Reduce Stress for a Safer Workplace

While many risks are part of any business, there are actions you can take to make your workplace a safer environment for everyone.

While it may not be feasible to have a massage therapist on staff or a zen garden installed in the breakroom, you can help your employees learn to identify and decrease their stress. Stress reduction not only helps workers feel better, but they also work better and safer. That's a benefit for workers and employers alike.

Make Breaks Count

Working through lunch and failing to take breaks aren't the marks of a hard worker, they're red flags for potential liability. Encourage workers to not only take their breaks but also put them to good use. A healthy snack and a short walk can be enough of a change of pace to bring stress levels down. Or provide a mental getaway with a quick game of checkers and a cool drink of water. A break needs to be just that, a break.

Encourage Communication

Workers who are at risk for high levels of stress should know that it's ok to ask for help and should be encouraged to do so.

By addressing the topic regularly, supervisors can help reduce the stigma around mental and emotional health issues, so be sure it's talked about in meetings and that information is posted in the common areas. Train supervisors to not only identify when workers are having trouble reducing their stress but also to deal with the situation in a helpful and non-confrontational manner.

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Have Support in Place

It's inevitable that some employees will need to seek help with stress. If they know what the protocol is and have easy access to help, they'll be more likely to do so. When employees can self-identify this need and get help, it can save valuable time -- not to mention increasing the safety of the workplace. By putting things in place to assist in stress reduction, leaders can greatly enhance the safety of their workplaces. When workers can identify their needs and have them met by accessible means, your entire workplace will benefit.