



Your Wellness Is Our Business



New Norms of Occupational Burnout

According to a survey that interviewed 100,000+ office workers around the world published by US research group <<Future Forum>> in 2022, over 40% of office workers experience burnout, with women and employees under 30 years old more prone to burnout than men and older employees. The issue seems even more grievous in Hong Kong - we have been running the "Hong Kong Employees Physical and Mental Health Survey" between 2011 and 2022, using the Workplace Outcome Suite (WOS) to measure the wellbeing of 627 Employee Assistance Programme (EAP) users. Before participating, nearly 80% of respondents reported "being mentally absent from work," nearly 50% reported "lack of engagement at work" and "dissatisfaction with life;" over 30% reported "fear of going to work," and about 35% had "taken leave due to facing difficulties." During the month before the survey, the average number of sick leave days taken was 6.1 days.

In fact, our work and life patterns have undergone significant changes since the pandemic, effectively marking the start of the "post-COVID era." To cope with the outbreak, companies have made a series of changes, introducing "Work From Home" (WFH) and hybrid working models, resulting in increasingly blurred boundaries between work and life. Employees must learn how to navigate between different software that enable WFH communications to adapt to the new working mode. Moreover, employees may find it difficult to identify clear start/end times for work as they could in the past. Eventually, being constantly in a state of being on-call ultimately increases their stress and gradually leads to burnout. Generally, there are 3 types of burnout symptoms:

1. Emotional Exhaustion

Emotional Exhaustion refers to employees feeling tired and exhausted from spending long hours and a large amount of work. Some may even experience feelings of depression, anxiety, and anger.

2. Lack of Accomplishment

When employees lack a sense of fulfilment, it might be due to them not being able to achieve their work goals, or not feeling satisfied with their contributions to work. As a result, they could experience emotions of self-doubt and decreased self-evaluation.

3. Depletion of Empathy

This means employees feeling disconnected from their work roles, feeling distant from interpersonal relationships at work, and feeling alienated from their responsibilities.

When coping with the changing scene, companies need to consider the needs and characteristics of different employees to implement different strategies to address the causes of burnout mentioned above, in order to achieve a win-win situation for both parties in this new epoch:

i. Enhance Employees' Sense of Control Over Work

In case of non-urgent work, allow employees to have appropriate "offline rights," establish boundaries, and give them sufficient rest and improve employees' feeling of being respected and sense of sovereignty.

ii. Look after Employees' Mental and Physical Health

Provide reasonable support to employees as encouragement, making them feel valued and increasing their sense of accomplishment. In addition, managers can provide health insurance plans, such as employee assistance programmes (EAPs) and mental health promotion training courses, to support employees' mental and physical health.

iii. Provide Community Support

By actively building team support and connections to create an inclusive workplace environment, managers can lead by example in terms of showing empathy, caring genuinely for team members, as well as balancing healthy work and life.



Love and Beginnings

Kicking Out Occupational Fatigue

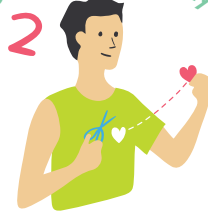
Technological advancements have made it more convenient for us to "log on" and handle tasks at work, but at the cost of blurring the lines between work and personal time. Going "offline" once in a while is essential for your mental well-being and setting boundaries between your life and work (such as taking regular breaks), which can help you recharge from busy work and give you an energy boost to face daily challenges.

1 View Relaxation as an Investment



Just like any other part of your body, your brain also needs time to relax and recover to become stronger. Utilise sensory relaxation techniques, such as smelling aromatherapy and make use of your tactile sense to touch the grass in the park, to activate your senses and relax your brain.

2 Detach Emotionally



As you begin to unwind, be patient with any discomfort that arises and avoid letting emotions dictate your decisions. Make an effort to redefine and confront challenges.

3 Set Expectations and Develop Contingency Plans



It is not unusual to be required on call and handle emergencies after work. Having said that, try to establish clear work schedules and contingency plans with your team, specifying how and when to communicate in different situations.



Liven Up Your Soul

Facing Work Challenges with Ease:

A sudden change in personnel has increased the workload for the team led by Wylie. Recently, his subordinate, Lily, has been working tirelessly, with her eyes fraught with unease and malaise. One day, while Lily was pondering over work matters as she ate her lunchbox, Wylie noticed her having a hard time relaxing even during lunch and tried to assure her, "I actually have full confidence in your abilities. The current challenges are well within your capabilities, but you always approach work challenges with stress and anxiety, which only leaves you exhausted. Have you ever tried facing work problems with a different mindset?" Confused, Lily asked Wylie exactly how she could achieve that.

Wylie smiled and handed Lily a uniquely shaped "magic spoon", saying, "This is the magic spoon which allows the user to effortlessly scoop up food, and sends food into one's mouth effortlessly." To verify what her boss said, Lily took the spoon and attempted to scoop up the food only to find such simple action unexpectedly difficult. "Could this be a joke?" Perplexed, Lily asked Wylie for an explanation. Nonetheless, Wylie said, "Cast aside your doubts for now. Close your eyes, take slow deep breaths. Then stretch your hand muscles, and try again." To her surprise, Lily succeeded. Wylie explained, "This spoon is specially designed. The cleverest part is that the more relaxed the user's mood, the more effectively the spoon's magic works. When the user is tense and muscles are tight, the magic of the spoon cannot function." Lily understood that Wylie wanted her to relax. She also became aware of her physical responses to stress, such as dizziness, increased heart rate, and tense muscles. The state of stress and anxiety hindered her from performing at her best.

