IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT, BUT IT IS YOUR PROBLEM

By Peter Dunn

Chapter 1: Physical Health Discussion Questions

- What are some common signs that an employee might be struggling with a chronic health condition?

- How can managers create a safe space for employees to talk about their health concerns without fear of stigma or judgment?

- How do health-related issues like absenteeism and presenteeism affect our organization's productivity?

- What specific costs has our organization incurred due to health-related absenteeism and presenteeism?

- Do these programs holistically address the physical, mental, and emotional needs of our employees?

- Are there barriers that make it difficult for employees to seek treatment — for example, high deductibles or limited provider networks?

- What incentives could we introduce to encourage employees to take advantage of preventive healthcare and engage in healthy behaviors?

- How can we foster a culture where participation in wellness activities is celebrated rather than seen as an obligation?

- How can we measure the effectiveness of our wellness programs?

- How does investing in employee health and wellness align with our long-term business goals?

Chapter 2: Mental Health Discussion Questions

- How can we remove the stigma surrounding mental-health issues in our organization?

- What initiatives can we implement to support employees' mental well-being?

- How can we ensure managers are equipped to have these sensitive conversations?

- What signs of burnout, anxiety, or depression might be going unnoticed in our current work environment?

- In what ways might our current workplace culture unintentionally discourage vulnerability or openness?

- How can leaders model healthy boundaries and self-care without compromising authority or credibility?

- Are there aspects of our workflow, expectations, or communication practices that may be contributing to mental-health strain?

- How do we create an environment where mental-health support is proactive rather than reactive?

Chapter 3: Financial Stress Discussion Questions

- How do financial issues manifest in the workplace?

- How can we identify employees who might be struggling financially without invading their privacy?

- What resources or support can we offer to alleviate the financial stress of our employees?

- Are our current wages, benefits, and financial-education programs sufficient to help our team build financial resilience?

- How does financial stress impact employee performance, engagement, and retention in our organization?

- Are there policies or practices in place that may unintentionally worsen financial stress (e.g., unpredictable scheduling, delayed reimbursements)?

- How comfortable do employees feel discussing financial concerns with their managers or HR?

- What role should leadership play in normalizing conversations around money and financial wellness?

- How can we measure the return on investment of financial wellness initiatives?

- In what ways could we tailor financial-support programs to meet the needs of different demographics within our workforce (e.g., early career, parents, nearing retirement)?

Chapter 4: Childcare Discussion Questions

- What family-related challenges do our employees face?

- How can we better support working parents and caregivers?

- How flexible are our current policies?

- What could we change to make our workplace more accommodating for those with caregiving responsibilities?

- How can we offer flexibility for working parents without creating inequality among non-parents?

- What role should HR play in shaping household dynamics?

- How do we balance respect for family decisions with supportive workplace policies?

- How can we better leverage our insurance providers to offer modern inclusive benefits for all parents?

- How should we hold leaders accountable for modeling healthy work-life balance?

Chapter 5: Aging Parents Discussion Questions

- What percentage of our workforce is likely part of the sandwich generation — and how is that impacting their performance, well-being, and absenteeism?

- What signs should managers look for to identify employees who may be silently struggling with caregiving responsibilities?

- Do our current policies adequately support employees who need time off or flexibility to care for aging parents? If not, what's missing?

- How could flexible work options — like remote work or adjustable hours — help reduce absenteeism and burnout for caregivers?

- What mental health resources do we currently offer, and are they accessible and relevant to caregivers in our workforce?

- What are the early warning signs of burnout — and how can we train managers to recognize and respond to them?

- Could we introduce or expand financial-wellness programs — like eldercare planning or long-term-care insurance guidance — to ease financial stress for caregiving employees?

- How can we create a workplace culture where employees feel safe disclosing caregiving challenges, without fear of being seen as less committed?

- Would a caregiver-focused peer-support group reduce isolation and provide practical relief for employees balancing dual responsibilities?

- How can we measure the success of caregiving-support initiatives (e.g., absenteeism rates, satisfaction scores, retention), and how often are we collecting that data?

Chapter 6: Housing Instability Discussion Questions

- How prevalent is housing instability among our employees?

- Have we noticed any trends in absenteeism, decreased productivity, or burnout that could be linked to housing instability?

- How might housing-related stress manifest in the workplace?

- How might long commutes and rising housing costs affect employee engagement?

- Would housing-assistance programs or relocation support make a significant difference for our employees?

- What kinds of support — financial stipends, down-payment assistance, or rental subsidies — would be most practical for our organization to offer?

- What partnerships (for example, with local housing organizations or financial-wellness programs) could we explore to help employees who are dealing with housing challenges?

- How might housing instability contribute to employee turnover in our organization?

- How might housing instability affect different groups of employees (for example, lower-income workers, parents, or new hires) disproportionately?

- How can we ensure that our housing-related support is equitable?

Chapter 7: Workplace Conflict Discussion Questions

- What are common sources of workplace conflict within our organization?

- How does workplace conflict affect team dynamics and productivity?

- Do our managers have the skills and training necessary to effectively mediate conflicts between employees?

- How can we create an environment that encourages open communication, where conflicts are addressed proactively and constructively rather than allowed to escalate?

- Are there structural issues — like vague roles, misaligned incentives, or competing priorities — that might be fueling unresolved conflict on our teams?

- Do our current feedback and escalation processes make it safe and easy for employees to surface concerns before they become major issues?

- How do identity-related dynamics (race, gender, disability, etc.) factor into the way conflict is experienced and resolved in our workplace?

- What signals — like passive-aggressive behavior, disengagement, or sudden drops in collaboration — might indicate underlying conflict that isn't being voiced?

Chapter 8: Career Stagnation Discussion Questions

- Do our employees have clear paths for career growth?

- How do we support their professional development?

- Are we providing the mentorship and opportunities necessary for our people to thrive?

- How well do we communicate our company's mission and values to our employees?

- How can we ensure each team member sees the impact of their work?

- Are there opportunities for employees to grow, learn, and assume roles that align with their passions and skills?

- How can we better support their personal and professional growth?

- What changes can we make to connect each employee's day-to-day tasks to the broader goals of the company to ensure they feel a sense of purpose?