

wellness questionnaire for employees

Wellness Questionnaire for Employees: A Comprehensive Guide to Building a Healthier Workplace

Are you ready to cultivate a thriving, healthier workforce? Investing in your employees' well-being isn't just a nice-to-have; it's a crucial strategy for boosting productivity, reducing absenteeism, and fostering a positive work environment. A well-designed wellness questionnaire for employees is the first step towards understanding your team's needs and tailoring effective wellness programs. This comprehensive guide will walk you through creating and implementing a successful wellness questionnaire, ensuring you gather valuable insights to improve your employees' health and happiness. We'll cover everything from crafting effective questions to analyzing the results and implementing actionable strategies. Let's dive in!

Why a Wellness Questionnaire for Employees is Essential

Before jumping into the specifics of creating your questionnaire, let's underscore the importance of this initiative. A robust wellness questionnaire for employees provides invaluable data that helps you:

Identify prevalent health concerns: Understanding the specific health challenges your employees face (physical, mental, or emotional) allows you to target your wellness programs effectively. Are stress levels high? Are employees struggling with sleep? A questionnaire can uncover these hidden issues.

Tailor programs to specific needs: Generic wellness programs often fall flat. By collecting data through a questionnaire, you can create targeted initiatives that directly address the specific needs of your workforce. This ensures a higher engagement rate and better results.

Measure the effectiveness of wellness initiatives: A pre- and post-questionnaire approach allows you to track the impact of your wellness programs. This data-driven approach helps you refine your strategies and demonstrate the return on investment (ROI) of your wellness initiatives.

Improve employee engagement and morale: Showing a genuine commitment to your employees' well-being fosters a stronger sense of loyalty, improves morale, and boosts overall job satisfaction.

Reduce healthcare costs: By addressing health concerns proactively, you can

potentially reduce healthcare costs associated with absenteeism, presenteeism (being present but unproductive due to illness), and chronic health conditions.

Designing Your Employee Wellness Questionnaire: Key Considerations

Creating a successful wellness questionnaire for employees requires careful planning and consideration. Here's a step-by-step guide:

1. Define Your Objectives: What specific information are you hoping to gather? Are you focusing on physical health, mental well-being, stress management, or a combination of factors? Clearly defining your goals will guide your question selection.
1. Choose the Right Format: Will you use a paper-based questionnaire, an online survey tool (like SurveyMonkey, Google Forms, or Typeform), or a combination of both? Online tools offer advantages in terms of ease of distribution, data collection, and analysis.
1. Develop Clear and Concise Questions: Use simple, straightforward language that is easy for everyone to understand. Avoid jargon or overly technical terms. Keep questions concise and focused on a single topic.
1. Mix Question Types: Incorporate a variety of question types to gather diverse data. Include multiple-choice questions, rating scales (Likert scales), open-ended questions (for qualitative feedback), and demographic questions (age, gender, department, etc.). This diverse approach provides a richer understanding of your employees' needs.
1. Ensure Confidentiality and Anonymity: Emphasize the confidentiality and anonymity of responses to encourage honest and open participation. Clearly state how the data will be used and protected.
1. Pilot Test Your Questionnaire: Before launching your questionnaire to the entire workforce, conduct a pilot test with a small group to

identify any potential issues with clarity, formatting, or flow. This helps ensure a smoother rollout and higher-quality data.

Sample Questions for Your Wellness Questionnaire

Here are some sample questions you can adapt for your own wellness questionnaire for employees:

Physical Health:

How many hours of sleep do you typically get per night?
How often do you engage in physical activity?
Do you have any chronic health conditions?
Do you consume a balanced diet?
Do you smoke or use tobacco products?

Mental Well-being:

How would you rate your overall stress levels? (Scale of 1-5)
How often do you feel overwhelmed or burnt out?
Do you feel supported by your colleagues and supervisor?
Do you have access to resources that support your mental health?
How would you rate your work-life balance?

Work-Related Well-being:

Do you feel your workload is manageable?
Do you have opportunities for professional development and growth?
Do you feel valued and appreciated in your role?
Do you feel comfortable communicating with your supervisor about concerns?
Do you have a clear understanding of your job responsibilities?

Analyzing the Results and Implementing Actionable Strategies

Once you've collected the data, it's crucial to analyze the results thoroughly. Identify trends and patterns in the responses. This analysis will inform the development of targeted wellness programs. For example, if stress levels are high, you might consider implementing stress-reduction workshops, mindfulness training, or providing access to employee assistance programs (EAPs). If employees report a lack of work-life balance, you might explore flexible work arrangements or encourage the use of vacation time.

