

# MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE



Each year, World Mental Health Day on October 10th highlights the importance of mental health, with this year's theme focusing on the workplace.

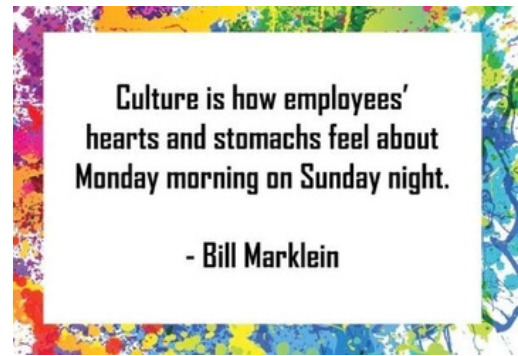
Given that workplaces are vital for individual survival and societal development, addressing mental health within this context is essential.

## Why mental health in the workplace?

- **Integral to Overall Health:** Mental health is a crucial component of overall health; without it, physical health often suffers.
- **Cognitive Demands of Work:** Most jobs require cognitive functioning, which can only thrive when mental health is prioritized,
- **Time spent at work:** Employees spend a significant portion of their lives at work, making it a key environment for fostering mental wellbeing.
- **Economic impact:** mental health issues lead to absenteeism, affecting not just individuals but also families, organisations and national economies.
- **Ripple effect:** Poor mental health can impact colleagues and family members, leading to wider social issues.
- **Meaning and Purpose:** A supportive work environment can enhance employees' sense of purpose and career progression.

## The numbers

- Global workforce: Approximately 60% of the world's population is employed.
- Days Lost: 12 Billion days are lost each year due to depression and anxiety.
- Economic Loss: An estimated \$ 1 Trillion is lost in productivity due to these conditions.



## Common mental health conditions in the workplace

- Burnout: chronic stress leading to exhaustion and reduced effectiveness.
- Compassionate fatigue: Emotional strain from caring for others, common in caregiving professions.
- Vicarious trauma: Emotional distress from exposure to others' traumatic experiences, often affecting journalists and health care workers.
- Stress: Overwhelming feelings of pressure when demands exceed available resources.
- Depression: affects thoughts, feelings and behaviours, leading to withdrawal and loss of interest.
- Anxiety: Persistent worry that disrupts daily functioning.
- Substance Use Disorders: Harmful patterns of substance use despite negative consequences.

## Call to Action

- Cultivate a Wellness Culture: Focus on holistic employee well-being.
- Consider the Whole Person: Recognize employees beyond their job functions.
- Provide Mental Health Training: Equip staff at all levels to recognize and address mental health issues.
- Open Communication; Foster an environment where mental health can openly be discussed.
- Implement Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs): Ensure accessible mental health information and resources.
- Create Inclusive Environments: Prioritize psychological safety and inclusivity.
- Address Burnout Causes: Look beyond workload to identify contributing factors.
- Establish Anti-Bullying and Sexual protection policies: create a zero-tolerance culture for harassment.
- Support Neurodiverse Employees: Make accommodations for diverse needs.

- Design Healthy Workspaces: Ensure natural light, good air quality, and spacious layouts.
- Set Clear Expectations: Provide clarity on roles and deliverables.
- Encourage breaks: Allow time for recharging and social interaction.
- Facilitate Open Communication: Create channels for employees to express needs and suggestions.
- Promote Regular Leave: Encourage periodic time off to prevent burnout.
- Separate HR and Therapeutic Roles: Ensure that support roles do not conflict with HR responsibilities.
- Foster Team Cohesion: Organize regular, low-cost team-building activities.