

5 Ways to Manage Hybrid Work Stress

As prominent organizations like Apple embrace and implement hybrid work policies, it becomes evident that hybrid working has firmly established itself in the modern work landscape. However, without effective management, this shift in work dynamics has the potential to escalate workplace stress, especially among hybrid employees.



April marks Stress Awareness Month, with its theme for this year centering around "community." In light of this, the question arises: How can leaders effectively address and manage stress within a hybrid working community?

To gain insights into this crucial issue, we turn to five experts who share their perspectives.

1. Establishing a Culture of Psychological Safety for Candid Feedback

In the transition to hybrid working, which amalgamates the advantages of remote and in-person work, it also introduces unique challenges. The potential risks, including extended work hours, the permeation of work into personal life, office distractions, and energy depletion, necessitate avenues for employees to voice their concerns.

Psychological safety is crucial in the workplace, too. Especially psychological safety in a work environment that encourages open and constructive feedback. This entails conducting regular feedback sessions within teams, encompassing both anonymous and face-to-face channels.

Leaders who are willing to actively listen to their team members' experiences can effectively manage stress levels. Active listening also marks a sign that psychological safety exists in the team and workplace.

2. Embracing the Role of a "Time Defender"

The stress induced by back-to-back meetings was a growing concern even before the pandemic, and companies should note this. In the current landscape, where there is no longer a need to physically move between meetings, the absence of breaks exacerbates the issue. Meetings encroach on personal time as never before.

One thing to realize is that all meetings now tend to blur together, resulting in wasted time and drained energy without meaningful productivity. To mitigate this, leaders must master the art of effective meeting management. This includes the ability to focus attention, manage energy, establish ground rules, differentiate between meeting types, invite the right participants, align teams with intentions, and, crucially, conclude meetings promptly.

Companies can try the practice of "TimeFraming". This involves allocating sufficient time for activities such as preparation, processing, recovery, and rest. Leaders, however, must not merely discuss these principles but actively exemplify them and empower others to protect this time. Companies can also implement micro-meditation, short bursts of meditation, which can provide valuable rejuvenation during meetings, and enhance focus, productivity, and enjoyment.

3. Investing in Company Culture for Support

With the physical office no longer providing the companionship it once did, creating meaningful interactions and connections becomes more challenging. To counteract potential stress, organizations require a supportive, unifying culture that reinforces common values and objectives.

Designated social channels on collaboration platforms can serve as virtual equivalents of the office "watercooler", while remote collaboration tools such as Miro and Mural facilitate teamwork. However, one thing to note is that technology should not replace human interaction, particularly when addressing well-being concerns. For instance, providing a free subscription to a mindfulness app may not be suitable when excessive screen time is a significant contributor to an individual's stress.

4. Guard Against Over-Reliance on Technical Solutions

There are unique challenges faced by professionals who must conduct sales activities remotely. The art of closing deals through screens requires mastery. While face-to-face meetings are irreplaceable, the virtual world is here to stay. Try to use user-friendly, reliable, and accessible tools that are able to simplify remote interactions, allowing individuals to focus on their core responsibilities. This can alleviate the pressure on sales teams.

5. Incorporating "Agenda-Free" Moments

Companies can also try to integrate "agenda-free" moments into the workday to enhance overall well-being and manage stress levels effectively. Each employee should intentionally allocate time within their daily schedules for activities that are unrelated to work. This can create boundaries between professional and personal lives.

These moments of respite should be safeguarded outside of regular working hours and complement established practices such as cultivating a consistent morning routine, designating a dedicated workspace, and taking breaks – including outdoor activities during lunch breaks – to promote physical activity and relaxation.