

What is absenteeism?



In simple terms, absenteeism arises when an employee is absent regularly for no apparent good reason. This does not include paid leave or unpredictable personal issues.

Minor illnesses are the most common reasons, such as:

- Colds and flu
- Upset stomach
- Headaches
- Bullying and harassment

Other issues causing absences are:

- Stress
- Burnout
- Musculoskeletal injuries
- Mental health illnesses
- Long term medical conditions
- Child or elder care



Causes of Absenteeism in the Workplace

It's a mistake to think that absenteeism is always a product of laziness or employees who try to get out of work whenever they can. For this article we will only focus on the mental health aspects contributing to absenteeism.

Stress

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. Stress is your body's response to anything that requires attention or action. Stress can lead to a number of problems. Employees who are under extreme stress due to work or personal reasons get sick more often, may have poor morale, and they are more likely to quit without notice. If you think stress might be affecting you, there are a few things you can watch for:

- **Psychological signs** such as difficulty concentrating, worrying, anxiety, and trouble remembering.
- **Emotional signs** such as being angry, irritated, moody, or frustrated.
- **Physical signs** such as high blood pressure, changes in weight, frequent colds or infections, and changes in the menstrual cycle and libido.
- **Behavioural signs** such as poor self-care, not having time for the things you enjoy, or relying on drugs and alcohol to cope.



Burnout

Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and often physical exhaustion brought on by prolonged or repeated stress.

Emotional signs and symptoms of burnout:

- Sense of failure and self-doubt.
- Feeling helpless, trapped, and defeated.
- Detachment, feeling alone in the world.
- Loss of motivation.
- Increasingly cynical and negative outlook.
- Decreased satisfaction and sense of accomplishment.

Types of burnout

- **Overload burnout:** when you continue to work at an unsustainable pace, clocking long hours without mental breaks.
- **Under-challenged burnout:** when you are not being challenged or stimulated by your job.
- **Neglect:** you don't feel a sense of purpose and find it hard to stay engaged at your job.

Here are the seven expert-backed ways that will help you manage your mood mindfully:

1

Don't run away from your emotions

One of the main problems is that we keep on ignoring what we are feeling. It is always better to face our fears so that we can work on them rather than running away from them. It will make us mentally stronger.

2

Understand your feelings

Now that you have made up your mind to deal with whatever you are feeling, the next step is understanding your emotions. At times, we mix up our emotions. For example, we think we are sad but it might be depression. We have to be careful of the nature of our emotions- whether they are temporary or permanent.

3

Accept your emotions

Acceptance is the key. If your doctor is telling you that you might have anxiety or anger issues then you need to believe in their expertise and accept it rather than countering them. Accepting your emotions can calm you down. It is always better to acknowledge your emotions because the sooner you accept them, the better you will deal with them. Crying or venting out in front of your confidant doesn't make you a weak person. In fact, it is the other way round.

4

Stop restricting yourself

Don't restrict your feelings. If you feel like eating good food then eat it, if you feel like dancing then dance, if you feel like talking to someone then talk. The thing is, don't restrict your feelings because this might aggravate your negative emotions and land you in deeper trouble.

5

Do what you love

The biggest setback of the typical modern lifestyle is that we hardly get time to do what we actually love. Our expert suggests that for instant relief, you can listen to the music of your choice, or do something that will help you calm down for 15 to 20 minutes.

6

Don't forget to breathe

If you learn the art of breathing, there is nothing like it to calm you down. Deep breathing is one such technique that nowadays people are vouching for to keep their mental health in check and to calm themselves down. Just take a deep breath until your lungs are full and exhale. Repeat this process 10 to 12 times and you will see that there is a sense of calm in you.



7

Sleeping well will also do the trick

Skipping sleep or sleeping for less than 7 to 8 hours can make you cranky along with impacting your mood negatively. That's why you must ensure that you have taken a good night's sleep so that it won't impact your mood. In fact, a recent study published in the Journal of Sleep Research suggests that insufficient sleep may have a negative impact on emotional reactions.

For more information or assistance, you are welcome to contact Platinum Health's Mental Health Services (014 590 1700 or 080 000 6942). EAP Counsellors (010 133 0525) are also available 24 hours per day, 7 days per week to offer counselling and support.



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