Conclusion

Investing in a comprehensive wellness questionnaire for employees is a

strategic move that pays significant dividends. By understanding your employees' health and well-being needs, you can create targeted programs that boost productivity, reduce absenteeism, and foster a more positive and supportive work environment. Remember, building a healthy workplace is an ongoing process, and regular feedback through questionnaires is key to continuous improvement.

FAQs

1. How often should I administer a wellness questionnaire? The frequency depends on your objectives. Annual surveys are common, but more frequent assessments (e.g., quarterly or semi-annually) can provide more timely insights, especially if you're implementing new wellness initiatives.
1. How can I ensure high participation rates in my questionnaire? Make it easy to complete, keep it concise, emphasize confidentiality, promote the benefits of participation, and offer incentives (e.g., a small gift card, entry into a raffle).
1. What if employees are hesitant to disclose sensitive information? Clearly communicate the purpose of the questionnaire, emphasize the confidentiality and anonymity of responses, and assure employees that their feedback will be used to improve the workplace, not to penalize them.
1. How can I ensure the data collected is accurate and reliable? Use validated questionnaires whenever possible, pilot test your questionnaire before widespread distribution, and clearly define questions to minimize ambiguity.
1. What should I do if the results reveal serious health concerns amongst employees? Consult with HR and potentially occupational health professionals. Develop appropriate support programs and ensure access to resources, including employee assistance programs (EAPs) and mental health services.

wellness questionnaire for employees: Wellbeing at Work Jim Clifton, Jim Harter, 2021-06-01 What if the next global crisis is a mental health pandemic? It is here now. One-third of Americans have shown signs of clinical anxiety or depression, and the current state of suffering globally has risen significantly. The mental health pandemic manifests everywhere, not least in your workplace. As organizations around the world face health and social crises, as well as economic uncertainty, acknowledging and improving wellbeing in your workplace is more critical than ever. Increasingly, leaders and managers must support mental health and cultivate resilience in employees — not just increase engagement and performance. Based on more than 100 million Gallup global interviews, *Wellbeing at Work* shows you how to do just that. Coauthored by Gallup's CEO and its Chief Workplace Scientist, *Wellbeing at Work* explores the five key elements of wellbeing — career, social, financial, physical and community — and how organizations can help employees and teams thrive in those elements. The book also gives leaders ideas and action items to help employees use their innate talents and strengths to thrive in each of the wellbeing elements. And *Wellbeing at Work* introduces a metric to report a person's best possible life: Gallup Net Thriving, which will become the "other stock price" for organizations. In a world where work and life are more blended than ever, maximizing employee wellbeing takes on greater urgency. *Wellbeing at Work* shows leaders how to create a thriving and resilient culture. If you and your leaders don't change the world, who will? *Wellbeing at Work* includes a unique code to take the CliftonStrengths assessment, which reveals your top five strengths.

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wellness questionnaire for employees: *Integrating Employee Health* Institute of Medicine, Food and Nutrition Board, Committee to Assess Worksite Preventive Health Program Needs for NASA Employees, 2005-09-29 The American workforce is changing, creating new challenges for employers to provide occupational health services to meet the needs of employees. The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) workforce is highly skilled and competitive and employees frequently work under intense pressure to ensure mission success. The Office of the Chief Health and Medical Officer at NASA requested that the Institute of Medicine review its occupational health programs, assess employee awareness of and attitude toward those programs, recommend options for future worksite preventive health programs, and ways to evaluate their effectiveness. The committee's findings show that although NASA has a history of being forward-looking in designing and improving health and wellness programs, there is a need to move from a traditional occupational health model to an integrated, employee-centered program that could serve as a national model for both public and private employers to emulate and improve the health and performance of their workforces.

