



10 to Go Guide - Maintaining Good Interpersonal Relationships at Work and Enhancing psychological Safety

1 - Know

Interpersonal Relationships at Work and Psychological Safety

Interpersonal relationships at work are the social connections and interactions among colleagues. This includes peer support, which is the assistance, encouragement, and empathy shared among coworkers. Given the amount of time spent at work, positive workplace relationships are vital for mental health. They contribute to decreased workplace stress, improved psychiatric and physiological health, and better overall job performance.

Strong interpersonal relationships lead to higher levels of employee engagement and wellbeing, resulting in lower business costs, improved performance outcomes, lower staff turnover and absenteeism, and fewer safety incidents.

2 - Act | Guidance Notes for Managers

How Managers Can Increase Employee Engagement

1| Promoting Interaction:



Foster face-to-face interactions and include remote workers via video-conferencing software to maintain a connection not just for work-related conversations but as check ins and informal team meet ups. Isolation has negative effects and can contribute to incivility.

2| Organizing Collaborative Events:



Plan events and activities to promote positive social interactions, focusing on shared interests and experiences.

3| Leading by Example:



Demonstrate behaviors that promote a positive emotional environment of inclusivity and positivity. This can include creating space for colleagues and team members to share concerns or topics of interest, being attentive to your communication style and awareness of unconscious bias.

4| Emotional Intelligence:



Cultivate emotional intelligence in your own leadership, focusing on self-awareness, self-regulation, internal motivation, empathy, and social skills.

3 - Reflect | Things to be mindful of

- Recognizing values and civility in the workplace – be alert to the undertones within your team and how they interact both overtly and covertly. Be attentive to sudden changes in attendance, engagement and the general mood of the team. Build trust and respect as essential values in the team.
- Emotional Intelligence in the team - pay attention to your own and your team member's emotional intelligence, focusing on compassion, empathy, their ability to perceive, manage emotions, and influence others.



4 - Suggested Tools

Tools and Assessments for Implementation (Suggested Tools and Models)



1. Check that you and your team have completed all mandatory courses relating to interpersonal relationships i.e. anti-harassment, anti-racism, values, ICSC code of conduct as may be appropriate.

Encourage compliance with a view of nurturing a supportive learning environment rather than name and shame. Share your own vulnerability in terms of meeting the standards.

2. Facilitate a team workshop – the Psychologically safe interactions workshop from Workplace Strategies for Mental Health is a great resource. Here are the workshop slides, facilitator guide and participant hand outs: Psychologically safe interactions workshop (workplacestrategiesformentalhealth.com)



3. Invite representatives from relevant services such as the Ombudsman, Ethics, Staff Relations, Staff Association etc. to join your team for a debrief after the workshop. Invite them to share the support services and other learning and policy provisions available for your organization.

Dig Deeper



- **Ombudsman and Mediation Service:** If your organization has an established Ombudsman service, it would be a great resource that could be available to all managers. Please check with your organization's Ombudsman to find out what services they offer.
- **Staff/Stress Counsellors office:** If your organization has established counselling services, it would be great to reach out to the counsellors and seek their support in providing training sessions or teambuilding activities to enhance team cohesion and improve interpersonal relationships among staff.



10 to Go Guide - Introduction to Psycho-social Risks

1 - Know

The workplace can help or harm our physical and mental health. Positive work experiences contribute a person's sense of self-worth, confidence, sense of having purpose, meaning, and an opportunity to contribute to our life.

The workplace, however, can have adverse impacts on our physical and mental health whether from physical injury, poor psychological safety, experience of trauma, and or prolonged or chronic stress. Not all stress is bad, it can help drive our motivation and can lead to higher performance. However, too much stress or prolonged exposure to stress, especially when there is a feeling of lack of power and control, can be detrimental to our physical and mental health.

Mitigating psycho-social risks requires an organizational approach. Actions can be taken to ensure that policies and practices take into account workplace factors that can lead to poor mental health.

→ **Workplace factors that can cause stress are called psychosocial hazards. Psychosocial hazards form the basis of assessing the workplace and developing actions to prevent and minimise harm.**

Psychosocial hazards were defined by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in 1984 as the “interactions between and among work environment, job content, organizational conditions and workers’ capacities, needs, culture, personal extra-job considerations that may, through perceptions and experience, influence health, work performance and job satisfaction”.

