

# Fall Readiness Planning Guide

## For HR & Wellness Leaders

*A 10-minute tool to prepare managers, employees, and leaders before September pressure builds*

Use this guide to identify predictable pressure points, strengthen manager and employee support, and increase utilization of the benefits and wellness resources you already have in place.

### How to use this guide

Set aside 10 minutes to identify your top fall pressure points, choose the group that needs the most support, and select one action you can take before September. Use it on your own or as a planning tool with your HR, wellness, or leadership team.

### Why this matters now

Fall is predictable. Workloads rise, routines shift, daylight decreases, caregiving demands increase, and many employees return from summer still feeling depleted.

At the same time, many organizations already offer valuable supports, but employees may not know what is available, when to use it, or how to access it.

- 39% of Canadian employees reported feeling burned out in 2025, up from 35% in 2023. (Mental Health Research Canada)
- 77% of Canadian professionals reported not fully utilizing their workplace benefits. (Robert Walters Canada)
- Employees who receive engaging benefits communication are much more likely to feel their employer cares about their health and well-being: 79% compared with 22%. (Mercer)

### Best practice

Plan before the pressure builds. The goal is not to add more programs for the sake of it. It is to connect the right supports to the right people at the right time.

## 1. Identify predictable fall pressure points

Check the areas most likely to affect your workforce this fall:

- Heavier workloads after summer
- Vacation coverage or staffing gaps
- Back-to-school or caregiving demands
- Performance review or year-end planning cycles
- Change fatigue or organizational uncertainty
- Reduced daylight, lower energy, or seasonal mood shifts
- Increased absenteeism or benefits usage
- Manager concerns about stress, morale, workload, or conflict

**Suggested next step: Choose your top 2-3 pressure points and use them to guide fall wellness planning.**

## 2. Prepare managers before employees are in crisis

Managers are often the first to notice when employees are struggling, but they may not always know what to say, where to refer, or how to support someone while staying within their role.

Ask whether managers are prepared to:

- Recognize early signs of stress, overwhelm, or disengagement
- Open supportive conversations with confidence
- Clarify priorities and workload expectations
- Set and model healthy workload boundaries
- Refer employees to HR, EAP/EFAP, benefits, coaching, or other supports

### Best practice

Managers do not need to become counsellors. They need practical language, clear referral pathways, and permission to support realistic capacity planning.

**Suggested next step:** Consider a short manager training session before September on difficult conversations, workload boundaries, psychological safety, communication, or referral pathways.

## 3. Support employees with practical habit-building

Many employees already know that sleep, nutrition, movement, stress management, and recovery matter. The challenge is applying those habits during busy seasons.

Consider whether employees have practical support for:

- Managing fall stress before it builds
- Improving energy, focus, sleep, and recovery
- Meal planning during busy workweeks
- Creating realistic movement routines
- Building healthier work boundaries
- Supporting caregiving or back-to-school routines

### Best practice

Pair awareness with access. Webinars can create shared understanding, while coaching helps employees apply strategies to their own routines, goals, and real-life barriers.

**Suggested next step:** Consider [employee wellness sessions](#) for shared learning and [nutrition](#) or [wellness coaching](#) for employees who need more personalized support.

## 4. Increase utilization of existing supports

Many organizations already have valuable supports in place - EAP/EFAP services, benefits, coaching, wellness resources, mental health supports, webinars, manager training, or HR pathways.

The challenge is often not whether support exists. It is whether employees know what is available, trust it, understand when to use it, and can access it easily.

As explored in 12 Weeks to Wellness' article [Making Wellness Work in 2026: Utilization, Engagement & Impact](#), many organizations do not have a benefits problem - they have a utilization-to-impact gap.

### Best practice

Use employee webinars and manager training as lower-barrier entry points into your broader benefits and wellness ecosystem. Practical sessions can normalize help-seeking, build trust, and show employees and managers where to go next.

Before September, consider whether you have:

- Created a simple “where to go for what” guide
- Explained the difference between EAP/EFAP, benefits, coaching, wellness sessions, HR support, and manager support
- Given managers simple referral language
- Used webinars or manager trainings to introduce key well-being topics and reduce stigma
- Included clear “where to go next” messaging at the end of each session
- Repeated reminders through email, intranet, team meetings, and leadership communication
- Tracked attendance, clicks, coaching inquiries, referrals, and feedback

Suggested next step: Choose one fall wellness session or manager training topic and intentionally connect it to the supports your organization already offers.

## 5. Choose the right fall readiness supports

Use your top pressure points to identify the most useful next step.

If your concern is...	Consider...
Managers feel unsure how to respond to stress, workload concerns, or difficult conversations	<a href="#">Manager training</a> on supportive conversations, workload boundaries, psychological safety, or referral pathways
Employees are struggling with stress, energy, sleep, nutrition, or routines	<a href="#">Employee wellness sessions</a> , nutrition or wellness coaching
Leaders are carrying decision fatigue, pressure, or burnout risk	<a href="#">Leadership Vitality Coaching</a>
Existing benefits or EAP/EFAP supports are underused	Benefits communication planning, webinars, manager referral tools, and <a href="#">utilization strategy</a>
Fall planning feels scattered or reactive	A customized <a href="#">workplace wellness planning session</a>

## 6. Your fall readiness action plan

Our top 3 fall pressure points are:

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

The group that may need the most support is:

Employees

Managers

Senior leaders

All of the above

One support we could put in place before September is:

\_\_\_\_\_

One existing resource we could promote more clearly is:

\_\_\_\_\_

### Ready to move from planning to action?

12 Weeks to Wellness can help your organization build a practical fall readiness plan tailored to your workforce. Support may include leadership and manager training, Leadership Vitality Coaching, nutrition coaching, wellness coaching, employee wellness sessions, and customized workplace wellness planning.

[Book a Fall Readiness Call](#)