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Furnham, 2008-03-26 *Personality and Intelligence at Work* examines the increasingly controversial role of individual differences in predicting and determining behaviour at work. It combines approaches from organizational psychology and personality theory to critically examine the physical, psychological and psychoanalytic aspects of individual differences, and how they

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wellness questionnaire for employees: *The Handbook of Stress and Health* Cary Cooper, James Campbell Quick, 2017-02-07 A comprehensive work that brings together and explores state-of-the-art research on the link between stress and health outcomes. Offers the most authoritative resource available, discussing a range of stress theories as well as theories on preventative stress management and how to enhance well-being Timely given that stress is linked to seven of the ten leading causes of death in developed nations, yet paradoxically successful adaptation to stress can enable individuals to flourish Contributors are an international panel of authoritative researchers and practitioners in the various specialty subjects addressed within the work

wellness questionnaire for employees: *Subjective Well-Being* Panel on Measuring Subjective Well-Being in a Policy-Relevant Framework, Committee on National Statistics, Division on Behavioral and Social Sciences and Education, National Research Council, 2014-01-01 Subjective well-being refers to how people experience and evaluate their lives and specific domains and activities in their lives. This information has already proven valuable to researchers, who have produced insights about the emotional states and experiences of people belonging to different groups, engaged in different activities, at different points in the life course, and involved in different family and community structures. Research has also revealed relationships between people's self-reported, subjectively assessed states and their behavior and decisions. Research on subjective well-being has been ongoing for decades, providing new information about the human condition. During the past decade, interest in the topic among policy makers, national statistical offices, academic researchers, the media, and the public has increased markedly because of its potential for shedding light on the economic, social, and health conditions of populations and for informing policy decisions across these domains. *Subjective Well-Being: Measuring Happiness, Suffering, and Other Dimensions of Experience* explores the use of this measure in population surveys. This report reviews the current state of research and evaluates methods for the measurement. In this report, a range of potential experienced well-being data applications are cited, from cost-benefit studies of

health care delivery to commuting and transportation planning, environmental valuation, and outdoor recreation resource monitoring, and even to assessment of end-of-life treatment options. Subjective Well-Being finds that, whether used to assess the consequence of people's situations and policies that might affect them or to explore determinants of outcomes, contextual and covariate data are needed alongside the subjective well-being measures. This report offers guidance about adopting subjective well-being measures in official government surveys to inform social and economic policies and considers whether research has advanced to a point which warrants the federal government collecting data that allow aspects of the population's subjective well-being to be tracked and associated with changing conditions.

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wellness questionnaire for employees: Workplace Wellness that Works Laura Putnam, 2015-06-08 A smarter framework for designing more effective workplace wellness programs Workplace Wellness That Works provides a fresh perspective on how to promote employee well-being in the workplace. In addressing the interconnectivity between wellness and organizational culture, this book shows you how to integrate wellness into your existing employee development strategy in more creative, humane, and effective ways. Based on the latest research and backed by real-world examples and case studies, this guide provides employers with the tools they need to start making a difference in their employees' health and happiness, and promoting an overall culture of well-being throughout the organization. You'll find concrete, actionable advice for tackling the massive obstacle of behavioral change, and learn how to design and implement an approach that can most benefit your organization. Promoting wellness is a good idea. Giving employees the inspiration and tools they need to make changes in their lifestyles is a great idea. But

the billion-dollar question is: what do they want, what do they need, and how do we implement programs to help them without causing more harm than good? Workplace Wellness That Works shows you how to assess your organization's needs and craft a plan that actually benefits employees. Build an effective platform for well-being Empower employees to make better choices Design and deliver the strategy that your organization needs Drive quantifiable change through more creative implementation Today's worksite wellness industry represents a miasma of competing trends, making it nearly impossible to come away with tangible solutions for real-world implementation. Harnessing a broader learning and development framework, Workplace Wellness That Works skips the fads and shows you how to design a smarter strategy that truly makes a difference in employees' lives—and your company's bottom line.

wellness questionnaire for employees: Betting on You Laurie Ruettimann, 2021-01-12
Indispensable reading for anyone seeking to improve their professional selves. —Daniel H. Pink, #1 New York Times bestselling author of *When* An essential guide for how to snap out of autopilot and become your own best advocate, with candid anecdotes and easy-to-adopt steps, from veteran HR specialist and popular podcast host Laurie Ruettimann Chances are you've spent the past few months cooped up inside, buried under a relentless news cycle and work that never seems to switch off. Millions of us worldwide are overworked, exhausted, and trying our hardest—yet not getting the recognition we deserve. It's time for a fix. Top career coach and HR consultant Laurie Ruettimann knows firsthand that work can get a hell of a lot better. A decade ago, Ruettimann was uninspired, blaming others and herself for the unhappiness she felt. Until she had an epiphany: if she wanted a fulfilling existence, she couldn't sit around and wait for change. She had to be her own leader. She had to truly take ahold of life—the good, the bad, and the downright ugly—in order to transform her future. Today, as businesses prioritize their bottom line over employee satisfaction and workers become increasingly isolated, the need to safeguard your well-being is crucial. And though this sounds intimidating, it's easier to do than you think. Through tactical advice on how to approach work in a smart and healthy manner, which includes knowing when to sign off for the day, doubling down on our capacity to learn, fixing those finances, and beating impostor syndrome once and for all, Ruettimann lays out the framework necessary to champion your interests and create a life you actually enjoy. Packed with advice and stories of others who regained control of their lives, *Betting on You* is a game-changing must-read for how to radically improve your day-to-day, working more effectively and enthusiastically starting now.

