

POPULATION HEALTH &
WELL-BEING

Seven Ways to Foster Employee Connection throughout the Holiday Season

By Rachel Jensen, MBA, CWP, Consultant,
Population Health & Well-Being



The holiday season is often a time of celebration, joy and togetherness with family and loved ones. Yet, for many, the bright lights and festive gatherings can intensify feelings of loneliness and isolation. According to the American Psychiatric Association, nearly one in three adults report feeling lonely at least once a week, and 10% experience loneliness daily.¹

Humans thrive on a variety of social connections, not just deep relationships with family and close friends, but also casual interactions with colleagues, neighbors and acquaintances. These “weak ties,” built through water cooler chats or friendly virtual greetings before meetings, play a vital role in fostering a sense of belonging.²

Employers who prioritize psychological safety and connection in the workplace often see improvements in both productivity and employee well-being.² This holiday season and throughout the year, organizations have a unique opportunity to help employees feel more connected and supported.

Seven Ways Employers can Help:

1

Host In-Person or Virtual Holiday Gatherings

Organize events like team lunches, virtual game shows, gingerbread house decorating or escape rooms. These activities encourage employees to connect outside of their usual routines, sparking new conversations and strengthening team bonds.

2

Promote Employee Recognition

Use your employee recognition platform or send personalized gratitude emails. Launch an end-of-year campaign to celebrate contributions. Expressing appreciation benefits both the sender and the recipient, reinforcing a culture of connection.

3

Launch Team Challenges

End the year with a team-based challenge—whether focused on fitness, well-being, reading or another shared goal. The collaborative nature of these challenges helps maintain connection and motivation during the holidays.

4 Promote Time Off When Possible

If the holiday season allows for a slower pace, encourage employees to take vacation days to spend meaningful time with loved ones. For teams experiencing peak workloads during the holidays, support time off once the busy period subsides. A well-rested team returns more engaged, energized and ready to contribute.

5 Give Back Together

Organize volunteer opportunities, such as helping at a local food bank. For remote employees, offer paid time off to contribute to their communities, schools and other organizations.

6 Show Leadership Support

Senior leaders can foster trust by sharing video messages or personal reflections. Mid-level managers can recognize team achievements through holiday cards or shout-outs during meetings.

7 Promote Mental Health Resources

Remind employees of available support, such as Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs) offering mental health coaching or counseling. These resources can help individuals navigate loneliness, set boundaries and manage seasonal stress.



By utilizing these ideas, employers can help to further create a workplace culture that values holistic well-being, including connection and mental health which is essential for both individual and organizational success. By prioritizing connection, whether employees are onsite, remote or hybrid, employers can help ease feelings of isolation and build a more resilient, engaged workforce. Even small moments of connection can have a lasting impact. Let's make this holiday season one of inclusion, gratitude and meaningful engagement.

¹ [New APA Poll: One in Three Americans Feels Lonely Every Week.](#)

² [A sense of belonging is crucial for employees. How employers can foster connection and social support.](#)



About the Author



Rachel Jensen, MBA, CWP

Consultant, Population Health & Well-Being

Rachel Jensen serves as a Consultant, Population Health & Well-Being and works with customers within the corporate well-being space. Her focus is program strategy, communication and analysis that helps build positive workplace cultures. Prior to joining Brown & Brown she worked at Unite Us, managing large health plan accounts and ensuring members had equitable access to quality care and address social determinants of health. She also spent nearly seven years at Cigna, with much of her time as a Senior Engagement Consultant. Rachel earned her Bachelor of Science degree in Health Promotion and Wellness from the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point and her MBA from Rollins College.



Find Your Solution at [BBrown.com](https://www.BBrown.com)

Brown & Brown, Inc. and all its affiliates, do not provide legal, regulatory or tax guidance, or advice. If legal advice counsel or representation is needed, the services of a legal professional should be sought. The information in this document is intended to provide a general overview of the topics and services contained herein. Brown & Brown, Inc. and all its affiliates, make no representation or warranty as to the accuracy or completeness of the document and undertakes no obligation to update or revise the document based upon new information or future changes.