



CASE STUDY

BODY, MIND, AND SPIRIT:

HILTON'S COMPREHENSIVE, DATA-DRIVEN
APPROACH TO WORKFORCE MENTAL
HEALTH AND WELL-BEING FOR ALL

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AT A GLANCE

Hilton is a leading global hospitality company, spanning 8,600 hotels and resorts across 139 countries and territories. Hilton has welcomed more than 3 billion guests to its properties since its founding in 1919.

Hilton represents a large workforce of half a million team members who operate in a complex global ecosystem of varying roles and locations. Some team members work across the hospitality leader's corporate operations; some are based at managed and owned hotels; and some work at franchise properties and are not directly employed by Hilton.

Regardless if team members work at a managed, owned, or franchised hotel, Hilton prioritizes a “for all” approach. Supporting mental health and well-being across Hilton requires thoughtful coordination, driven by the company's founding purpose to “spread the light and warmth of hospitality” across the globe. This purpose guides everything Hilton does, from how it approaches customer service and workplace culture to how it designs programs supporting workforce mental health and well-being.

Underpinning the success of Hilton's mental health efforts are the following key strategies:

- » Taking a comprehensive approach to focus on “whole human” well-being, not just mental health.
- » Leading with data and following with results.
- » Supporting workers in their moments of need.

And Hilton's approach has paid off. In 2024:

- » **88%** of hotel-based Hilton team members said they feel balanced and healthy.
- » **85%** of Hilton team members reported they were comfortable discussing mental health and well-being with their manager, a significant increase since the question was initially asked in 2022. This is a testament to the success of Hilton's mental health and well-being efforts.

“At Hilton, we see a clear connection between our purpose, our culture, and our business performance. When we make investments in programs and benefits that support our team members' mental health and well-being, it allows our team members to perform at their best. That helps our team members better serve our guests and impacts our overall business.”

— Lora Lawler, Senior Vice President, Total Rewards and HR Technology, Hilton



TAKING A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH

Companies can often fall into the trap of approaching mental health programs one-dimensionally, leading to offerings that may address some needs but fail to address overall root causes at the core of workers' mental health and well-being challenges. In contrast, the "Thrive at Hilton" program, launched in 2017, focuses on multiple dimensions of well-being, including body, mind, and spirit, to meet the broad needs of Hilton's nearly half a million team members.

"We believe in order for our team members to thrive, we believe it requires not just support of their physical well-being, but also their mental and spiritual health," said Amanta Mazumdar, vice president, Total Rewards, at Hilton. "We intentionally organized our Thrive at Hilton program by body, mind, and spirit, with the recognition that in order to be well, you have to be well across all three of those dimensions."

Organizing the Thrive at Hilton offerings around these three key areas allows the company to ensure each aspect of team members' well-being receives the attention it deserves and that there are resource offerings designed to meet each need.



To evaluate whether its offerings were comprehensively meeting team members' needs, Hilton held focus group interviews across its workforce to discuss mental health and uncover root causes contributing to mental health challenges. Leaders discovered that caregiving support challenges were a key issue impacting their team members' mental health. "While we already had child care resources available, we were hearing from team members that they weren't just taking care of children, but they were also taking care of a neighbor or a friend, or in the most common case, an elderly parent," Mazumdar said.

In response, Hilton introduced a third-party caregiving concierge service that provides a care navigator who can help team members navigate caregiving logistics. Through this service, team members can access personalized support to help tackle the logistical and administrative tasks of caregiving and more in nearly 20 languages. Upon registration, team members are matched to a personalized and dedicated care coordinator, who helps with a variety of tasks, such as identifying the right in-home aide, handling a move into an assisted living facility, evaluating and recommending babysitters and nanny agencies, coordinating daily tasks for aging seniors, contesting medical bills, finding support for veterans, and more. The benefit is available to full-time and part-time Hilton team members in the U.S., U.K., and Ireland across the company's corporate, managed, and owned properties.



This investment is paying off:

- » **80%** of team members who have used this caregiving benefit report feeling less stressed.
- » **60%** report they were able to avoid missing work because of the help they received.
- » Hilton estimates that team members have collectively saved **24,000 hours** of time by using the service.

While not a typical “mental health” benefit, this resource has helped both hotel-based and corporate team members deal with caregiving stress and time demands that were compromising their mental health. The benefit complements a suite of [additional caregiving benefits](#) offered to team members, whether they are caring for themselves, a parent, a child, or a pet.