wellness questionnaire for employees: Ask a Manager Alison Green, 2018-05-01 From the creator of the popular website Ask a Manager and New York's work-advice columnist comes a witty, practical guide to 200 difficult professional conversations—featuring all-new advice! There's a reason Alison Green has been called “the Dear Abby of the work world.” Ten years as a workplace-advice columnist have taught her that people avoid awkward conversations in the office because they simply don't know what to say. Thankfully, Green does—and in this incredibly helpful book, she tackles the tough discussions you may need to have during your career. You'll learn what to say when • coworkers push their work on you—then take credit for it • you accidentally trash-talk someone in an email then hit “reply all” • you're being micromanaged—or not being managed at all • you catch a colleague in a lie • your boss seems unhappy with your work • your cubemate's loud speakerphone is making you homicidal • you got drunk at the holiday party Praise for Ask a Manager “A must-read for anyone who works . . . [Alison Green's] advice boils down to the idea that you should be professional (even when others are not) and that communicating in a straightforward manner with candor and kindness will get you far, no matter where you work.”—Booklist (starred review) “The author's friendly, warm, no-nonsense writing is a pleasure to read, and her advice can be widely applied to relationships in all areas of readers' lives. Ideal for anyone new to the job market or new to management, or anyone hoping to improve their work experience.”—Library Journal (starred review) “I am a huge fan of Alison Green's Ask a Manager column. This book is even better. It teaches us how to deal with many of the most vexing big and little problems in our workplaces—and to do so with grace, confidence, and a sense of humor.”—Robert Sutton, Stanford

professor and author of *The No Asshole Rule* and *The Asshole Survival Guide* “Ask a Manager is the ultimate playbook for navigating the traditional workforce in a diplomatic but firm way.”—Erin Lowry, author of *Broke Millennial: Stop Scraping By and Get Your Financial Life Together*

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human resources by clearly and concisely describing the essential requirements and administrative processes necessary to comply with each regulation. It offers suggestions for protecting employers against the most common litigation threats and recommendations for handling various types of employee problems. Throughout the Guide are numerous exhibits, useful checklists and forms, and do's and don'ts. A list of HR audit questions at the beginning of each chapter serves as an aid in evaluating your company's level of regulatory compliance. In addition, Mandated Benefits 2020 Compliance Guide provides the latest information on: Family and Medical Leave Substance Abuse in the Workplace Workplace Health and Safety Recordkeeping and Documentation Integrating ADA, FMLA, Workers' Compensation, and Related Requirements Significant Developments at the EEOC Affirmative Action Plans Retirement Savings Plans and Pensions Pay Practices and Administration Health, Life, and Disability Insurance Managing the Welfare Benefits Package Human Resources Risk Management And much more! Previous Edition: Mandated Benefits 2019 Compliance Guide, ISBN 9781543800449

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wellness questionnaire for employees: Research Anthology on Changing Dynamics of Diversity and Safety in the Workforce Management Association, Information Resources, 2021-07-16 The recent COVID-19 pandemic has emphasized the importance of safety and ergonomics in the workplace. From work-life balance and mental health to risk prevention, maintaining a healthy and happy workforce has become essential for the progress of every company. Moreover, ensuring inclusive spaces has become a pillar of business with some worrying that the diversity agenda will be overshadowed by the recent pandemic. It is imperative that current research is compiled that sheds light on the advancements being made in promoting diversity and wellbeing in the modern workforce. The Research Anthology on Changing Dynamics of Diversity and Safety in the Workforce is a comprehensive reference source that provides the latest emerging research on diversity management and initiatives as well as occupational health and safety practices in the workplace. These concepts are necessary for global workplaces to remain safe, efficient, and inclusive. Covering topics such as employee equity, human resources practices, and worker wellbeing, this anthology provides an excellent resource for researchers, human resources

personnel, managers, safety officers, policymakers, CEOs, students, professors, and academicians.

