5 WAYS EMPLOYEE FINANCIAL WELLNESS IS GETTING WORSE

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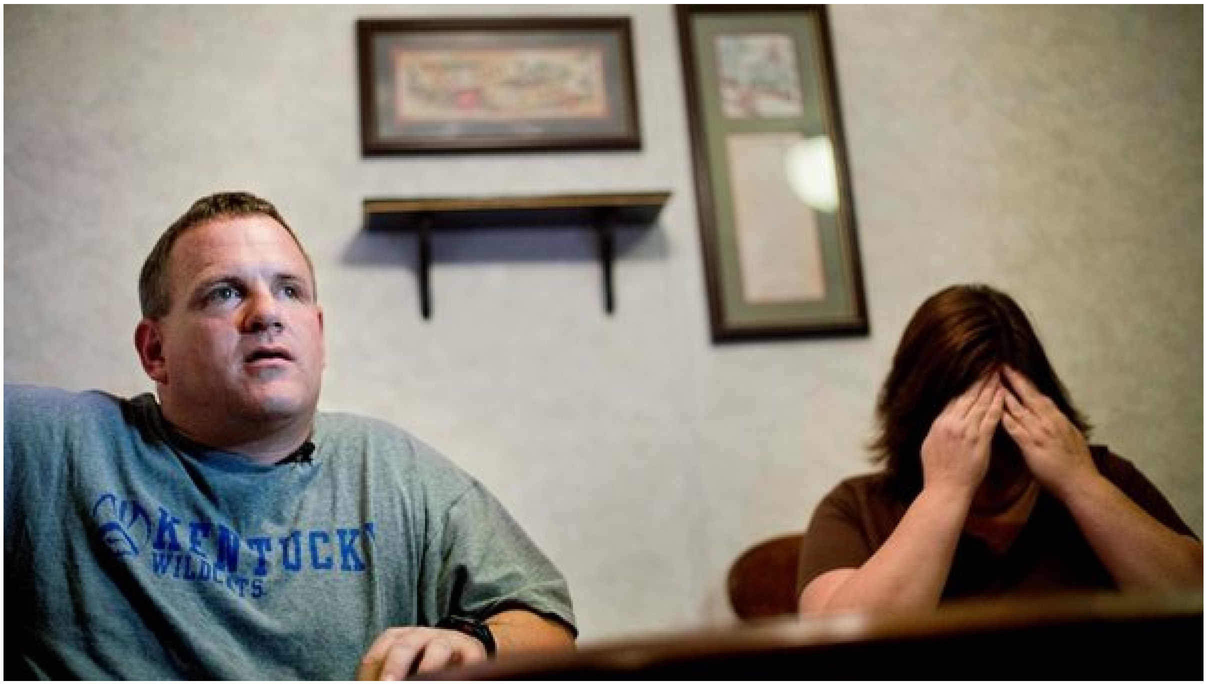

Financial stress takes a toll not just on employees but also on a company's bottom line. (Photo: AP)

Employees aren't happy about the state of their finances.

In fact, despite having improved for several years, employee financial wellness has lost substantial ground in many areas over the last year—and the stress is showing.

5. Employees have increased financial responsibilities.

According to the survey, more employees are providing financial support for parents or in-laws, with 22 percent now financially responsible—compared to 16 percent in 2015.

Longer lifespans for a large aging population, many of whom lack adequate long-term health care protection, are combining to dump the financial responsibility for at least some of those costs onto the next generation.

4. Emergency savings worries worse for women.

Neither men nor women are satisfied with the amount of emergency savings they've managed to amass, with 55 percent overall saying so compared with 51 percent in 2015.

But women have it worse; 60 percent say they don't have enough emergency savings set aside for unexpected expenses, compared with 50 percent of men.

3. Job loss would hit them hard.

Less than half—41 percent—of employees could manage to stay afloat on their basic expenses if they were out of work for an extended period of time. And while it's not a huge decrease, that's down from 42 percent last year.

Predictably, women, with lower pay and a harder time making ends meet, would suffer more; only 36 percent of women say they could keep up with basic expenses without their jobs, while 45 percent of men said they could.

2. Financial stress is the biggest source of stress in their lives.

There are plenty of things to stress about, with respondents citing health concerns (15 percent), their jobs (20 percent) and relationships (15 percent), but no matter the generation workers belonged to, financial stress/money matters topped the list, with 45 percent saying it was their chief stressor.

It’s also the biggest stressor for women, 49 percent of whom put it at the top of the list.

1. Student loans make the problem worse.

Student loans have a large part to play in this gloomy picture.

When compared with all other employees, those who say that their student debt has a moderate or significant impact on their ability to meet their financial goals experience higher stress (81 percent, compared with 46 percent); more difficulty meeting household expenses (65 percent, compared with 35 percent); greater use of credit cards to pay for monthly expenses they couldn’t otherwise afford (41 percent, compared with 22 percent); are more likely to be distracted at work due to their finances (50 percent, compared with 23 percent), and are more likely to raid their retirement funds (57 percent, compared with 40 percent).