

Workplace well-being

Approaches to psychological wellness among staff

Comfort coping: Individual actions to distract from distress and numb the emotional response

- Often messaged as “self-care” focused on consumption, abandon and excess
- Avoidance strategies, especially when overused or taken to their logical extremes, are not necessarily health-promoting and sometimes unhealthy
- Examples: alcohol and drug use, sleeping outside of a typical routine, shopping sprees, comfort food binges

Self-care: Individual routines that bolster long-term emotional and physical stores

- Easy to abandon in favor of avoidance strategies
- These “unsexy” daily activities typically promote health or maintain it
- Examples: meditation, regular physical activity, drinking adequate amounts of water

Social support: Caring actions of others intended to mitigate stress

- Sometimes called “love languages,” though not only provided by intimate partners
- Social support is in the eye of the beholder – it only promotes health if the person receiving it considers it supportive
- Examples: advice, encouragement, empathetic listening, gifts

Staff care: System changes to proactively reduce and eliminate workplace stressors

- Address common, structural causes of stress in the profession and/or building. A prevention orientation implies that planning processes for structural workplace changes will examine potential impact on staff stressors
- To sustainably promote health in the long-term, staff care measures should be designed in conjunction with staff and/or their union
- Examples: coordinating volunteer support, improving working conditions, increasing full-time support staff, scheduling breaks