Mental Health Expert Faisal Tai, MD on the Evolution of Sick Days

The work-while-sick trend is likely to become integrated into employment norms, according to Faisal Tai, a psychiatrist who moonlights as the CEO of PsychPlus, a Houston-based mental health care platform. "Before Covid, and before all of the technology that allows us to stay connected and work from home, if we were sick, we would stay home and rest," Tai says, explaining that it was "basically considered part of the social contract." In other words, employees had the right to rest if they got sick.

But now, Tai says, "technology allows many of us to work from anywhere at all times, and therefore we feel the pressure to get things done regardless of how we feel or where we are." There's also a certain guilt that workers may feel about requesting time off, whether it stems from concerns of falling behind on their workload or the stigma associated with taking a sick day itself.