Focus On: Presenteeism

The overwhelming majority of health-related productivity losses occur *on the job* from reduced performance by employees who show up for work not feeling their best. This is commonly known as presenteeism.

Presenteeism & the Importance of Wellness Programs

The implications and costs of presenteeism are enormous and can be highly disruptive. Integrating wellness strategies into a safety program can help combat the effects. Let's look at a 4-step example by the Canadian Mental Health Association, Manitoba Division (Manitoba Model).

4 Steps to Take

1. **Get Workers' Feedback**

Have workers fill out a questionnaire to determine perceptions about their health, well-being, and what causes work-related stress. Respondents should remain anonymous, so they provide candid responses. (Click here for Model Questionnaire you can adapt.)

2. **Evaluate Feedback**

Next, evaluate the results to identify problems that need to be addressed. For example, questionnaires might reveal a certain process is unusually stressful or fatiguing.

3. **Intervention**

Prioritize the problems and decide when and how to address them. Let workers know when steps are taken to resolve problems.

4. **Re-Issue Questionnaires**

The first set of questionnaires serves as a baseline. Once the results have been processed and interventions taken, the cycle begins again (every 1 and 3 years, according to the Manitoba Model's authors).

Conclusion

To be fair, the Manitoba Model is a strategy for implementing a wellness program controlled by management across an entire organization, not purely a safety program. Still, it’s an effective approach that you can use to introduce and integrate elements of wellness into your overall health and safety program.