Leaders demonstrate values that support mental health.** Several studies have found that one of the most effective practices for promoting a workplace culture supportive of employee mental health and well-being is when leaders are transparent and proactive in reflecting the goal. This can include leaders advocating for mental health at work (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Menon et al., 2021), using stigma-free language (Greenwood & Anas, 2021), openly discussing their own mental health challenges or experiences (Archibald, n.d.; CDC, 2021; de Oliveira et al. 2020), and transparently using mental health benefits, such as days off (Kelly, 2022; Keus Van De Poll et al., 2020; Schulz, 2021).

⭐ **Recommended Take 5 Component**

Develop a worksite wellness committee. Employee wellness committees are small groups of employees who lead, promote, and participate in worksite wellness initiatives. Keys to successful and sustainable wellness committees include having a high level of leadership support, and members who are representative of all employees—staff from across departments, management and non-management, full- and part-time (Aldana, 2022; Brown et al., 2020). Employers with wellness committees have been shown to be more effective at implementing and maintaining wellness initiatives (Aldana, 2022; Brown et al., 2020; Hannon et al., 2019). One study found that companies with strong leadership support and wellness committees were over four times more likely to report substantial improvement in employee health risk, and two and a half times more likely to report reductions in medical costs (Aldana, 2022). This resource provides

instructions on how to develop a wellness committee:
https://www.wellsteps.com/blog/2020/01/02/worksite-wellness-committee/

- **Open and strategic communication about mental health values.** It is essential that information about the mental health and wellness resources and supports available to employees is communicated frequently and through multiple channels (CDC, 2021; Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly, 2022; London, 2020; Menon et al., 2021; Schulz, 2021). In addition, some studies found that more general awareness campaigns about mental health and wellness in the workplace can be effective, including storytelling activities (Kangasniemi et al., 2019), "start the conversation campaigns (CDC, 2021), and employees sharing their experiences using employee benefits (Lorenz et al., 2021).

Reduce workplace stress and role overload

- **Redesign work conditions to support staff and prevent burnout.** Several studies discussed the importance of creating a positive and supportive work environment in general to address and prevent burnout and reduce stress. Reducing levels of job stress can decrease the symptoms of stress, anxiety, and depression (Murphy, 2000). Specific approaches include:

  - **Allowing employees more flexibility when, where, and how they work,** including embracing and encouraging work-life balance (Archibald, n.d.; Gewurtz et al., 2020; Kelly et al., 2021; Lorenz et al., 2021; Menon et al., 2021; Murphy, 2000; Nogues & Finucan, 2018). While this can include offering opportunities for remote work (Kelly et al., 2021), some employees report greater isolation and mental health symptoms due to "Zoom fatigue" (Elbogen et al., 2022).

  - **Offering employees autonomy,** including providing employees with opportunities to have more control over their work and to identify and solve workplace problems (Kelly et al., 2021; Murphy, 2000; Rollins et al., 2021). Employees given opportunities to problem solve together and participate in workplace improvements were less likely to say they wanted to leave jobs, and even small changes in worker autonomy can improve employee well-being (Kelly et al., 2021).

  - **Keeping your organization adequately staffed, so workloads are reasonable.** Long hours or pressure to work very quickly takes a toll on employee health. Solutions may include changing staffing in a targeted way (Kelly et al., 2021; Murphy, 2000; Nogues & Finucan, 2018).

  - **Taking steps to foster a sense of social belonging among employees** where they can create a work culture and develop supportive relationships from colleagues that increase worker well-being (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly et al., 2021; Menon et al., 2021). Examples include developing virtual or in-person communities or social activities, employee resource groups, social platforms for interacting, and/or creating a forum for staff to share affirming stories with each other.

- **Increasing the stability of workers' schedules** which allow for better management for personal and family responsibilities, increased sleep quality, and reduced stress among employees with children (Kelly et al., 2021).

- **Reducing bureaucracy and "busy work."** Managers can improve culture by reducing inefficiencies, particularly those related to documentation and meetings (Rollins et al., 2021).

- **Strategies that address equity and disparities in the workplace.** Investing in DEI can support employee mental health. BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) employees often have to navigate additional stressors, such as trauma and systemic racism, on top of the stressors associated with their personal and professional responsibilities (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly, 2022). In addition, women have been disproportionately affected by increased caregiving responsibilities, particularly in the pandemic (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Lorenz et al., 2021). It is important for employers to recognize how these disparities may be affecting their employees and address policies and practices in the workplace that may be reinforcing or perpetuating disparities (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly, 2022; Lorenz et al., 2021; Menon et al., 2021). Some smaller steps employers can take include offering choices that align with their personal culture and experiences (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly, 2022); listen authentically to employee needs, particularly diverse employees who may not be as empowered to vocalize their needs (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kelly, 2022); and review policies and practices to ensure inclusive language (Lorenz et al., 2021).

