

7 Essentials for Protecting People (and Yourself) During the Holidays and Beyond

The end of the year often brings extra stress, tight deadlines, and emotional fatigue. This checklist is designed to help you support your team (and yourself) during the transition to a successful year ahead.

1: SPOT THE SIGNALS

- Pay attention to changes in energy, behavior, and/or tone: they're potential signs of stress or mental health challenges.
- Burnout develops when stress builds over time. So, check in with staff early! ("You don't seem like your usual self.")

2: FOCUS ON CONNECTION

- Equip people leaders to notice signs of stress and approach mental health conversations confidently.
- Use proven frameworks like *R U Okay?* or guidance from your employee assistance program (EAP) to structure conversations.

3: MODEL RIPPLE BEHAVIORS

- Lead by example with healthy work habits.
- Remind leaders that more is caught than taught: how you handle stress, set boundaries, and approach setbacks sets the tone for your entire team.

4: CELEBRATE THE WINS

- Recognize accomplishments from the year.
- Revisit and respect individual recognition preferences.
- Remember: dopamine doesn't have to equal dollars; simple can be sufficient!

5: MAKE RECHARGING THE NORM

- Use language and frameworks that make rest part of the culture (i.e. Dr. Sahar Yousef's *3M Framework*).
- Promote micro-breaks: short pauses that help reset focus and energy.

6: PROMOTE HEALTHY GOAL SETTING

- Reflect on the goal-setting process: what worked, what didn't, and how can you improve?
- Check next year's goals for attainability: use past data and team input to ensure a healthy stretch.
- Normalize revisiting and revising goals.

7: SUPPORT YOUR SUPPORTERS

- Check in regularly with those in high-empathy or caregiving roles and acknowledge secondary/vicarious stress.
- Connect staff to resources, such as your EAP, for support.
- Personally connect with resources as needed!

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