

Holiday Workplace Well-Being Checklist

Small actions. Meaningful impact.

The holiday season can bring excitement, celebration and connection. It can also bring increased stress, financial pressures, grief, loneliness and competing personal and professional responsibilities.

Supporting employee well-being doesn't have to require a significant budget or an elaborate program. Sometimes, the most meaningful actions are the simplest.

Use this checklist to identify opportunities to support your employees throughout the holiday season and into the new year.

01 | Mental Health & Emotional Well-Being

- ☐ Remind employees about available Employee Assistance Program (EAP) services and how to access them: website, phone number and app.
- ☐ Highlight mental health benefits, virtual care options and available support resources. Give examples of how these benefits can help (e.g., virtual care may help assess a sore throat and determine whether testing or an in-person visit is needed).
- ☐ Encourage managers to conduct meaningful, supportive and timely employee check-ins. Not sure what that looks like? Let's talk and design a custom manager guide.
- ☐ Recognize that the holidays may be difficult for some employees.
- ☐ Normalize taking breaks, setting boundaries and asking for help.

02 | Workload & Work-Life Balance

- ☐ Review year-end deadlines verbally and in writing. Identify what can realistically wait until January.
- ☐ Evaluate whether recurring meetings are necessary during the holiday season.
- ☐ Offer scheduling flexibility where business needs allow.
- ☐ Establish clear holiday coverage and out-of-office expectations.
- ☐ Encourage employees to use their earned time off and genuinely disconnect. Managers need to model the same mentality.
- ☐ Lead by example by respecting employees' time outside of working hours.

AP PRO TIP

Don’t just tell employees they have an EAP. Show them how to use it. A benefit nobody knows how to access isn’t much of a benefit.

LET’S BE REAL...

You don’t need to check every box to make a difference. Pick three realistic actions and start there. Progress over perfection applies to HR, too.

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Support your people

03 | Benefits & Financial Well-Being

- ☐ Communicate applicable year-end FSA spending deadlines, carryover provisions and grace periods.
- ☐ Remind employees about financial wellness resources available through benefit providers.
- ☐ Share information about preventive care and virtual support services.
- ☐ Ensure employees know how to access their benefits information during holiday office closures. A dedicated benefits intranet page allows for access 24/7/365.
- ☐ Communicate upcoming benefit changes and effective dates clearly and multiple times.

04 | Inclusion & Connection

- ☐ Recognize that employees celebrate different holidays, traditions or none at all.
- ☐ Make participation in holiday activities voluntary.
- ☐ Consider remote employees when planning celebrations and recognition.
- ☐ Be mindful of dietary restrictions, accessibility and personal preferences.
- ☐ Avoid creating unnecessary financial obligations through gift exchanges or other activities.

05 | Employee Appreciation & Recognition

- ☐ Encourage leaders to personally thank employees for their contributions.
- ☐ Recognize behind-the-scenes employees whose work may go unnoticed.
- ☐ Celebrate individual and team accomplishments from the past year.
- ☐ Consider meaningful, low-cost recognition opportunities.
- ☐ Ask employees what makes them feel valued rather than making assumptions.

AP PRO TIP

Make recognition specific. Tell someone what they did, why it mattered and how it helped the team.

A LITTLE SOMETHING FOR YOU

Your Holiday Permission Slip

You officially have permission to...

Take your own PTO.
Leave something until January.
Say no without feeling guilty.
Enjoy the holidays without checking your inbox.
Take care of yourself, too.

Consider this HR-approved. — Annie

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Keep the momentum going

06 | Looking Ahead to the New Year

- ☐ Gather employee feedback on current well-being initiatives.
- ☐ Review available benefits and wellness program utilization using appropriate aggregate data.
- ☐ Identify underutilized resources that could benefit from better communication.
- ☐ Begin developing a realistic annual workplace wellness calendar (e.g., a “New Year, New You” initiative).
- ☐ Make employee well-being a year-round priority, not just a seasonal initiative.

Five Meaningful Actions You Can Take Today

No additional budget required.

1. Cancel an unnecessary meeting.
2. Send a genuine, personalized thank-you.
3. Share your organization’s EAP contact information. Many EAP providers offer wallet-sized cards or magnets.
4. Give employees permission to disconnect during their time off.
5. Ask your team: “What’s one thing we could do to make this season a little easier?”

A Personal Note from Annie

As HR professionals and people leaders, we spend so much time taking care of others that we sometimes forget to prioritize our own well-being.

This holiday season, I encourage you to extend the same grace, flexibility and compassion to yourself that you offer your employees.

After all, you cannot pour from an empty cup.

When we take better care of people, good things happen.

You got this. -Annie

Need an Extra Set of Hands?

Powell HR Partners provides flexible HR consulting, benefits administration, workplace well-being support and educational workshops designed around your organization’s needs. Whether you need help evaluating your current wellness offerings, developing an annual wellness calendar or delivering a meaningful employee well-being webinar, I’d love to help.

Annie Powell | Founder & Fractional HR Consultant | SHRM-CP
annie@powellhrpartners.com
www.powellhrpartners.com

COMING NEXT FROM AP ADVANTAGE

Ending the Year Strong: Your Year-End Benefits Checklist

Explore the AP Advantage Resource Library

Complimentary AP Advantage resource. Designed for general educational purposes. Adapt recommendations to your organization’s policies, benefit plans and applicable requirements.

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