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Mandated Benefits 2014 Compliance Guide is a comprehensive and practical reference manual covering key federal regulatory issues that must be addressed by human resources managers, benefits specialists, and company executives in all industries. Mandated Benefits 2014 Compliance Guide includes in-depth coverage of these and other major federal regulations: Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) Health Information Technology for Economic and Clinical Health (HITECH) Act Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act (MHPAEA) Genetic Information Nondiscrimination Act (GINA) Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Employee Retirement Income Security Act (ERISA) Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA) Heroes Earnings Assistance and Relief Tax Act (HEART Act) Consolidated Omnibus Budget Reconciliation Act (COBRA) Mandated Benefits 2014 Compliance Guide helps take the guesswork out of managing employee benefits and human resources by clearly and concisely describing the essential requirements and administrative processes necessary to comply with each regulation. It offers suggestions for protecting employers against the most common litigation threats and recommendations for handling various types of employee problems. Throughout the Guide are numerous exhibits, useful checklists and forms, and do's and don'ts. A list of HR audit questions at the beginning of each chapter serves as an aid in evaluating your company's level of regulatory compliance. The Mandated Benefits 2014 Compliance Guide has been updated to include: Updated best practices for organizing the human resources department Information on Federal Insurance Contributions Act (FICA) and severance pay New regulations and guidelines for health care reform as mandated by the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (PPACA) New information on de-identified protected health information (PHI) and the effect of the omnibus final rules on business associates and notification requirements in case of a breach of PHI Information on the revised model election notice as required under PPACA A completely revised section on the final rules implementing HIPAA's nondiscrimination requirements for wellness programs and updated information on providing employee benefits to legally married same-sex couples based on the Supreme Court's decision in *United States v. Windsor* A new section on the ADA's direct threat provisions Updated information on caregiver leave under military family leave and survey data regarding the FMLA's impact Updated information on completing the newest Form I-9 and the E-Verify system The OFCCP's final rules for developing and implementing AAPs for veterans and individuals with disabilities and new policy directive for compensation compliance evaluations A new section on bring your own device to work and its impact on employee privacy Information on the final rule revising the hazard communication standard, and the requirements for safety data sheets, which will replace material safety data sheets New information on medical marijuana in the workplace

wellness questionnaire for employees: *Cultivating Teacher Resilience* Caroline F. Mansfield, 2020-08-11 This open access book follows the development of the Building Resilience in Teacher Education (BRiTE) project across Australia and internationally. Drawing on the success of this project and the related research collaborations that have since emerged, it highlights the importance of cultivating resilience at various stages of teachers' careers. Divided into three sections, the book includes conceptual, empirical and applied chapters, designed to introduce readers to the field of research, provide empirical evidence and showcase innovative applications. The respective chapters illustrate the ways in which teacher resilience can be enhanced in a variety of contexts, and address specific learning activities, case studies, resources and strategies, student feedback and applied outcomes. They also consider future directions including cross-cultural applications and the use of technologies such as augmented reality. The book will appeal to researchers, teacher educators and teachers, as well as those interested in supporting the cultivation and ongoing development of professional resilience for pre-service and practicing teachers.

wellness questionnaire for employees: **Employee Benefits Answer Book** Dorinda D.

DeScherer, 2015-06-09 Employee Benefits Answer Book provides comprehensive guidance for those involved in the design and administration of employee benefit plans. The Q&A format is ideal for probing key topics such as: Health care reform COBRA continuation coverage Retiree health care coverage Health coverage portability requirements Group long-term care insurance Dependent care assistance Adoption assistance Vacation and severance pay plans Death benefits Financing employee benefits Financial accounting for employee benefits And more! Employee Benefits Answer Book will help you: Set the best Health Care Reform strategy for your company and your clients Keep in compliance with current and coming requirements Find clear answers to hundreds of employee benefits questions Avoid costly errors related to employee benefits administration Resolve employee benefits issues quickly and effectively And much more! The Thirteenth Edition provides up-to-date coverage of the Affordable Care Act (ACA), including: Transition rules leading to full implementation of the employer shared responsibility requirements in 2015 Guidance on when employer-provided health coverage provides minimum value Latest figures for determining affordability of employer-provided health coverage Rules governing the interplay of orientation periods with the new limits on waiting periods for health coverage And more! Additionally Employee Benefits Answer Book has been updated to include discussions of: New guidance on stop-loss insurance The Supreme Court's weighing in on vesting of retiree health benefits Final regulations on payment of retiree health premiums by a pension or annuity plan DOL issuance of updated COBRA continuation coverage notices that reflect the Health Exchange option And more!

