Calm Work Solutions

White Paper

Workplace Focus Kit: Findings from a Five-Week Internal Pilot Study

November 11, 2026

Executive Summary

Sleep is one of the clearest links between workplace stress and burnout, and one of the few that can be measured and changed. In a five-week internal pilot, sleep was also the earliest and most consistent improvement among 10 participants using custom flower essence blends. Average "sleeping well" scores rose from 2.8 to 4.4 on a 5-point scale by week 1 and held through week 5, and total survey scores rose from 29.9 to 38.1 out of 45.

The Workplace Focus Kit is an unscented, non-pharmaceutical spray kit for shared work spaces. It needs no training, no individual sign-up, and no time away from work. This paper describes the pilot, places it beside published research on sleep, stress, and flower essences, and states its limits plainly.

These are preliminary, self-reported, non-clinical results from a small group with no control group.

The Problem

Workplaces have been given the job of motivating employees to take better care of their health. Most rely on incentives, challenges, recognition, and workshops, and each one asks the employee to find the energy to take part.

Most stressed employees are in survival mode, moving from solving one problem to the next. Slowing down to tend to their health doesn't enter their minds. In SHRM's 2024 survey of 1,405 U.S. workers, 44% felt burned out at work, 45% felt emotionally drained, and 51% felt used up at the end of the workday (SHRM, 2024).

Research helps explain why motivation tactics fall short for this group:

- **Motivation.** Long-term exposure to psychosocial stress was associated with dampened dopamine function in the brain's reward system (Bloomfield et al., 2019).
- **Focus and planning.** Burnout is linked with everyday problems in executive function and measurable changes in brain activity (Pihlaja et al., 2023).
- **Pressure.** Nurses who relied on outside rewards and pressure to keep going showed more emotional exhaustion and depersonalization than nurses driven by their own interest in the work (Int J Occup Med Environ Health, 2025).

For a chronically stressed employee, one more program to join can feel like one more demand. What's missing is support that asks nothing of the employee: no sign-up, no schedule, and no effort required to take part.

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Why Sleep Matters

The World Health Organization describes burnout as the result of chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed (WHO, 2019). Sleep is one of the clearest pathways between that stress and burnout, and one of the few that can be measured and changed.

- **Sleep and burnout reinforce each other.** In a two-year Swedish cohort, frequently sleeping less than six hours was the strongest predictor of clinical burnout (Söderström et al., 2012). Among 1,356 Israeli employees, insomnia predicted new burnout 18 months later, and burnout predicted new insomnia (Armon et al., 2008). Some studies find burnout disrupts sleep more than the reverse (Rothe et al., 2020).
- **Sleep loss lowers stress tolerance.** After about 35 hours without sleep, the brain's emotional center reacted 60% more strongly to negative images (Yoo et al., 2007). Sleep-deprived adults also reported more stress, anxiety, and anger in response to mild demands (Minkel et al., 2012).
- **Poor sleep shows up as errors.** Among 11,395 physicians, high sleep-related impairment was linked to about twice the odds of a self-reported significant medical error, even after accounting for burnout (Trockel et al., 2020).
- **Better sleep reduces stress.** A meta-analysis of 65 randomized trials found that improving sleep reduced stress, anxiety, and depression, with larger sleep gains producing larger benefits (Scott et al., 2021).

The Approach

The Workplace Focus Kit is a two-part kit: a 30 mL concentrate and a reusable 4 oz spray bottle. One dropper of concentrate goes into the bottle, which is filled with water and misted lightly into a shared work space.

The concentrate contains vegetable glycerin, purified water, and an unscented flower essence blend formulated for each order. Glycerin is Generally Recognized as Safe by the FDA (21 CFR 182.1320). The mist is for environmental use only and is never applied to skin or ingested.

Because it has no scent, the kit fits fragrance-free and scent-sensitive workplace policies. It rolls out with no training, no individual opt-in, and no downtime. The solution is made in the USA.

