



# Take 5 Movement Toolkit

**A toolkit for employers and employees**

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## **Orientation to the Take 5 Movement and this toolkit**

### **Purpose of the Take 5 Movement**

The purpose of the Take 5 Movement is to launch a new workplace benefit that offers a proactive, intentional, and ongoing mechanism to support employee mental health and well-being. Ultimately, the Movement seeks to decrease stigma around mental health issues in and beyond the workplace, and to result in positive outcomes for the employer such as improved employee productivity, a more satisfied and loyal workforce and thus reduced turnover, and reduced health care expenses.

This toolkit includes resources for both employers and employees to implement the Take 5 Movement within their organization.

## Key elements of the Take 5 Movement

In order to implement the Take 5 Movement as designed, it includes the following core components:

- **Employee five-day break.** Every employee is eligible for an annual five-day mental health and wellness break in addition to other paid leave. Employees are encouraged to unplug from work – no meetings, phone calls, or emails if at all possible. Optimally, employees take a consecutive five-day break. In some organizations, it may be preferable to spread employee breaks over the course of the year while in others it may be preferable to close the office and make the breaks simultaneous. Employers can consider incentivizing employees to take this time off with investments in a ***lifestyle spending account***.
- **Employee planning.** In order for a mental health activity to work, people must believe it will be helpful and they must have the time and resources necessary to do it. To assist with this planning, this toolkit includes a template roadmap to individualize and plan their week, a menu of possible activities, and a list of resources. It also includes a sample five-day plan and a template to plan activities beyond the break to support their own continued care. We also strongly encourage employers to provide a ***wellness coach*** to help support employee planning. *See pages 5-19.*
- **Employer commitment to ongoing wellness support.** To ensure everyone’s success and to work toward destigmatizing mental health, employers will develop an aligned ongoing wellness program. This toolkit also includes a program template and ideas such as strategies for leadership to support their staff and company-sponsored wellness activities. ***Employee Assistance Program*** and forming a ***worksite wellness committee*** as part of these efforts. *See pages 20-28.*
- **Evaluation to prove effectiveness.** Employees and employers will be asked to participate in evaluation steps to capture results, assess effectiveness, and inform approach revisions. Pre and post surveys and other company records will assess level of workforce satisfaction, happiness, engagement, absenteeism, and retention. *See pages 15-19, 27-28.*

## Inspiration for the Take 5 Movement

The Take 5 Movement is the vision of David Moeller, a C-Suite Executive who had a personal experience with his own mental health that changed his life and fueled a passion to help others. With concerns about addiction to prescription medication, and a diagnosis of depression, he decided to seek professional help.

Thankfully, David had connections to people in the mental health field and the resources to pay for help. After a brief stay in a treatment center where he safely discontinued his prescription sleep medication and learned strategies to address his depression, **David dedicated the next five days to reflecting on his experience, writing his story, and charting his personal course for mental wellness.**

Upon reflection, he acknowledged that he had been just a little ashamed to admit he had a problem. He had wondered how he, a successful CEO who has most everything he needs, could suffer from depression. Yet, at the time, it had felt to him like no one cared, and that no one was really there for him, so he suffered in silence. Considering this, he wondered how many other people at his company may be struggling with something similar.

David was grateful to have had the resources, connections, and most importantly, the ability to take time to address his issues. He felt an urgency to help others and realized that offering this same gift of time to his own employees, along with tools and resources for using their time in a purposeful way would be a great place to start. He dove into researching whether other companies were offering anything similar.

He did find some companies that provide additional days off for when employees are feeling stressed or overwhelmed. At that time, he did not find any offering five consecutive days for proactive mental health and wellness each year, or any that offer guidance and tools for planning to use the time. David engaged the research and mental health experts at the Wilder Foundation in Saint Paul, Minnesota, to help build out his vision to help others.

## **Why the Take 5 Movement is important**

Millions of people suffer from mental health issues. In fact, every year one in five adults in the U.S. have a diagnosable mental health issue, and one in 20 have a more serious condition (SAMHSA, 2016). In addition, more than half the population of the United States will have a mental illness or disorder at some point in their lifetime (Kessler et al., 2007).

While the global stress of the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in more conversation about mental health and wellness, there remains a great deal of stigma for people who experience concerns, especially in the workplace. When people do feel comfortable acknowledging a concern, they often have no idea what to do – who to talk with, what might make a difference or where to seek resources and help. All the while, as people are coming to grips with having an issue and then trying to figure out what to do, their mental health struggles are disrupting their family, their work, their entire life.

## **Benefit to employers and employees**

Providing mental health supports to employees is not only beneficial to the employees themselves, but also to employers. Among various programs and interventions, employers who provided mental health supports to their employees saw increased productivity via reduced absenteeism and reduced presenteeism (being physically present at work but not psychologically engaged enough to perform job duties), an increased return on investment for employer-funded programs, increased job satisfaction among employees, increased retention, and increased organizational reputation (Gewurtz et al., 2020; Hargrave & Hiatt, 2005; Hargrave et al., 2008; Schulz, 2021).

In a randomized clinical trial, work-focused interventions (WFIs) for employed adults who showed signs of depression reduced presenteeism by 44% and absences by 53% in the treatment group as opposed to 13% and 11% reductions in the control group (Lerner et al., 2015). This reduction in lost productivity had a benefit-cost ratio of \$6.19 USD for every dollar spent. Furthermore, one WFI demonstrated overall cost savings of \$671-\$979 per employee treated (Lerner et al., 2021). Investments in brief counseling through Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) have also shown to help reduce symptoms of anxiety and depression among workers. One organization yielded an estimated return on investment of \$4.26 for every dollar spent on the EAP from avoided overall health care treatment costs for depression and avoided lost work productivity (\$1433/case; Attridge & Dickens, 2022). Similarly, another analysis yielded a \$3.25 return for each dollar spent for small employers in the U.S (Attridge, 2022). These findings suggest a positive return on investment for employers when investing in mental health resources for their employees.

Workplace mental health interventions have led to reductions in mental health symptoms, and mental health-related short-term disability. In addition, such interventions have led to employees being more likely to talk about mental health at work, and more likely to support coworkers who are dealing with mental health issues (Greenwood & Anas, 2021; Kangasniemi, 2019). Employee use of workplace-supported EAP services such as counseling have produced reductions in mental health symptom severity (Attridge & Dickens, 2022; Beyer & Dyme, 2021; Lerner et al., 2021). In one study, employees who used EAP services saw a 47% reduction in the severity of depression symptoms, a 44% reduction in the severity of anxiety symptoms, a 30% increase in life satisfaction, and an 11% increase in overall health status (Attridge & Dickens, 2022). Interventions aimed at increasing workers' autonomy have shown improvements in mental health, reductions in heart disease rates, and increased employee engagement (Kelly et al., 2021; Rollins et al., 2021).