WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR INSIGHTS TO
Refocus Your Employee Wellbeing Strategies

WCWI Well Practice
Members-Only Resource

WCWI Membership and Community:

As a professional development and consultation organization for wellness strategists and people leaders, WCWI will help your organization shift employee wellbeing to a foundational strategy that is valued and understood by all. Over 650 wellness professionals use WCWI's Membership and certified trainings to be empowered and equipped to create strategic change; while organizationally they're experiencing the power of a designed-culture where employees will feel a sense of community, purpose, and impact.

- WCWI Membership
- WCWI Members

WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTORS

As WCWI supports our community of connected employers to shift the narrative of wellbeing in Wisconsin, we have sought out leaders in a variety of wellbeing specialties to partner with and create exclusive member resources and learning opportunities. These WCWI Expert Contributors provide multi-disciplinary perspectives and expertise to help WCWI Members continue to elevate their culture-focused wellbeing strategies.

View WCWI's four Expert Contributors and their shared resources.

Use the WCWI Expert Contributor insights
to inspire and refocus your employee wellbeing initiatives:

CULTURE

Shawn Gulyas
WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR
The Thought Catalyst with humanworks

"You are what organizations and leaders need. Business success is built on putting people first. Be the beacon to help guide your organization and set priorities."
– Shawn Gulyas

FORWARD THINKING

We're experiencing a foundational reset when you think about culture. You need to be the voices to expand this. What does wellbeing mean to your company now? The meanings of terms we've traditionally used have changed in the last year.

Take these questions to your leadership and wellness teams to discuss:
- What is the significance and new meaning of **work-life-balance** in your workplace now?
- What is the significance and new meaning of **belonging** in your workplace now?
- What is the significance and new meaning of **values** in your workplace now?

TWO WAYS TO MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT

- Build confidence in individuals and teams. A culture a confidence allows you to breathe.
- Audit your people touchpoints and assess what it means to be a leader in your organization. From there, create your wellbeing leadership model.

HOT TOPIC: TOXIC POSITIVITY

Toxic positivity may happen when someone over generalizes their response to create this happy, optimistic state which in turn denies, minimizes, and invalidates any real human experience. Responses like, "Just smile!" "Stay positive!" "Others have it worse." Toxic positivity avoids dealing with emotion. It tells someone they shouldn't feel what they're feeling, and may create a culture where individuals think they always need to be happy rather than be their authentic self.

How do we correct toxic positivity?
1. Learn about toxic positivity and what it really is.
2. Get leadership in a room to start talking about it.
3. Teach leaders how to respond with questions that open up the conversation.
4. Empower leaders to say what they see.
5. Establish new ways that put people first organizationally. For example, one-on-one meetings should be led by the employees with them owning the conversation.

RECOMMENDED RESOURCES

- Leader Well-Being Self-Assessment: Designed for any people leader, the questions in this document illustrate twenty different ways leaders can elevate well-being within their team. Use it with yourself, or your entire organization to spark critical conversations and help everyone thrive. Better yet, pair it with the discussion prompts listed above.
- The Five Dysfunctions of a Team: A Leadership Fable by Patrick Lencioni

MENTAL HEALTH

Mettie Spiess, CWP, CPHSA
WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR
CEO and Founder of A World Without Suicide (AWWS)

"Mental health is no longer in the back of a human resource department,
it's crashing into being a CEO priority."
-Mettie Spiess

FORWARD THINKING
Study after study have shown us that mental wellbeing is really the foundation of everything from driving productivity, to lowering disease risk, to healthy bottom lines for employers, and more. Now that we bring the pandemic and all the recent global events into the equation, rising mental health and suicidal crisis is really the epidemic within the pandemic. Supporting employee mental wellbeing from an employer's perspective is really more critical now more than ever.

TWO WAYS TO MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT
- Embed psychological safety into not only your organizational culture, but your safety initiatives.
- Train your managers to identify and respond to employees who need additional support and may be facing mental health crisis.

HOT TOPIC: HOW TO SUPPORT MENTAL HEALTH & REDUCING STIGMA
1- Have executive leaders acknowledge the current stressors employees are facing and pledge their commitment to prioritizing employee mental health. As a part of their commitment, have leaders remind employees of the support resources that are available to them to reduce the stigma of asking for help.
2- Equip managers to comfortably talk about mental health with employees. This includes how to empathically provide support and appropriately address performance issues that may be related to a mental health condition or challenge.
3- Implement policies to support employee mental health and reduce the stigma. Bottom line, policies shouldn't penalize employees who need support. Policies should support employees reintegrating from a mental health leave of absence and include crisis response protocols. If we embed this support into safety initiatives we start to equalize employee physical health with mental health. When looking at your policies, confirm your organization has policies and protocols for mental health crisis, check that these policies are inclusive and use stigma free language, and ensure these policies don't discriminate any person or area of health.

