

Happy Hour - Wellness in the Contact Center

We live in a busy, non-stop world. With everything that's on our plates, it's no wonder that health can fall to the bottom of our priority lists. But we shouldn't wait until our stress reaches a breaking point for us to consider our wellness.

Jenny Dempsey is a Social Media and Customer Experience Manager at NumberBarn and a health coach at [Jenny Dempsey Wellness](#). Years in the customer service industry as an agent, director and everything in between showed her how important wellness in contact centers is. Now, in addition to her position at NumberBarn, she hosts wellness workshops, where she tells busy professionals how and why they need to take better care of themselves.

Jenny shared tips about why wellness in the workplace is a necessary component of self-care, and how we all can (and should!) practice it. Thanks to her time in the customer service industry, Jenny's advice is optimized for contact centers. To start, let's define what workplace wellness means.

What is Workplace Wellness?

Jenny defines workplace wellness as “humans being human in the workplace”. This means that we need to recognize our “different states of being” and not expect ourselves or others to be robotic, emotionless workers. The customer service industry provides the wonderful opportunity of connecting with others, whether through a phone call, social media inquiry, email or other media. When we give ourselves permission to be human, we can better connect with people who have sought out answers to a problem they're having.

Contact Center Wellness Tips

The question is: How do we create a culture of workplace wellness so that we can thrive and, as Jenny says, “Take the best care of others by taking the best care of yourself”? Start by following these tips Jenny recommended to help you care for your emotional, social and physical wellness at work.

Emotional:

- Use mindfulness: Take breaks to notice your surroundings and how they're affecting you.
- Journal: If you find yourself in a stressful moment, take the next free opportunity you have to write about it and how it's impacting you.
- Research: Many companies offer assistance for challenges with emotional health. If your emotional health is in a negative place, look into what help your healthcare plan provides.

Social:

- Find individuals who listen to your concerns and frustrations, and do the same for them.
- Avoid being a “people-pleaser”. Jenny says, “Ask yourself: Are you giving too much to others?”. It's wonderful to help people, but it shouldn't be at the expense of your own

wellness. You're a better friend and colleague when you're not trying to be everything to everyone.

- Use your break time to connect with others—outside of your screen. In-person workplace relationships are important.

Physical:

- Contact centers are notoriously busy, but it's still important to get out of your chair and get some physical activity. Jenny suggests starting small and asking yourself how much activity you can realistically fit into your day. After doing the smallest amount possible, see if you have time to do more. You might have to schedule it in, but your mind and body will thank you.
- Use an app to remind you to move.
- Stretch. This can easily be done at your desk—you can even do it while helping a customer on the phone!

How to Implement Workplace Wellness as a Boss

Great bosses want their employees to be happy and healthy. A “supportive, safe environment” is achieved when managers and supervisors support it being that way. To make this a reality, Jenny shares that it's important to “have conversations about workplace wellness and realize that we're all people with different needs”. Bosses should ask, “How can we support the customer but also the agent?” and put themselves in the agent's shoes.

Effects of Healthy/Unhealthy Work Environments

Jenny notes that ignoring the need for workplace wellness can lead to “more people reaching their limit, brains getting fried and people being generally disgruntled and not being their true selves.” Contrastingly, a workplace that emphasizes wellness as an integral part of the employee experience will be “thriving”. Success starts from the inside, and when employees are happy, so are their customers.

Now what?

If you don't work in a contact center that supports workplace wellness, there are still many ways you can improve your emotional, social and physical health. Start by enacting one of the tips above. You can also consider making a suggestion to your manager about how they can better focus on wellness in the contact center.