Solutions

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fseap Now we're talking.

Wellbeing Starts With Belonging

Feeling respected, included and safe at work is closely connected to wellbeing. So, how can you help? It goes beyond inviting someone to join an event or activity. Belonging means creating an environment where people can be themselves, feel that their ideas and opinions are genuinely heard, and don't feel pressured to explain or defend their culture, background, or experiences.

What can you do to create a greater sense of belonging?

- Recognize different holidays and traditions – Be willing to listen, learn and adapt.
- Respect how people choose to share – Give people the choice of whether, when and how they share aspects of their identity and experiences.
- Listen and respond – Take concerns seriously, acknowledge mistakes and follow through.
- Avoid assumptions – Recognize that one approach will not work for everyone.
- Make space for all voices – Encourage different perspectives, particularly in meetings and group discussions.
- Practice and ask respectfully – If you struggle with names, pronunciation or pronouns, make the effort to learn.
- Educate yourself – Take responsibility for learning about different cultures, histories and experiences rather than expecting others to educate you.

Belonging isn't created through posters or a single lunch-and-learn, and it's not about special treatment. It is built through the small, repeated interactions that help people truly feel like valued members of a team.

Making Space for Connection

When life becomes difficult, having someone you can turn to can make a difference. Yet when people are struggling, they may withdraw from others rather than reach out. Stress, shame, fear of being a burden, or simply not knowing how to ask for help can all lead to isolation.

Changes in someone's behaviour, becoming unusually quiet, withdrawing, missing meetings or appearing less engaged can be signs that don't necessarily mean someone is struggling, but they can be a reason to reach out, listen, and remind them that you are here. Simple things like creating opportunities for informal conversation or making someone feel comfortable around you can help build stronger connections and may make it easier for them to ask for support when they need it.

When Life Comes to Work With You

Work-related stress is strongly associated with workload and work-life balance but we often bring other things to work with us:

- finances
- grief & major life transitions
- parenting & caregiving
- relationships
- health concerns

When trying to manage stress, it is important to consider your whole day, not just your workday. While we can't always control the challenges we face, we can consider where we have some control and where we may need support.

Try separating your stressors into two categories: what you can control and what you can't. You may not be able to control a difficult situation, someone else's behaviour, or an unexpected change, but you can often control how you respond, where you focus your energy, the boundaries you set, and whether you ask for help.

Once you've identified what you can control, the next step is to turn that awareness into action. Start by identifying one small change you can make rather than trying to solve everything at once. You might set a boundary, have a tough conversation, adjust your routine, or break a big problem into manageable steps.

It can also help to ask yourself:

- What is one thing I can do today? What can wait?
- What boundary would make this situation more manageable?
- Who can help me with what I can't handle alone?
- What do I need to let go of?

Managing stress isn't about controlling everything that happens. It's about recognizing where you have influence, taking manageable steps and knowing when to reach out for support.

Support When You Need It Most

September is Suicide Prevention Month—a time to remind ourselves that support is available, and no one has to face a difficult moment alone.

Your Employee Assistance Program (EAP) offers 24/7 crisis counselling and support for employees and eligible family members who may be experiencing thoughts of suicide, self-harm, or feeling that they can't cope. Trained counsellors are available day or night to provide compassionate support, help you navigate an immediate crisis, and connect you with additional resources when needed.

Don't wait until things feel unbearable to reach out. Whether you're struggling yourself or concerned about someone you care about, we are here to listen and help.

If you or someone you know is struggling, please reach out to the EAP at any time—day or night. Asking for help is a sign of strength, and support is always available.

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