

“Perspectives on Workplace Wellbeing” Cast Video Text Transcript

Isaac:

My name is Isaac McCoy, and I am a graphic designer.

Stacey:

My name is Stacey Brown, and I'm the president and CEO of a sign and graphics company.

Parker:

My name is Parker Nguyen, and I'm a college student.

Michelle:

My name is Michelle Bannister, and I work for a fortune 100 company that's in government contracting. I'm on the organizational development team. All the research says that, absolutely, companies all over of all sizes in all different verticals are seeing more and more employees self-report higher levels of anxiety, more stress, more burnout, more overwhelm. And a lot of companies are investing more and more in wellbeing initiatives.

Stacey:

So, our business is a little bit stressful, right? And so I can tell when my team members may be, they're just at their limit, right? Giving people the flexibility and the space and actually saying out loud, “if you have something you need to deal with, if something's going on, let me know. Let's figure out how we can make it work for you. Maybe you have to deal with something. Maybe you're under the weather.” The other thing is I try to pay attention.

Parker:

I think it's important to support workers' mental health, because when your workers are happy and they're flourishing, then the company does better as a whole.

Isaac:

I would say in general terms of a mental health friendly workplace would be allowing employees to have time that they need to take off to take care of their mental health needs, to go to their appointments. Because when you don't have that, it's kind of hard to maintain good mental health. And, as far as on-site, I would say companies could understand that employees may need to take longer breaks or whatever they need to really perform their best.

Michelle:

I think that a mental health friendly workplace is a place where no one has to live in fear because the work that they do, the quality of the work that they do, their credibility and expertise is not going to be called into question. As somebody who has a mental health condition myself, I have to say that there are times when I worry a little bit. Thankfully, I work at a company where we're very open. We have an employee resource group especially for people with mental health conditions. And, so, we're very open and honest about the fact that we want to encourage all kinds of people, regardless of what their diversity lens would be, to feel welcome to work here, to be able to feel safe and to be able to bring their whole selves to work.

Isaac:

I've done various things to help me succeed on a job. One is to ask other employees to sit in and give me on-site training. And a lot of the times the employees are very receptive to that idea.

Michelle:

Sometimes I come to work after a particularly bad day in my personal life. Maybe I'm just not feeling my best, I'm tired, I'm not as sparkly. And I'm hopeful that when that happens that maybe people won't be as judgmental of me but just maybe think to themselves, "Michelle's just having a bad day like everybody has a bad day," rather than labeling me, "oh, she's that person with a mental health condition," but just give me a little grace.

Parker:

I think it's essential for coworkers to support each other because you're working alongside them five days out of the week all year long. And if you can't feel comfortable around your coworkers, then the work environment is not going to be a positive place. Don't treat them just like a coworker, treat them as your friend, treat them as a human being, ask about their day.

Stacey:

I think people think that mental health is something else or only for certain people, but everyone has to deal with their own mental health, right? And I think particularly in a small business, I want a family culture. I want people to feel safe. And, so, I really do want people to feel like it's okay if things are overwhelming them or if they just have something going on personally and they need to take time. 'Cause that's how I treat my family. And, so, I want to treat all of my team members the same way.

Isaac:

I would say that you would need a very finely tuned work-life balance. So, finding a way of getting the things that you know you need to succeed on the job. Even if you're not asking for accommodations from your employer, just finding ways of meeting your needs so that you can perform on the job. And that'll show in the quality of your work, and that'll show in the skills that you build over your work.

Michelle:

A mental health-friendly workplace benefits the employer in so many ways. For example, if we're known as a mental health-friendly workplace, then we're able to attract lots of diverse kinds of talent. And they'll immediately feel like, yes this is the place for me. I feel really comfortable here, I'm going to be welcome here, there are going to be resources where I can feel supported here. That's a place where loyalty starts to show up and higher levels of engagement are going to come forward.

Parker:

If a company invests in their employees, they're essentially investing in the success of their company. By helping employees deal with mental health or stress or anything along those lines, the employee's work is going to benefit from that automatically.

Isaac:

I think understanding goes a lot farther than people think, because with understanding comes more people working in positions that they're qualified for. And with understanding comes the small amount of accommodations people need to join the workforce and participate in economic growth.

Stacey:

Mental health friendly workplaces are more important than ever...

Michelle:

And all of us have a role to play in promoting them.

Parker:

Learn more at WhatCanYouDoCampaign.org.