- **Support employee personal and professional roles.** It is essential to recognize that employees have many roles in their professional and personal lives, including caregiving for children and/or elderly relatives (Kelly et al., 2021). Therefore, it is important to develop benefits and approaches to help employees navigate these different roles and avoid "role overload" (Murphy, 2000). Some specific strategies include providing family caregiver leave (with an inclusive definition of family), support groups, counseling, and staff flexibility (Lorenz et al., 2021).

Implement specific interventions

⭐ **Recommended Take 5 Component**

Offer a robust Employee Assistance Program (EAP). Several studies recommend offering a robust employee assistance program as an important mental health benefit (Attridge, 2010; Attridge & Dickens, 2022; Beyer & Dyme, 2021; Grasso et al., 2022; Kangasniemi et al., 2019; Kelly, 2022; NAMI, n.d.). One study found that "with regard to mental health support investments, companies with a positive return invested…10 percent more in EFAPs (employee and family assistance programs)" (Kangasniemi et al., 2019). Another found that "health care claims-based cost offsets have been associated mostly with employees with relatively serious issues who were assisted by EAPs" (Attridge, 2010). In particular, it is important that EAPs offer mental health and substance abuse screening, referral, and follow-up (Attridge, 2010; Beyer & Dyme, 2021; Grasso et al., 2022), rapid access to appointments (Beyer & Dyme, 2021), and no cost to employees (Grasso et al., 2022). One study recommended that EAPs be expanded to provide

more sessions to employees as ongoing care (Grasso et al., 2022). It should be noted that many EAPs are underutilized by employees, so it is also important to train employees on the benefits available and how to access them (Murphy, 2000).

- **Provide access to direct mental health services.** One way to reduce barriers to employees accessing mental health services is if the employer offers services directly (Kangasniemi et al., 2019; Lorenz et al., 2021; NAMI, n.d.). This can include having on-site services and/or access to free counseling (CDC, 2021; Kelly, 2022). It can also include offering mental health self-assessment tools to all employees and free or subsidized clinical screenings from a qualified mental health provider (CDC, 2021).

- **Provide adequate insurance coverage for mental health care.** In addition to employers providing direct access to mental health services, it is also important that employers provide health insurance benefits that allow employees to engage in mental health treatment without significant financial barriers (NAMI, n.d.). This can include offering insurance with no or low out-of-pocket costs for mental health services and medications (CDC, 2021) and ensuring that medical care providers in the insurance network are high-quality and appropriately reflect the diversity of employees covered (Menon et al., 2021).

- **Tailor mental health benefits to employee needs.** Several articles in this review acknowledge that different individuals have different life experiences and preferences for how they address their mental health needs (Kelly, 2022; Walker, 2020). One step in doing this is to create a culture of openness to employees defining their own needs (Kelly, 2022; Menon et al., 2021). Another is to provide an array of supports that follow the continuum from prevention to treatment (Kangasniemi et al., 2019). Kangasniemi et al. (2019) found that mental health programs that have a positive return on the investment offered support to employees from promotion of well-being to treatment and care for mental health concerns, as well as reducing risks in the workplace that could add psychological harm.

⭐ **Recommended Take 5 Component**

Provide access to well-being coaches. Certified health or wellness coaches work with employees to set individual goals for improving the wellness and then follow up with them as needed to help ensure they achieve their goals (Gardyasz, 2012). Intensive wellness coaching programs produced a return on investment for one employer of $3 to $6 in savings for every dollar spent, while another saw annual increases in health insurance premiums begin to shrink (Gardyasz, 2012). In another study, a well-being initiative that involved access to coaches found a 38% reduction in burnout rates, and 39% increase in employees' ratings on a self-care scale (Schult et al., 2013).

- **Use digital mental health interventions.** A recent, promising trend in employer mental health benefits includes digital health and well-being programming, particularly through smartphone apps (Menon et al., 2021). One study (Firth et al., 2017) looked at 22 smartphone apps ranging in focus from cognitive training, problem solving therapy, Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), mood monitoring, and self-monitoring. The apps tested in this study

indicated that smartphone devices are promising self-management tools for depression, but do not provide many benefits for mindfulness, CBT, or anxiety. Because this is a relatively new form of support, information about best practices is limited. Recommendations from the literature include identifying apps that include access to resources, such as guidance from a provider (Gaillard et al, 2020; Menon et al., 2021), lists of local resources available (Menon et al., 2021), and ensuring that apps are easy to find and access and communication about their availability is frequent (London, 2020).

- **Support employee physical health.** Mental and physical health are closely related, so a comprehensive wellness program is beneficial (de Oliveira et al., 2020; Lorenz et al., 2021; Menon et al., 2021). This can include providing nutrition or food access support (Menon et al., 2021) and access to physical activity, such as yoga (Lorenz et al., 2021). It should be noted that some EAPs offer discounts on gym memberships.

