



# August 2023: Empathy in the Workplace



***“I do not ask the wounded person how they feel, I myself become the wounded person.” – Walt Whitman***

Welcome to the **August 2023 edition of TotalWellbeing**, your guide to the **8 dimensions of wellbeing**. This month we are talking about empathy in the workplace. Empathy and compassion are the cornerstones to creating a work environment that promotes healthy interaction, positive morale, and a sense of feeling valued in the workplace. As essential as these emotional skills are, it can be tough to practice them in the heat of the moment. Check out our info and follow our tips below to help get a handle on these crucial development opportunities.

Empathy is a cornerstone of a healthy and thriving workplace, fostering a culture of understanding, support, and collaboration. When leaders and employees embrace empathy, they create an environment where individuals feel valued and heard, leading to increased job satisfaction and employee engagement. Empathy encourages open communication, allowing team members to express their thoughts, concerns, and emotions without fear of judgment. This fosters stronger relationships and builds trust among colleagues, enhancing teamwork and productivity.

Moreover, empathy plays a crucial role in conflict resolution and problem-solving. By understanding and acknowledging the perspectives and feelings of others, leaders can approach conflicts with a compassionate and constructive mindset, seeking resolutions that benefit everyone involved. When employees feel that their emotions are acknowledged and their well-being is genuinely cared for, they are more likely to be motivated and committed to their work. Ultimately, empathy in the

## ***This Month's Focus***

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[Engaging Empathy in the Workplace](#)

### ***MINESblog:***

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[7 Simple Ways to Weave Self-Care into Your Work Day](#)

[BIPOC Mental Health Awareness Month: How Community Can Help You Thrive](#)

[How to Start the Conversation About Mental Health – in the Workplace and Beyond](#)

### ***Important Links***

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workplace cultivates a positive and inclusive atmosphere, driving creativity, innovation, and overall organizational success.

Remember that if you or a household member have questions or could use help restoring or strengthening their empathy skills, MINES can help! Your EAP offers free and confidential counseling with experienced professionals, wellness coaching, online mindfulness and empathy building content, and other great resources! Plus, an online resource library full of proactive self-help tools! Visit [PersonalAdvantage](#) for helpful articles, personal development tools, a free mindfulness app, and more! Call or log in today to get connected to resources.

To your total wellbeing,  
The MINES Team

## **Reminder! You now have 24/7 Peer Support available!**

As part of your MINES EAP benefits, you will have access to Supportiv, a live peer to peer support service. Supportiv is now available 24-7-365 to all employees and household members as live, small group peer-to-peer chats across all topics. Answer just one question: “What’s your struggle?” and you’ll be instantly matched with the right peers who really get it, and a trained moderator to keep the conversation flowing. Chat as long as you want, until you feel better.

You’ll find Supportiv on the MINJES website. Or, go to [www.supportiv.com/mines](http://www.supportiv.com/mines) and click “Chat Now” to connect with peers right away!

## ***Developing Empathy and Compassion to Avoid Division in the Workplace***

The increased diversity and division in our culture these days makes empathy and compassion in the workplace an even more critical skill for employees and employers to develop. Without empathy and compassion, the workplace would be an emotional battlefield where no one would feel safe to share their ideas or concerns, ask for what they need to improve their work, or have a healthy work-life balance for fear of being fired. Empathy and compassion are the cornerstones to creating a work environment that promotes healthy interaction, positive morale, and a sense of feeling valued in the workplace. In fact, according to research conducted by McKee, David, Chaskalson, and Chussil in 2017, increased empathy impacts our work effectiveness, thereby improving our skills as workers and managers.

The general consensus among researchers is that empathy is the ability to sense another person's emotions, while also being able to imagine what someone else might be thinking or feeling. Empathy is the foundation of compassion, which is defined as the concern for the suffering or misfortune of others and a desire to alleviate that suffering. In other words, empathy is identifying and sympathizing with what the other person may be experiencing and feeling, while compassion is the act of helping that hurting person either physically and/or emotionally.

Many corporations have been utilizing employee trainings with a focus on developing the five components of emotional intelligence: self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills. Emotional intelligence is defined by the Oxford Dictionary as: "The capacity to be aware of, control, and express one's emotions, and to handle interpersonal relationships judiciously and empathetically." Although empathy is not an attribute that all people are born with, it is a skill that can be learned by using self-awareness and mindfulness to notice how our beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors affect those around us. Empathy is also gained through the process of reading non-verbal cues, such as facial expressions, tone of voice, and body language.

According to PositivePsychology.com, there are eight strategies to developing empathy:

- **Cultivate curiosity** about the people you interact with who may come from different religious, ethnic, or political backgrounds.
- **Step outside your comfort zone** and learn something new, which can foster feelings of humility and lead to empathy.
- **Ask for feedback from others** regarding your active listening and relationship skills, and identify areas that you can improve.
- **Examine how your biases** impact your capacity to empathize when you make judgments about others who are different than you.
- Spend time with others who you usually don't connect with and practice active listening to help you "**walk in their shoes.**"
- Practice having **difficult but respectful conversations** with those who have different points of view by listening without interruption and being open to new ideas.

- **Work on a shared cause** with people different than you. Research has shown this can help to heal differences and **remove biases**.
- **Expand your reading** and expose yourself to different points of view through a variety of articles, books, and newspapers.

As we become more mindful of the way we treat others, we can take responsibility for doing our part to create a more accepting and validating environment in the workplace. Developing the skill of empathy, which is a necessary step to compassion, is crucial to promoting the evolution of a supportive and thriving workplace atmosphere.

***If you or a member of your household needs assistance or guidance on any of these wellbeing topics, please call MINES & Associates, your EAP, today for free, confidential, 24/7 assistance at 800.873.7138.***

**To access past issues of *TotalWellbeing* please visit our [newsletters page](#). This newsletter is aimed at providing helpful information about various aspects of your wellbeing and then connecting it all back to important and relevant parts of everyday life. If you have any thoughts, questions, or content you would like to see covered here please get in contact with us. You can email us directly by clicking [here](#).**

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