



Changing workplace cultures to promote better health

When it comes to promoting, supporting and participating in healthy workplaces, do employers and employees walk the talk?

From an employer view, many organizations state that they value the well-being of their employees—this may be reflected in a vision or mission statement, or in company policies.

However, an organization's culture is also expressed in the unwritten rules that greatly influence the way things are done at the workplace. These common practices can either support employee health or not.

To consistently demonstrate a workplace culture focused on supporting employee health, employers should consider

- training leaders (e.g. supervisors and managers) in understanding the link between employee health and the successful achievement of the organization's business goals;
- recognizing and supporting work-life balance;
- providing flexible work arrangements;
- involving employees in decisions that affect their work;
- distributing work tasks fairly;
- promoting honest, open communication and conflict resolution;
- fostering respect and trust;
- providing a work culture free of harassment and discrimination;
- facilitating the personal and professional development of employees; and
- providing recognition for work well done.

But employers cannot achieve health-related objectives alone; to support a healthy workplace, employees should

- be true to their own values;
- make sure they are taking their breaks, lunch times and vacations;
- eat healthy snacks and lunches;
- drink lots of water;
- be physically active whenever possible—for example, by using stairs, taking a short walk outdoors at break times or doing stretches at their work station;
- do yoga or take a meditation break (e.g. at lunch hour);
- access the Employee and Family Assistance Program (EFAP) for support;
- get involved in new learning and professional development; and
- support others at the workplace, and accept support in return.

By making a conscious effort, employees and employers can each do their part to “walk the talk” and promote better health for everyone in the workplace.

Learn more

[Physical Activity at Work](#)

A workplace web site and resources from the Alberta Centre for Active Living.

[Revisiting Work-Life Issues in Canada](#)

A 2012 National Study on Balancing Work and Caregiving in Canada.

Content provided courtesy of Alberta Health's Healthy U initiative.



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