- **Assess employee well-being and evaluate strategies.** A few articles in this review identified the importance of ongoing assessment of employee well-being, particularly during times of high stress, such as supervision changes (CDC, 2021; Kangasniemi et al., 2019). In addition, as new employee mental health and wellness benefits are rolled out, it is important to evaluate their effectiveness and make adjustments as needed (CDC, 2021; Kangasniemi et al., 2019; London, 2020).

⭐ **Recommended Take 5 Component**

Health and lifestyle spending accounts. An emerging benefit in recent years has been flexible spending accounts for health and wellness activities or other work-life balance needs (such as caregiving). The key to these accounts are that they are flexible enough for employees to tailor how they spend the funds to better meet their personal needs (Kelly, 2022).

- **Provide Mental Health First Aid (MHFA),** a standardized psychoeducational program that was developed to help empower the public to support, refer, and approach individuals in distress by improving participants' knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors related to mental health (Hadlaczky et al., 2014).

- **Offer mindfulness-based interventions (MBI)** provided online. While face-to-face is also an option for MBIs, online MBIs are just as effective because of accessibility, anonymity of patients, and it does not necessarily require involving a licensed therapist educated in mindfulness. Online MBIs also have a small but significant beneficial impact on depression and have a potential to improve mental health outcomes, particularly stress (Spijkerman et al., 2016).

- **Promote nature-based interventions (NBI)** involving green exercise (e.g., forest walking), nature savoring (e.g., aiming attention at natural elements such as sky, clouds, water, grass), and green office space (e.g., incorporating indoor green space using large leafed plants; Gritzka et al., 2020).

Evaluating your Take 5 Movement

In order to ensure that your investment in your employees' well-being is as effective as possible, you should plan to evaluate the Take 5 Movement work you're doing as an organization. This will allow you to determine what is working well and what can be improved to allow your staff to fully engage in the mental health and wellness benefits you are providing and get the greatest benefit from them.

Staff surveys

Wilder Research created a baseline and follow-up survey that can be administered to employees of pilot sites. The baseline survey asks questions about employees' current health and well-being, the activities they currently participate in to support their well-being, and their interest in and barriers to participating in employer-sponsored activities, including the Take 5 break. The follow-up survey asks similar questions to determine changes over time, as well as questions about employees' experiences with the Take 5 break and/or barriers to using the time. Please contact Melissa Adolfson at Wilder Research (melissa.adolfson@wilder.org) to inquire about administering these evaluation tools.

- The baseline survey should be administered prior to any staff taking the Take 5 break

- The follow-up survey should be administered to employees at least six weeks after staff have taken the Take 5 break. We recommend administering it to all employees annually.

Other evaluation options

In addition to these foundational surveys, you may also consider other evaluation options to answer key research questions for your organization. These can include some of the following options. For more information or evaluation support, please contact Wilder Research.

- Examining key **human resources data**, such as employee turnover and absences, to determine if there are changes after implementing the Take 5 Movement.

- Conducting **interviews with managers** to better understand their attitudes, experiences, and perceived outcomes associated (for themselves and their staff) with employee mental health and wellness benefits in general and the Take 5 Movement specifically. These interviews should be conducted by someone who is not closely associated with the manager (including their supervisor or subordinate), in order to avoid power dynamics that could influence authentic engagement.

- Holding **interviews or listening sessions with employees** to learn more about what would be most beneficial to them with regard to mental health and wellness benefits and how to address barriers to using these benefits.

- Summarizing **employee journal entries** from their Take 5 break to understand themes from their experiences, including how they chose to structure their time and what they identified the immediate outcomes of their activities to be. It will be essential that

employees understand prior to completing the journal entries that they may be used in this way and that they can choose whether or not to submit some or all of their entries. In addition, the journals should only be read and summarized by someone not closely associated with the employee, in order to avoid risk of disclosing private information.

Employer roadmap template

1. **How will you plan to structure your Take 5 break for your employees?**

    a. When are staff able to take the days (e.g., will your office close down or will these breaks be staggered)?

    b. How far in advance do they need to identify their days?

    c. What requirements do you have for how they plan for or spend their breaks?

    d. Are there any restrictions on their access to work email or phone calls during their break?

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2. **What is your plan for communicating with staff about the Take 5 Movement and encouraging them to use it?**

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3. **How will you engage leadership in planning for, communicating about, and participating in the Take 5 Movement?**

   a. How will you ensure leaders are trained on how to talk to employees about mental health in non-stigmatizing ways and on the array of benefits available to employees to support their mental health and wellness?

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4. **What additional resources or benefits will you implement to support the Take 5 Movement?**

   a. For instance, will all employees have (or have access to) a mental health self-assessment? Will they have access to clinical screening with a trained provider before, during, or after the break? Will they have access to support through an Employee Assistance Program (EAP)? Will you company provide a wellness coach?

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5. **How will you evaluate your Take 5 Movement efforts?**

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