



neu-Guide to: Mental Health Initiatives in the Workplace

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Introduction

Leaders around the world started to realise the importance of employee mental wellbeing because of the impact brought to the workforce by the global pandemic in 2019.

This guide will take leaders through several important considerations when assessing, developing and implementing mental health initiatives.



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1. Assess & Implement Holistically

Even before considering bringing mental health initiatives to an organisation, leaders should bring the following questions to the table of discussion:

People

- Does my workforce understand mental health challenges in the workplace?
- Are the employees aware and equipped to deal with them and support one another?

Work Practices

- Do I need to reevaluate the way work is done at micro or macro level?
- Are my employees overworked or overburdened?
- Is there a discrepancy between reward and effort?

Culture

- Is my organisation cultivating a culture where extending and seeking mental health support is accepted?
- Are there any implicit practices which stop people talking about mental health or reaching for support?
- Is talking about mental health de-stigmatised?
- Are there sufficient opportunities for individuals to bond with each other?

Structure

- Is my organisation structured in a way that support is easily accessible?
- Is there procedural justice in the organisation which enables employees to achieve their goals?



2. Lead by example

Leaders are encouraged to talk openly and honestly about mental wellbeing issues. Initiating dialogue about the ways you handle stress and look after your wellbeing (e.g.: therapy, physical activities, meditation, etc.,) can create an environment where employees feel safe and be willing to join the conversation.

Addressing stigma and encouraging literacy around mental health would initiate an open dialogue as acceptance of mental wellbeing issues trickles down from the top.

3. Consult your people

To get a better grip of the organisation, ask your teams what bothers them and where the leadership can help. Involve people from different positions to tap into the root cause of certain problems. Integrating opinions of employees can not only help you to devise targeted solutions, but also improve engagement.

4. No one-size-fits all

One-size-fits-all mental health intervention is ineffective. Different demographics or backgrounds of employees would engage differently with employee assistance programmes. Thus, leaders should study the workforce data to best cater to their needs.

Instead of following generalised guidelines and trying to replicate interventions from other businesses, companies should tailor employee wellness initiatives that fits the culture, values and the nuances of the workforce.



Digital mental health platform is effective in bolstering employee mental health.

The United Nations

5. Turning to healthtech industry

Digital solutions can foster positive behavioural changes and a resilient workforce by reducing the barriers to accessibility. They are self-paced, private, and non-intrusive.

Being built on clinical therapeutic models, these interventions can also be put in place as a preventative measure for improving employees' mind health. Personalised programmes can help improve performance, wellbeing, self-efficacy and overall mental health.

Moreover, these interventions help not only the employers by enabling them an aggregate overview of employees' wellbeing levels, but also the users to keep track of their wellbeing.

The rationale behind any initiative should be thoroughly communicated, not to mention mental health-related ones.

Additionally, the tool which the company chooses to offer ought to be of credible quality and clinically approved.

6. Support employees to support

Support for employees who are recovering from mental health problems is, without doubt, important. On the other hand, leaders and managers are often in the front line to handle employees' wellbeing.

Training programmes beyond mental health first aid courses for effective team management can make sure that support is available at different levels within an organisation.

7. Create designated positions

To navigate mental health in the workplace, having a specialised position such as Chief Wellbeing Officer (CWO) can ensure that the organisation has the most relevant policy and measures to support employees. The person will be responsible to assess and develop policies and programmes to foster a healthy and resilient workforce.

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