



OUT OF OFFICE
GONE FISHING!



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Managers Managing Stress in 2022

The last few years have been extremely challenging in many ways, especially as we have learned to adapt to a world turned upside down by Covid and how it has drastically changed our daily lives. Hopefully, one lesson we can take away from this is the importance of work/life balance. Burnout and stress are two words that continually pop up all over the news and various social media sites, such as LinkedIn. There are thousands of articles out there that claim to have tips and tricks to reduce stress.

With many people working from home, we have lost the ability to turn off and be fully present at home. The majority of us have demanding jobs that require us to log in after hours. We have workstations set up at home, smartphones and watches, and other electronics that ensure

we can log in at all times. The typical “9-5” job is rare these days. While this benefits us to work remotely and check in whenever we are up against an important deadline, it also means that our homes become an extension of the office.

As many people worked from home during the pandemic, the feedback was mixed. Benefits included flexibility and lack of commute, but there were also many drawbacks. Employees missed the social time and human connections of a typical office setting. Many people described the loneliness and disconnect they felt, being at home all of the time. Both introverted and extroverted people have noted that they have become far less social and have lost motivation. Employees struggled with mental health issues, and reports of substance abuse and suicides rose.

While the pandemic has arguably had the most significant impact on mental health, there have been other obstacles in the last few years—economic uncertainty, frustration with lockdowns, labour shortages, and major project delays, to name a few. Many people are terrified of the economy, with housing prices rapidly increasing and inflation. The world is witnessing horror and chaos in Ukraine, and many feel helpless and depressed.

Covid had made the job of property management more complex than ever – burnout in our industry is rampant. Budgeting has become more complicated, with costs rising and difficulties keeping condominium fees low. Lockdowns have caused many delays and made it virtually impossible to plan ahead.

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A few lessons I have learned are the importance of being mindful and setting boundaries. The world can seem like an overwhelming place these days, so it is crucial to develop strategies to decompress and unwind. Setting boundaries is critical – everyone must be able to disconnect from work. There are several ways to do this – only allowing yourself to check emails and work during an allotted time each evening, communicating with colleagues and peers to develop best practices, and encouraging and fostering a healthy work environment. As a leader, employees need to know that they can come to you when they feel overwhelmed or struggling with the workload. Sharing tips for decompressing at work has really made a difference in my workplace. I always encourage my peers to take breaks throughout the day – stop and go for a walk or a drive to grab a coffee or chat with colleagues. Discussing mental health in the workplace is also extremely important.

There are some other tricks I have come across that I find helpful in stressful and overwhelming times. Listening to music or watching a movie are great distractions. Playing sports and getting exercise are

great stress relievers. It can be tough to find the motivation to get moving after a long day of work, but it definitely helps clear the mind and blow off steam. Creative outlets are also helpful – some people write journals or paint. Being social is a great way to unwind, especially now that more places are open and there is more to do. With the nice weather coming, I look forward to spending more time outdoors and having BBQs with friends and family. There are so many spots to explore in Ontario and Quebec, and the fresh air is one of the best ways to relax and get a new perspective.

The last few years have been unprecedented, and we have a lot to learn from these significant changes. I hope that we all continue to work together to address mental health struggles and tactics to assist those who need it. ■

Noah Johnston, RCM, is the Director of Condominium Management at Sentinel, where he oversees their team of property managers focusing on development and education. Noah is a passionate leader who helps his entire team reach their maximum potential and have fun. sentinelmanagement.com

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