

SUPPORTING PROSECUTORS AND ADVOCATES: PRACTICAL WELLNESS TOOLS

Prosecutors and advocates working with people impacted by crime often face intense and sustained emotional demands, placing them at high risk for burnout, secondary trauma, and stress. The cumulative toll of high caseloads and repeated exposure to traumatic events can impact staff retention, case outcomes, morale, and overall wellbeing. Leadership that recognizes these challenges and actively promotes employee wellness policies and practices can foster a healthier and more resilient workplace.

Benefits may include increased staff retention, better case outcomes, and higher morale. What feels supportive or restorative can vary across individuals and teams. Leadership can best understand staff needs and concerns through surveys in order to tailor activities to create a more supportive and mentally healthy workplace.

The following are examples of practices that can be implemented.



Guide



Outcome 1:

Helps physical symptoms of stress (eg. reducing blood pressure or heart rate, de-escalates stress hormones, increases endorphins)



Outcome 2:

Fosters team-building, staff morale, and group bonding



Outcome 3:

Improves overall physical and mental health



Outcome 4:

Improves individual job performance (memory function, ability to focus, etc)



Outcome 5:
















































Expands staff perception of their role in the office/puts work experience into a bigger context









Outcome 6:

Role-models wellness, reinforces wellness as an office priority, destigmatizes self-care

Mindfulness & Decompression

-  **Host a health/wellness fair at the office**   
-  **Schedule office therapy dog visits**    
-  **Explore breathing activities**   
-  **Create quiet/calm room in office for decompression**   
-  **Begin staff meetings with short wellness activities**      
-  **Incorporate vicarious trauma training for staff to recognize and normalize discussions about it**   
-  **Explore options for work from home days**  
-  **Include plans for self-care in strategy & acknowledge the impact (reviewing videos, sensitive interviews etc.)**     
-  **Debrief after a case. Review what went well, what could change in the future, what they felt good about, what felt different**    
-  **Introduce “focus” games that allow the mind to relax**    

Leadership & Office Culture

	Encourage cross-role collaboration (e.g legal & admin staff as a team)	  
	Begin staff meetings with short wellness activities	     
	Start/end a staff meeting with sharing one good thing	  
	Where/when possible, meet in person	 
	Promote conversations by leadership about office culture	   
	Train supervisors on how to spot burnout/work	  
	Explore opportunities with office leadership to develop a wellness committee to implement ideas and engage staff	 
	Explore policies with HR to incorporate proactive/preventative sick days as part of earned sick time	    
	Explore opportunities with office leadership to provide access to mental health professionals/EAP (on/off site)	   

Creative & Social Bonding

-  Staff contribute suggestions for an office play-list    
-  Share meals     
-  Art/paint nights    
-  Facilitate group volunteer opportunities  
-  Set up a jigsaw puzzle table    

Movement & Physical Health

-  Encourage lunch-time walking group or walking 'meetings'   
-  Physical activity (yoga classes, gym discounts, etc.)     
-  Healthy vending machines selling salads, nuts, fruits, etc.    
-  Facilitate "play" (sports team activities, board games, scavenger hunts, etc.)  