Over the past five years, Hilton has acted to enhance and expand the Thrive at Hilton program offerings. For example, recognizing the burden that rising health care costs can have on its employees, Hilton worked to reduce co-pays for behavioral health visits to \$5 for most of its health plans. This action enabled team members to seek mental health care for themselves and their families without concern that cost would present a major impediment.



LEADING WITH DATA AND FOLLOWING WITH RESULTS

Most organizations generally recognize the importance of leading with data when making the case for new investments in mental health or any other kind of benefit. However, while many organizations may recognize the need to gather data to inform initial investment decisions, few are diligent about assessing the impact of these investments after they are made.

17%

Only **17%** of HR professionals say their organization assesses the effectiveness of its mental health resources.¹

85%

Organizations that evaluate the effectiveness of their mental health resources are significantly more likely to say their mental health initiatives demonstrate a return on investment (**85% versus 33%**).²

What sets Hilton apart is its commitment to using data not only to guide initial decisions on Thrive at Hilton offerings but also to track and evaluate outcomes after these resources are implemented, ensuring a positive return on these investments over time. “Every quarter we look at our programs, and we are aggressive about what is not working and what we need to cut. The more we can be data-driven about what we’re trying to do, the better,” Mazumdar said.

Hilton relies on an array of external data — such as industry trends, academic research, and competitive benchmarking — and internal data — such as team member surveys, feedback, and aggregated claims data — to identify trends and determine how the company can more effectively support workforce needs.³

Hilton has also been adamant about incorporating feedback, data, and external trend information into its mental health strategy. “There are a million different services that you can offer, and where they often fail is if you don’t hold vendors accountable on what you want your customer experience to be,” Mazumdar said.

By evaluating vendor feedback in conjunction with other sources, such as team member feedback, Hilton can better ensure it is allocating resources efficiently, investing in programs that are most effective for its team members, and reducing unnecessary expenditures on less impactful programs. This strategic use of various data sources allows Hilton to stay nimble and adapt its approach as necessary to best meet team members’ needs.

¹ Belonging and Mental Health in the Workplace, SHRM Executive Network, October 2022.

² Ibid.

³ Notably, organizations may already have access to some of these data sources but are not using them to inform their work.



For example, Hilton's Total Rewards team learned that its existing employee assistance program (EAP) was not delivering the level of access to mental health professionals that team members needed. The data showed that team members were having to wait from a week to up to a month to see a clinician — a potentially troubling wait time for any kind of health concern and especially where a mental health issue is involved. As Hilton researched new EAP options, it spoke with other large companies that had successfully tackled this issue. By leading with data and following with results, Hilton's Total Rewards team was able to make the business case for a more modern EAP provider that:

- » Expanded its network to include **9,000** new mental health professionals.
- » Reduced team members' median wait times for appointments down to **0.8** days.
- » Improved team members' well-being, with **85%** of those who have used the EAP provider indicating improvement in their mental health.



SUPPORTING WORKERS IN THEIR MOMENTS OF NEED

Many organizations offer useful mental health resources but often only educate their workforce about those offerings during the onboarding period or when a new resource is launched. Consequently, employees may forget they have access to these valuable resources when they need them the most.

67%

of U.S. workers are unaware or only somewhat aware of the mental health resources their organization provides.⁴

55%

of U.S. workers say their organization offers too few resources to support their mental health.⁵

In contrast, Hilton proactively recognized the need to increase team members' awareness of the company's mental health offerings to support team members in moments of need. With a global workforce including corporate, managed, and franchised team members the company had to think creatively and strategically about how to accomplish this goal. "One of our biggest challenges when putting our mental health and well-being resources out is there are so many benefits available in our ecosystem. And for the vast majority of team members, they don't really think about benefits until they need them," Mazumdar said. "And layer on top of that the fact that we are in many ways a decentralized company."

To ensure team members are well-informed about the resources available to them and understand how to access these tools during times of need, Hilton highlights specific benefits through internal communications at key points throughout the year, utilizing multiple channels to disseminate messages. For example, rather than overwhelming team members with comprehensive benefits information in a single sitting, every month, Hilton's U.S.-based Total Rewards team sends a note highlighting mental health resources focused on one central theme (e.g., family-friendly benefits) to all of its HR partners at the company's U.S. hotels. Hilton and its HR partners use several channels of communication to share this information, including postcards sent to homes, electronic bulletin boards at hotels, and start-of-shift briefings. Hilton also holds office hours with its HR partners to help answer onsite team members' questions.

