

Memorandum

To: All Full-time Employees

From: Human Resources

Date: March 24, 2021

Re: Mental Health, Employee Wellness, and Sick Leave Usage

Each of you make a difference for our students and employees every day. We've overcome many obstacles this past year and in light of a pandemic, we have renewed our focus on mental health and employee wellness. Our mental, physical and emotional health all contribute to our individual overall health as well as the health of our college community. We want to ensure you have the appropriate information on how the college supports your health.

Many benefits of our sick leave program can't be quantified, but it is designed to support a healthy person, family, and society. For example, employees with sick leave can take time off to care for children or other family members in need. The ability to care for our own families can reduce stress and anxiety that impacts an individual's health.

College sick leave covers time off for behavioral health needs. Behavioral health includes our emotional, psychological, and social well-being. As with physical health, sick leave is a tool to provide needed care, rest, and recovery when our mental health makes it difficult to be productive. Sick leave helps us get back up to speed more quickly than if we try to muscle through. Sometimes taking a mental health day, a day off that's specifically geared toward stress relief and burnout prevention, is the best thing you can do for yourself. A mental health day can provide a much-needed break to pause, regroup, and come back with greater levels of energy and a fresh, less-stressed perspective.

We cannot provide a specific rule that will cover every circumstance of sick leave for mental health. Generally, when you are not feeling mentally well you can use sick leave for a mental health day. Mental health days should not be used to replace or supplement vacation leave. Repeated use of sick leave for mental health within a short period of time may require a doctor's note and should be referred to Employee Relations for family and medical leave or other resources.

Other examples of the benefits of sick leave:

- **Sense of Security:** Paid sick time also allows employees to manage emergencies when they arise without having to worry about the additional impact of lost wages.

- **Sense of Safety:** Bringing an illness to the office can impair the productivity of the entire team. So often, several employees get sick at once. Keeping germs out of the office can prevent this and help keep an office running smoothly when only a single person is out sick.
- **Improved Productivity:** Rest is often underrated but is important for a quick recovery and going into work does not facilitate quality rest time. Staying home when ill can help employees get better sooner so they can return to the office and get back to work.

For information on sick leave accrual and usage, please see our [policy and procedure](#) on the website.

Below are some ideas for meeting everyday challenges and a better work-life balance:

- Adding structure to our days and parameters around working hours with consistent breaks, thus strengthening the boundaries between work and personal life.
- Nurturing our minds and bodies through consistent exercise, sometimes as simple as a walk outside.
- Connecting with friends.
- Spending time with family.
- Meditating, listening to music, cooking.

There are additional programs to help individuals receive assistance as needed:

- **Employee Assistance Program.** Employees who are distressed regarding COVID-19 or want to discuss many of life's issues may use the College's Employee Assistance Program online at [Reliant Behavioral Health \(RBH\)](#), use access code "salt lake community college" or by calling 866-750-1327.
- **SLCC Center for Health and Counseling.** Employees also have direct access counseling services through the SLCC Center for Health and Counseling. Employees are eligible for 12 sessions with some flexibility on an as-needed basis between. Due to the pandemic the \$30 co-pay per session is currently being waived.
- **Telehealth.** If you need assistance with your physical or behavioral health, you do have the option to use MDLIVE and talk with a medical provider by phone, online or by using the mobile app (mdlive.com or 1-800-400-6354). This can be done from the convenience of your own home.

We encourage supervisors to be flexible with the scheduling of part-time employees as health care needs arise. Part-time employees may have health care insurance from their spouse, partner, parents or may have purchased a plan themselves. We suggest going through these health plans as needed. If a part-time employee does not have health insurance, they may be able to get assistance through the Utah State Department of Health by calling 1-800-456-7707. There is list of free and low-cost clinics available in our community, [here](#).

If you need any additional assistance or have questions, please feel free to contact Human Resources at 801-957-4210 or hr@slcc.edu.