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Recovery, Mental Health, and Social Benefits

Weekends are very busy for a lot of people, they usually spend the weekend running errands, doing homework, and cleaning. For many, they use the weekends as a catch-up from the week that they just had. It is important to make sure that you can recover from your weekday stressors. When deciding what to write this paper about, it came to mind to write about the benefits of three-day weekends over the traditional two-day weekend. Three-day weekends are better for American workplaces and society because it allows people time to improve their physical and mental health. Having a four-day working week can allow time to de-stress and not have a rushed weekend.

Mental and physical health is vital for personal growth. Weekdays are very stressful for many. It can be hard balancing work life with personal life, and finding time to recover is the solution for this struggle. In the article *Embracing Work Breaks: Recovery from Work Stress*, the authors go into detail about the benefits of recovery. “Employees who do not completely recover during the weekend...are at an increased risk for depressive symptoms, fatigue, energy loss, and cardiovascular disease.” (Demskey, 2013) It is important to give yourself time to rest and refuel your body and mind. Because many workplaces have limited break time and limited vacation days, it is important to find the time to effectively recover. This article talked about the difference between recovering activities versus recovery experiences, where recovery activities

can be an act of what you do, while recovery experiences are how you feel when doing these activities. You can go on a walk to try and recover, however, if you do not detach yourself from the thoughts of your work life you may not find the true peace of your recovery. You would look at your walk more as a task instead of experiencing the recovery.

As important as recovery is, your mental health is just as important. In fact, these two subjects tie hand in hand. Mental illness has never been as prevalent as it is in today's world. Workplace mental health should be addressed accordingly, as it is a big stressor for many working adults and teenagers. Recovery can help benefit mental health. By taking time to recover and reset your mind and body, it allows you time to get in tune with yourself. In the article, *“Workplace Mental Health: Developing an Integrated Approach”*, the authors talked about ways to prevent harm, promote positivity, and how to manage mental illnesses. The first step to improving your mental health within the workplace would be limiting yourself to the amount of exposure to job stressors that you face. Finding time to recover and take breaks is important because it can make you more focused and more efficient. The more efficient and focused that you are will lead to a more positive work environment.

Having a more positive work environment not only helps the employers but the employees that work at the company too. Working on making a work environment more positive will positively influence adult socialization, help the development of one's identity, and will help build social connections within the workplace. It is just as important to find connections in your work environment as it is in your personal life. This will allow you to find workplace wellbeing. “Wellbeing is more than the absence of ill-health but the presence of positive feelings and functioning.” (LaMontagne, 2014) Having that social connection with your co-workers can allow you to have more stability with work, relationships, and yourself.

While having work-related relationships is important, it is also good to find time to make connections within your personal life. Personal relationships allow you to have a more rounded lifestyle and can allow you to find interests outside of work. Meaning that you will be thinking less about your career outside of working and you can find recovery methods more effective. Having social connections can also improve your physical health as well as your mental health. In an article about social connections, “Social Relationships and Health: A Flashpoint for Health Policy.”, they talk about the three aspects of social ties influence on health. The authors, Umberson and Montez, inform about the behavioral, psychosocial, and physiological benefits of social relationships. The benefits can be improved mental health, as well as physical health and improvement of health habits. In fact, people are more at risk of death than those who do have social ties to their friends and community. The behavioral impact of social connection can help create a sense of responsibility to yourself and help establish a health concern for others. Some of the psychosocial benefits would be having that social support from your friends and family and even just those peers in a local community. Another psychosocial benefit is the improvement of mental health. “For instance, the emotional support provided by social ties enhances psychological well-being, which, in turn, may reduce the risk of unhealthy behaviors and poor physical health” (Umberson and Montez, 2010) And finally, the physiological benefits of having social ties within a community, would be a healthier lifestyle. These healthier lifestyles can benefit your immune and endocrine system, as well as your cardiovascular functions. “Social support in adulthood reduces physiological responses such as cardiovascular reactivity to both anticipated and existing stressors” (Umberson and Montez, 2010) Meaning, having that social support and being able to talk to someone that you trust, can help reduce one's stress levels,

meaning the way your body reacts to stress is minor compared to those who don't have any social support.

In conclusion, it is very important to recover from your weekday stressors. It is important to find time to rest, focus on your mental health, and find time to spend time with friends and family. There are many ways to effectively recover from stress, and finding ways to detach your work life from your personal life is important for your mental health. Compartmentalizing your life is important to one's recovery journey.

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