Wylie said, "It's normal to feel stressful when you value your work and encounter challenges. Instead of resisting stress or finding a way to eradicate stress ASAP, focus on handling the tasks at hand!" Lily gradually discovered that co-existing with stress allowed her to face work with a more relaxed mindset.

The parable of the magic spoon means to convey the message that it is crucial for us to face work challenges with ease. When we learn to deal with stress, we can focus better on overcoming difficulties, unleashing our potential, and finding enjoyment and satisfaction in our work. When feeling tired, remember to rest well and adjust your pace!





LEAP File

Moving Forward

Navigating Life amidst Confusion

It is now the eighth year since Miss Wong left Taiwan for career development in Hong Kong. During this time, she focused on climbing up the ladder at work and embracing challenges. She even became fluent in Cantonese as she admirably tried to adapt to life in Hong Kong despite numerous difficulties. Nevertheless, as the company underwent reforms and her workload increased, Miss Wong gradually felt lost especially in terms of motivation, and began receiving our counselling service through the EAP provided by the company.

During counselling, Miss Wong discovered that her work fatigue was just the tip of the iceberg, with hidden uncertainties and anxieties about life underneath as well as feelings of self-blame for not being able to handle work. Talking about her concerns subsequently enabled herself to verbalise about her struggle with whether to continue staying in Hong Kong due to the guilt of not being able to be with her parents. After sorting through her emotions, Miss Wong realised that there's no such thing as the "right decision." Gradually, she felt encouraged to listen to her inner voice and became aware that going home was what she had always wanted. Taking this realisation into action, Miss Wong decided, after discussing with her parents, to return to them when they retire in three years' time. When her inner conflict was acknowledged to and addressed, Miss Wong was no longer controlled by her emotions, and a clear plan formulated together by herself and the therapist allowed her to reconsider her pursuits and position in work. While she used to see value in being recognised externally, she now hopes to see herself confidently face changes in life and enrich herself with different knowledge. In the ongoing counselling process, the new direction empowered Miss Wong to regain her motivation and drop anchor at work, while transforming her view for work challenges into a more positive perspective.

Towards the final few counselling sessions, Miss Wong's change was noticed by her superiors, giving her an opportunity for promotion. Although Miss Wong may face greater challenges in the future, her clear direction fills her with conviction as she now sees the opportunity for growth in every challenge.





HR Sharing: Strategies for Caring for Retired Employees

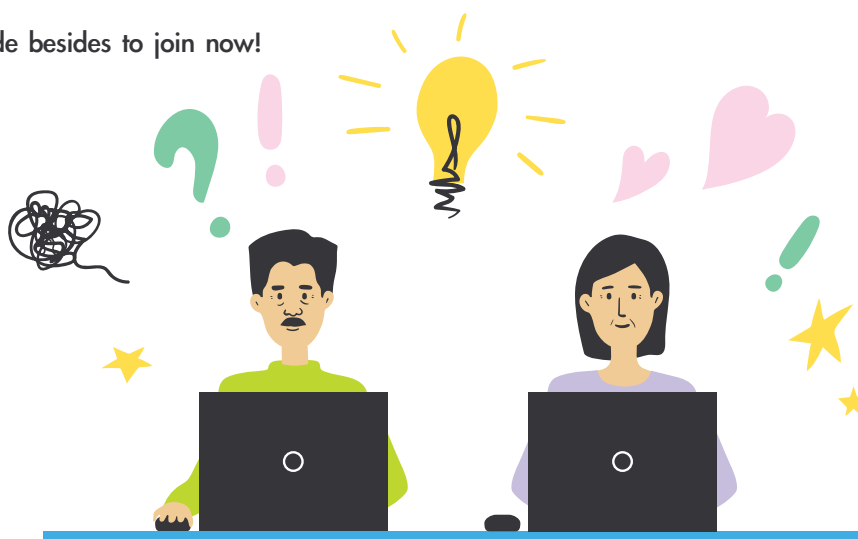
As a considerable percentage of the local population approaches retirement age, how to properly care for retired employees has become a concern for employers. In fact, a good employee care strategy can make retired employees feel valued. When employees feel that their employer is looking after their future, it can not only increase their sense of belonging to the company in the long run, but also alleviate their anxiety about retirement preparation, thereby effectively attract and retain talent.

FDC will be hosting the "HR Sharing: Strategies for Caring for Retired Employees" event on 28 June (Friday). This event will have the honour of having several heavyweight guests to share their insights, including Dr. Leung Man Fook Edward, Director of Elderly Health at Hong Kong Sanatorium & Hospital and Honorary Consultant in Geriatrics, Mr. C.H. Tang, Internal Affairs Department Group Head at Sun Hung Kai Properties Development Ltd., and Mr. Fred Chan, Chairman of the Hong Kong Aircraft Engineering Co., Veterans Club Limited. They will share their respective thoughts about retirement preparation and effective measures for caring for retired employees, in order to help participants understand the difficulties that soon-retiring employees may face and formulate better retirement plans for them.

Scan the QR code besides to join now!



Scan and join now!



Company Information

Four Dimensions Consulting Limited (FDC) is a private limited company set up by Hong Kong Christian Service (HKCS) in 2005. Employee Development Service (EDS) of HKCS is the first EAP provider in Hong Kong since 1991. We offer total solutions to assist employees with work/life issues, develop strengths/potentials, increase work engagement and positivity at work, which ultimately enhance organizational excellence and sustainability.

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