Further, Hilton recognized that team members have varying availability, capacity, and comfort levels when it comes to engaging with the company's mental health offerings. To address these challenges, Hilton launched a mental health education program in 2023, offering tools consumable within different time intervals — from 2-minute tip sheets to 5-to-10-minute videos to 45-minute webinars on timely and relevant mental health topics. Offering varied resources ensured that time was not a major barrier to team members' access to the help they needed.

By meeting workers where they are:

- » Hilton educated **4,500** team members via live mental health webinars on relevant and timely mental health topics in the last 12 months.
- » Among those who attended, **99%** said they found something they could take back and learn from.
- » On average, users rated their satisfaction a **4.77 out of 5** (n=639).

⁴ Employee Mental Health in 2024: A Research Series, SHRM, 2024.

⁵ Ibid.



Tip Sheet: Stress Management

It is important to note stress is a natural response to challenging or overwhelming situations but can have detrimental effects on our health. Stress management refers to techniques and strategies used to cope with and reduce the negative effects of stress on physical, mental, and emotional wellbeing. It is important to find productive ways to manage stress levels and take steps to prevent chronic stress.

3 Quick Tips

1. **Identify the source and symptoms:** Stress can be caused by a variety of things, and it is important to be aware of what is causing it and recognize specific factors. By identifying the root cause, you can take steps to address or minimize them. Learn common [sources](#) of stress.
2. **Practice self-care:** Take time to nurture yourself and engage in activities that promote self-care. Learn to say no when you have too much on your plate to concentrate on self-care. Self-care permits you to step away from stress and responsibilities and focus on activities that bring you joy. Explore different types of [self-care activities](#) to aid you in reducing stress.
3. **Focus on time management:** Learn to prioritize tasks and manage time effectively by consistently planning and controlling your time. Breaking tasks into smaller steps and pieces reduces feelings of stress. Explore [strategies](#) for time management.

“Creating products and programs that truly work for all team members is essential if we’re to ensure a positive experience. In order for our team members to feel empowered and valued, we need to have the products and services that help them get there. Not only do we feel good about the number of people accessing the resources we offer, but we also feel good about the quality of the resources we’re providing.”

— Amanta Mazumdar, Vice President, Total Rewards, Hilton



RECOMMENDATIONS FOR BUSINESSES

Hilton's approach to supporting mental health at work offers insights for other employers:

- » ***Design programs that address mental health and well-being more comprehensively, and ensure your programs work for all.*** Acknowledging the connection between physical, mental, social, and emotional health enables organizations to design targeted resources that support employees at every stage of their well-being journey.
- » ***Look beyond “traditional” mental health benefits to address overlooked areas of well-being.*** By expanding their focus beyond conventional offerings, employers can identify and prioritize lesser-known yet crucial factors that impact employees' mental health.
- » ***Use data to build stronger business cases for mental health investments.*** Harnessing data to inform decisions on mental health investments empowers HR teams to create stronger business cases for their offerings.
- » ***Assess mental health programs routinely to keep them effective and relevant.*** Regular assessment and feedback mechanisms provide built-in opportunities for organizations to revisit their mental health and well-being programs on a regular basis, ensuring these programs remain effective and relevant.
- » ***Utilize various data sources to assess programs and hold vendors and partners accountable.*** Using various internal and external data sources, including employee surveys, vendor data, industry trends, and academic research, allows companies to assess their programs and hold service providers accountable.
- » ***Provide frequent opportunities for workers to learn about available resources.*** Offering frequent opportunities for employees to learn about the mental health and well-being resources available to them allows them to access essential tools when needed.
- » ***Curate a mix of resources for varying availabilities, capacities, and comfort levels.*** A curated mix of mental health resources can be more useful and relevant to a larger portion of employees in their moments of need.



RESOURCES

» **Taking a Comprehensive Approach**

The U.S. Surgeon General's Framework for Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being can guide leaders in thinking through what comprehensive mental health and well-being can look like at their organization.

» **Leading with Data and Following with Results**

SHRM Foundation's Field Guide for Mental Health in Your Workplace: From Evaluation to Action equips workplace leaders to think through important questions from assessment and implementation, all the way to measurement and impact.

» **Supporting Workers in Their Moments of Need**

SHRM's Workplace Mental Health Ally Certificate equips HR professionals and people managers to understand critical mental health topics and identify appropriate approaches to help.





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