

If you're sick, stay home!



In our busy-busy, go-go-go world, it can be tough to slow down just because you're sick. But if you're working with people while you're contagious, it's possible to do more harm than good.

Many employees don't like to call in sick, even when they really are ill and should stay home. After all, things still need to get done. And sometimes when someone's out, there's no one there to do them.

Maybe you have no choice but to count "attendance occurrences" as part of your team's employee reviews. But you can still help build a culture in which taking care of your customers and each other includes taking care of yourself when you're sick. Here's how:

- **Set a good example.** If you tell your team to stay home when they're sick but you're sneezing up a storm at work, they may not think you mean it. But if you take time off to get well, they'll know it's okay to do the same.
- **Praise self-care.** Express empathy. Encourage your staff to take time to get better. Speak highly of the choice to stay home and recover. Give permission to not feel guilty.
- **Take a load off.** Have a plan in place to cover the workload when — not if — things happen and your team members need to miss work. Advocate for staffing levels that don't pressure your team to never miss a day. That way no one will share their germs out of a sense of duty.

- **Mind the cost.** Help your employees figure out the best way to handle the risk of lost wages. Does your company offer sick pay? When does short-term disability kick in for an extended illness? Can vacation time cover a sick day? Or maybe you can offer make-up hours or overtime once they're feeling well again.

In addition to getting coworkers sick, working through an illness can reduce productivity and lead to a longer recovery time.

By creating a workplace culture that values the health and well-being of your employees, you can minimize disruptions. And as a bonus, you might just find that no one wants to leave your team.

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