

FP SNAPSHOT FOR MANUFACTURERS: MENTAL HEALTH TAKES TOLL ON EMPLOYEE RETENTION

Insights
Jun 2, 2022

The challenges facing manufacturers seem to increase with each passing day, and the results of [a recent FP Flash Survey](#) demonstrate that workplace mental health can be added to that list. It's not just that supply chain disruptions, rising costs for everything from energy to toilet paper, worker shortages, and increased turnover have put tremendous pressure on manufacturers in every industry, this pressure is also creating increasing amounts of stress on your employees. What can manufacturing employers take away from this survey, and what can you do about this increasingly challenging problem?

Results of Survey Paint a Challenging Picture

According to the latest [FP Flash Survey](#), employers are seeing increased requests for mental health accommodations requests and are also seeing the impacts of mental health concerns negatively impacting their employee retention efforts. Some of the more interesting results as they relate to the manufacturing industry:

- 41% of manufacturing employers say that mental health challenges have negatively impacted employee retention efforts in the past two years.
- 10% of manufacturers have seen an increase in legal demands and claims related to mental health and wellbeing since the pandemic started.
- 28% of manufacturers have received a work-from-home request based on a claim of anxiety or other mental health

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issue in the past two years.

- 31% of manufacturing employers have seen an increase in requests for reasonable accommodation relating to mental health and wellbeing during the same timeframe.

In addition, according to the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission, Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) claims based on Anxiety Disorder and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder have more than doubled over the past 10 years from 7.1% to 16.7% of ADA claims.

What Can You Do About It?

Manufacturers addressing the workplace mental health issues need to walk a fine line between promoting mental health and wellness initiatives and appropriately addressing specific employee needs for workplace mental health accommodations. Manufacturing employers should review the 10 Steps to Mental Health Wellness for Your Employees for guidance on what steps to take. These steps provide a solid foundation for addressing mental issues in the workplace but should be reviewed with your workplace attorney prior to initiating them to avoid creating legal liabilities pursuant to anti-discrimination laws. A brief summary of the steps:

1. **End the stigma:** End the stigma associated with mental health issues by starting workplace conversations in an appropriate manner.
2. **Gather input:** Understand the unique stressor impacting your workplace.
3. **Determine the landscape:** Determine how your company culture supports positive mental health.
4. **Smooth the path:** Eliminate barriers to employees seeking assistance.
5. **Take stock:** Understand your company's resources available to address mental health issues.
6. **Promote the resources:** Communicate to the entire workforce about the resources and how to access them.
7. **Train managers on accommodations:** Train managers on the interactive accommodation process particularly when dealing with mental health issues.

8. **Consider work from home:** Consider WFH options on a case-by-case basis.
9. **Stay in your lane:** Respect employee privacy and offer resources without enquiring into details.
10. **Be there:** A company is limited into what it can ask an employee about a potential disability, there are ways that an employer can express concern and offer help without running afoul with the law. Again, consulting your workplace attorney can help develop the legal parameters.

Conclusion

We will continue to monitor workplace law developments as they apply to manufacturers, so make sure you are subscribed to [Fisher Phillips' Insight system](#) to get the most up-to-date information directly to your inbox. If you have questions, contact your Fisher Phillips attorney, the author of this Insight, or any attorney on our [Manufacturing Industry Team](#).