wellness questionnaire for employees: The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work-Family Interface Kristen M. Shockley, Winny Shen, Ryan C. Johnson, 2018-04-26 The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work-Family Interface is a response to growing interest in understanding how people manage their work and family lives across the globe. Given global and regional differences in cultural values, economies, and policies and practices, research on work-family management is not always easily transportable to different contexts. Researchers have begun to acknowledge this, conducting research in various national settings, but the literature lacks a comprehensive source that aims to synthesize the state of knowledge, theoretical progression, and identification of the most compelling future research ideas within field. The Cambridge Handbook of the Global Work-Family Interface aims to fill this gap by providing a single source where readers can find not only information about the general state of global work-family research, but also comprehensive reviews of region-specific research. It will be of value to researchers, graduate students, and practitioners of applied and organizational psychology, management, and family studies.

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models, current best-practice guidelines, and evidence-based documentation of such models and guidelines. The contributors were carefully selected for their unique knowledge, as well as their ability to meaningfully present this information in a comprehensive manner. As such, this Handbook is of great interest and use to health care and rehabilitation professionals, management and human resource personnel, researchers and academicians alike.

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the definition of spouse based on the Supreme Court ruling in *United States v. Windsor* New material on the proposed Equal Pay Report

wellness questionnaire for employees: *Paradigms Lost* Heather Stuart, Julio Arboleda-Florez, Norman Sartorius, 2012-06-28 *Paradigms Lost* challenges key paradigms currently held about the prevention or reduction of stigma attached to mental illness using evidence and the experience the authors gathered during the many years of their work in this field. Each chapter examines one currently held paradigm and presents reasons why it should be replaced with a new perspective. The book argues for enlightened opportunism (using every opportunity to fight stigma), rather than more time consuming planning, and emphasizes that the best way to approach anti-stigma work is to select targets jointly with those who are most concerned. The most radical change of paradigms concerns the evaluation of outcome for anti-stigma activities. Previously, changes in stigmatizing attitudes were used as the best indicator of success. *Paradigms Lost* and its authors argue that it is now necessary to measure changes in behaviors (both from the perspective of those stigmatized and those who stigmatize) to obtain a more valid measure of a program's success. Other myths to be challenged: providing knowledge about mental illness will reduce stigma; community care will de-stigmatize mental illness and psychiatry; people with a mental illness are less discriminated against in developing countries. *Paradigms Lost* concludes by describing key elements in successful anti stigma work including the recommended duration of anti-stigma programmes, the involvement of those with mental illness in designing programmes, and the definition of programmes in accordance with local circumstances. A summary of weaknesses of currently held paradigms and corresponding lists of best practice principles to guide future anti-stigma action and research bring this insightful volume to an apt conclusion.

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wellness questionnaire for employees: *Major Labels* Kelefa Sanneh, 2021-10-05 One of Oprah Daily's 20 Favorite Books of 2021 • Selected as one of Pitchfork's Best Music Books of the Year "One of the best books of its kind in decades." —The Wall Street Journal An epic achievement

and a huge delight, the entire history of popular music over the past fifty years refracted through the big genres that have defined and dominated it: rock, R&B, country, punk, hip-hop, dance music, and pop. Kelefa Sanneh, one of the essential voices of our time on music and culture, has made a deep study of how popular music unites and divides us, charting the way genres become communities. In *Major Labels*, Sanneh distills a career's worth of knowledge about music and musicians into a brilliant and omnivorous reckoning with popular music—as an art form (actually, a bunch of art forms), as a cultural and economic force, and as a tool that we use to build our identities. He explains the history of slow jams, the genius of Shania Twain, and why rappers are always getting in trouble. Sanneh shows how these genres have been defined by the tension between mainstream and outsider, between authenticity and phoniness, between good and bad, right and wrong. Throughout, race is a powerful touchstone: just as there have always been Black audiences and white audiences, with more or less overlap depending on the moment, there has been Black music and white music, constantly mixing and separating. Sanneh debunks cherished myths, reappraises beloved heroes, and upends familiar ideas of musical greatness, arguing that sometimes, the best popular music isn't transcendent. Songs express our grudges as well as our hopes, and they are motivated by greed as well as idealism; music is a powerful tool for human connection, but also for human antagonism. This is a book about the music everyone loves, the music everyone hates, and the decades-long argument over which is which. The opposite of a modest proposal, *Major Labels* pays in full.

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