Flower essences are dilute preparations of flowers in water, traditionally used to support emotional balance. They carry no pharmacologically active dose and are not drugs. The kit makes no medical or therapeutic claims and does not replace medical or behavioral health care.

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Pilot Study Methods

The pilot was an exploratory, five-week internal study to find which areas of daily life changed for people using the blend. It was run by Calm Work Solutions, not by an independent research group.

- **Timing:** baseline surveys in July 2021 and final surveys in September 2021.
- **Design:** a single group measured against itself, with no control or placebo group. Each participant's later scores were compared with their own starting scores.
- **Participants:** 15 adults enrolled, none of them existing clients. 11 completed all three surveys. One completer was excluded because she began the pilot during a cross-country move, leaving 10 in the results. Including her gives similar results (sleep +52%, focus +32%, decisions +26% at week 5).
- **Blends:** each participant received a custom blend. Each chose whether to take it by mouth or use it as a spray, and the method was not recorded.
- **Survey:** the same custom 9-item questionnaire at baseline, week 1, and week 5. Participants rated statements such as "I've been sleeping well," "I've been able to focus," and "I've made good decisions" for the past week on a 1 to 5 scale (1 = rarely, 5 = mostly). The nine items add to a total score from 9 to 45.
- **Privacy:** responses were linked to each participant to measure individual change and are reported only as group results.
- **Analysis:** for each item, the change in the group average from baseline, shown as a percent. Total scores and individual items were compared with baseline at week 1 and week 5 using the Wilcoxon signed-rank test.

Pilot Study Results

All nine survey items rose from baseline. Sleep, focus, and relaxation rose the most and were already up by week 1.

Item by item, sleep showed the clearest change, significant at both week 1 and week 5. Focus, decisions, and relationships were significant by week 5. Relaxation was significant at week 1 only.

Item	Improved / same / lower at week 5	Wilcoxon p, week 1	Wilcoxon p, week 5
Sleeping well	8 / 1 / 1	0.008	0.016
Able to focus	6 / 4 / 0	0.062	0.031
Good decisions	6 / 4 / 0	0.016	0.031
Relationship Satisfaction	7 / 3 / 0	0.062	0.016
Relaxed	5 / 3 / 2	0.047	0.062

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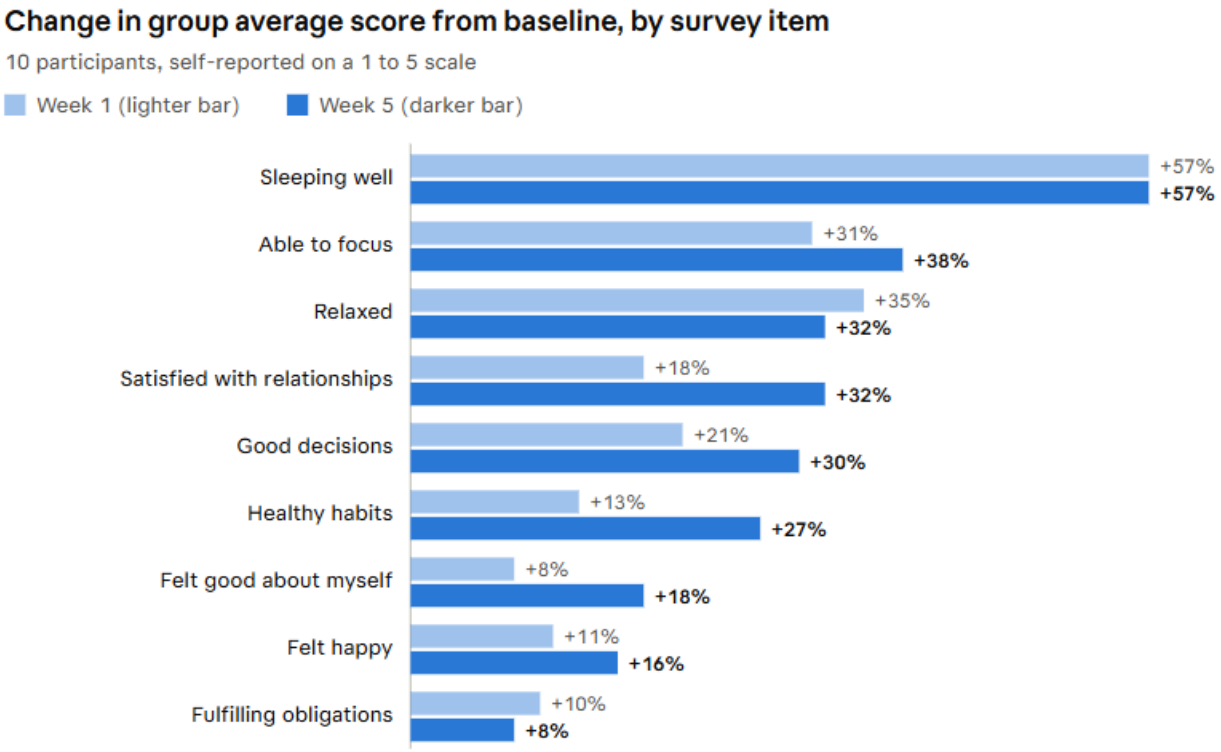