RESOURCES
- [Mental Health & Emotional Wellbeing in Your Workplace](#) (WCWI Webinar)
- [Support for the Mental Health of Wisconsin's Workforce](#) (WCWI Well Practice)

WORKPLACE ENVIRONMENT

Heather Turner Loth
WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR
Workplace Strategy Leader with EUA

"EUA's research discovered that there are five drivers to a disengaged workplace, with one of those being wellbeing. This data proves wellbeing is at the core of elevating employee productivity and engagement, while lowering turnover."
-Heather Turner Loth

FORWARD THINKING
Workplace design approaches are going to be more holistic in nature for our employees going forward. It's going to look different for every company and it is going to look different to every individual within those companies. There's a great opportunity to change the lens we use to look at workplace design with the alignment of culture and elevating employee wellbeing.

TWO WAYS TO MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT
- Use visual cues to direct positive behavior and wellbeing, while having them modeled by leadership. Ask your leadership and team, "What does positive modeled behavior look like?"
- Focus on reviewing the policies that you have in place. A one-size-fits-all is not likely to be the best approach moving forward.

HOT TOPIC: HOW TO BUILD EMPLOYEE TRUST THROUGH SPACE & DESIGN
1- Empower Choice and Control – Allowing employees to choose where, how, and when to get their tasks done solidifies trust. Create policies in support of this and have leaders positively model this behavior.
2- Chance Interactions – Trust is built within small human interactions and moments. In the virtual environment, we're missing the "water cooler" space and touchpoints. Now, we must mentor leaders to foster employee touchpoints and create genuine interests in each other to create trust-building.

RESOURCES
- Dare to Lead by Brené Brown
- EUA Workplace Strategy
- 3 Ways Workplace Design Supports a Culture of Trust + Empowerment

LEADERSHIP

Beth Ridley
Beth Ridley
WCWI EXPERT CONTRIBUTOR
*Leadership & Workplace Culture Expert with
The Brimful Life*

"Because of the pandemic, companies have had to recognize that employees are people. They're full people. They're not just workers. Employees have emotions, interests, and values. These things can't be ignored anymore and have come full into the workforce."
– Beth Ridley

FORWARD THINKING
This is a turning point that we need to handle with care going forward. Data shows that 60% of all employees, not just women and people of color, feel they need to hide an aspect of themselves to fit in. All of us have some aspects of ourselves that we have to hide in order to fit in. We know this is unhealthy organizationally and individually, which is why companies are leaning into this space of cultural belonging where everyone feels that they can be themselves. And you know what, it's better that way, because it's not as exhausting and there's a cost when people hide a piece of themselves.

TWO WAYS TO MAKE THE BIGGEST IMPACT
- The one best thing you can do is start leading by example by being more of yourself at work. Many people can have your job title, but there's only you who can do it your unique way. Bring your authenticity forward and whatever spark that you have inside.
- Check in with your why and your priorities to ensure your why is aligned with your business vision and values.

HOT TOPIC: HOW DO YOU ENSURE LEADERS SUPPORT EMPLOYEE WELLBEING
We need ambassadors because our success isn't just rooted in building initiatives. Leadership can make a significant impact with how they show up and the experiences they create in the day-to day touchpoints with employees.
1- Recognize that your leaders are balancing many priorities in support of the organization. They may not be thinking about employee wellbeing as intimately as we do. Therefore, it's important to break down our strategies to small things that they can do to shift the culture. Start by sitting down with frontline leaders to bring them into your employee wellbeing strategies and inquire what is meaningful to them. Have each leader choose one small thing they can do that's in alignment with your strategies and have them build it within their performance plans for accountability.
2- Clarify what success looks like for your organization and decide how to track it. This may include: 360 feedback, specific questions in performance reviews, culture surveys, and general observance of micro-shifts in culture.
3- Encourage and refuel your leaders by reminding them that their efforts are appreciated.

RESOURCES
- [Transform Your Organizational Culture with Positive Psychology](#) (WCWI)
- [The Brimful Life Podcast](#)