

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.