Total scores across all nine items rose for 9 of 10 participants:

Measure	Baseline	Week 1	Week 5
Average total score (out of 45)	29.9	36.3	38.1
Change from baseline (Wilcoxon p)		+6.4 (p = 0.004)	+8.2 (p = 0.004)
Effect size (Cohen's d)*		1.6	1.5

*An effect size above 0.8 is considered large.

Context from Published Research

Controlled studies of flower essences are few and their results are mixed, while the safety record is consistent. A reader weighing the pilot should see both sides.

Studies reporting benefit

- Salles and da Silva (2012), a randomized, double-blind trial in anxious adults, found a larger, statistically significant drop in anxiety with a four-essence formula than with placebo.
- Dixit and Jasani (2020) randomized 120 children aged 4 to 6 into Bach flower, music, and control groups during dental cleaning. Behavior was significantly better in the flower essence group than in the control group.
- Halberstein et al. (2007) tested Rescue Remedy against placebo in 111 adults during a stressful exam. Anxiety fell in both groups, with no significant overall difference, and the authors suggested a possible benefit for those with high anxiety.

Systematic reviews

- Thaler et al. (2009) found no evidence of benefit over placebo in four controlled trials, rated the evidence as low quality, and concluded that flower remedies are probably safe.
- Ernst (2010) reviewed seven randomized trials and concluded that the most reliable trials show no difference between flower remedies and placebo.

The evidence on benefit is mixed: no benefit beyond placebo and statistically significant improvements with the flower essence group. The safety findings are consistent.

Limitations

The pilot shows a clear rise in self-reported scores, but its design cannot separate the blend's effect from other causes.

- **No control group.** Expectation, attention from taking part, and normal ups and downs can all raise scores.
- **Small group.** Results come from 10 people, so one or two individuals can shift an average.
- **Self-report only.** Scores reflect how participants rated themselves, with no objective measures such as sleep trackers or task performance.
- **Custom survey.** The 9-item questionnaire has not been validated against standard instruments.
- **Drop-out and exclusion.** 4 of 15 enrollees did not complete all surveys, and one completer was excluded after the fact.
- **Internal study.** The pilot was designed, run, and analyzed by Calm Work Solutions, with no independent review.
- **Different from the kit.** Participants each used a blend made for them, by mouth or as a spray, and the method was not recorded. The Workplace Focus Kit uses a blend formulated for each order and misted into a shared space for a whole team.

Conclusion

Sleep was the earliest and most consistent change in this pilot. Average "sleeping well" scores rose from 2.8 to 4.4 by week 1 and held through week 5, with 8 of 10 participants improving. Sleep is one of the few modifiable factors that predicts burnout, and randomized trials show that improving it reduces stress.

This pilot study identifies sleep as the clearest self-reported improvement.

Organizations interested in a structured evaluation can contact support@calmworksolutions.com.

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