

# PROTECTION FROM HARM

*Posted on April 25, 2023*



Ensuring Protection from Harm in the workplace depends on fulfilling the needs of safety and security. This final element of the Surgeon General's Framework for Mental Health and Well-Being defines safety as protection "from physical harm, injury, illness, and death."<sup>1</sup> Security "builds on safety to include financial, and job security, given the negative effects that layoffs and job loss can have on the workers and their families."<sup>1</sup>

Successfully crafting a plan to provide safety and security relies on four primary strategies. These are: prioritizing workplace physical and psychological safety, enabling adequate rest, normalizing and supporting mental health, and ensuring policies further diversity and inclusion.

Prioritizing physical and psychological workplace safety is crucial in appreciating employees as whole individuals and in cultivating an environment where they can reach their full potential.<sup>1</sup> Psychological safety is one's ability to "speak up without the risk of being punished, retaliated against or humiliated, and without fear of these risks."<sup>1</sup> In addition to developing their own safety policies and procedures, employers may leverage partnerships like the one Bookminders enjoys with [Standing Firm](#), a nonprofit dedicated to assisting firms with policies and resources that can mitigate partner violence.

Enabling adequate rest and normalizing/supporting mental health are also important elements in providing for Protection from Harm. Research shows that fatigue reduces productivity and workers with sufficient rest time are less likely to experience injury and illness.<sup>1</sup>

Making space for adequate rest time can be difficult when schedules are strenuous or rigid. To combat this, employers should consider offering greater flexibility in scheduling and workload so employees can choose what works best for them. Bookminders employees have benefited greatly from this approach. In our last bi-annual survey, 100% of our employees reported that their manager's expectations were realistic and 100% stated they were comfortable requesting changes to their workload.<sup>2</sup>

Normalizing mental health requires "validating challenges, communicating mental health and well-being as priorities, and offering both support and prevention services." In addition to Employee Assistance Programs (EAP) and insurance-related resources, employers should consider extending tools that contribute to daily wellness. As an example, Bookminders offers free premium Calm memberships to all employees and up to five of their family members. This sleep and relaxation app provides tools to enhance rest, stress management, mindfulness, and movement.

Implementing policies that extend diversity and inclusion are the final strategy in ensuring worker safety and security. "In inclusive workplace cultures all workers...feel safe to be authentic and express their feelings

because they trust that their coworkers welcome and value their unique perspectives.”<sup>1</sup> Bookmind employees identify communication, strong core values, and caring managers as corporate strengths and place our company in the top 1% of accounting/bookkeeping firms for inclusivity. This feedback suggests that work cultures rooted in strong values and guided by caring managers have an advantage in crafting policies that foster inclusion.

Learn how Bookmind Accountants like [Jennifer](#) and [Wendy](#) have leveraged our flexible work culture to create schedules that support balance and wellness in their lives. In next week’s final Wellness installment, we’ll discuss the importance of centering the Framework on **Worker Voice and Equity** and the potential impact strengthening employee wellness could have on your business.

Sources:

1. U.S. Department of Health & Human Services. (2023). Workplace Mental Health & Well-being: Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General. Workplace Mental Health & Well-Being - Current Priorities of the U.S. Surgeon General. Retrieved March 15, 2023, from <https://www.hhs.gov/surgeongeneral/priorities/workplace-well-being/index.html>
2. Bookmind Bi-Annual Employee Survey Results (2021)
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