- *Stress The Collective Challenge ILO (2012)*

Table of Psychosocial Hazards

1. Job Content <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Lack of variety or short work cycles- Fragmented or meaningless work- Under use of skills- High uncertainty	2. Work Overload & Work Pace <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Workload or work underload- High levels of time pressure- Continuity subject to deadlines	3. Control <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Involvement in decision-making relative to their job role- Lack of control over workload, workflow, pacing, shift work, etc.
4. Work Schedule <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Shift work- Inflexible hours- Unpredictable hours- Long, unsociable working hours	5. Environment & Equipment <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Inadequate equipment availability, suitability or maintenance- Poor environmental conditions: lack of space, poor lighting, excessive noise	6. Organisational Culture & Function <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Poor Communication- Low Level for Support of Problem Solving & Personal Development- Lack of definition of, or agreement on, organizational objectives
7. Interpersonal Relationships at Work <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Social or Physical Isolation- Poor Relationships with Superiors- Interpersonal Conflicts- Lack of Social Support	8. Role in Organization <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Role Ambiguity- Role Conflict- Responsibility for People	9. Career Development <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Career Stagnation & Uncertainty- Under Promotion & Over Promotion- Poor Pay- Job Insecurity- Low Social Value to Work
10. Home-Work Interface <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Conflicting Demands of Work & Home- Low Support at Home- Dual Career Problems	11. Substance Abuse & Misuse <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Workplace drinking- Binge drinking- Drug Abuse- Drug & Alcohol Dependency	12. Workplace Violence <ul style="list-style-type: none">- Violence among colleagues- Bullying- Mobbing- Third party violence (from clients, patients, external parties' external parties)
13. Direct Threat to Life <ul style="list-style-type: none">- High risk jobs with exposure to deadly chemical, weapons, etc.- Posts in active war zones or other deadly threats- Locations with high risk of exposure to life threatening illnesses	Activity - My Workplace Questions <ol style="list-style-type: none">Discuss the hazards in a small group of peers or with your team, and rank hazards from #1-#13 (1 being the worst problem)Which are the top 3-5 psychosocial hazards in your office/duty station?<ol style="list-style-type: none">What is being done to help?What should be done to help?	



The benefits of collective and individual attention to these interacting elements are in:

- 1| Improved health and resilience for individuals.
- 2| Improved experience of work by individuals, and thus, work performance, engagement, productivity and loyalty to the organisation.
- 3| For the organization, this can result in overall improved performance, productivity, retention and reduced financial costs associated with psychosocial risks and poor health.

It is important to remember that all these elements impact each other. They result in good outcomes if attended to.

2 - Reflection

Review each psychosocial hazard in relation to you and your team:

- What are the risks that may be impacting on your team?
- What have you done to mitigate these risks?
- How can your team assist you in identifying risks and suggesting solutions?

3 - Action

Taking action is the only way to ensure that you and your team mitigate psycho-social risks.

- Talk with your senior manager to find out how to identify psychosocial risks in your workplace and how to mitigate them.
- Engage your team in reviewing the workplace to identify issues and solutions from their perspective.
- Where relevant, work with Staff Representatives, as they often have people trained in supporting colleagues with mental health issues and understand the wider workplace dynamics.
- Work with counsellors, ombudsperson, human resources divisions and medical services divisions in your agency to assist in conducting a workplace risk assessment. They will have risk assessment tools that use a “biopsychosocial” model – physical, psychological, social and environmental.
- Reflect on what you can do around specific job design and job control factors.

Dig Deeper



- **Factsheet 3: Thriving as a Manager and Leader**
- **Factsheet 2: How can you improve mental health and well-being**
- **Module 1: Lead and Learn Program Workplace Mental Health and Well-being**
- **Developing a mental health and well-being plan Microsoft Word: [Mental Health and Well-being Action](#)**
- **The benefits of a Mentally Healthy UN System Workplace**
- **Podcast – Why it is important and how you can improve it Podcast 1: [Lead & Learn: Mental health and well-being for managers and leaders](#)**



10 to Go Guide - Job Control for Staff Engagement

1 - Know

What do we mean by job control?

Job Control refers to the amount of discretion staff have in determining what they do and how they do it at work. This encompasses having meaningful discretion over how, when, and where their work gets done, significantly impacting their physical and mental health, especially work-related stress.

A lack of job control can lead to increased absenteeism, tardiness, and a higher turnover intention, burnout, negatively impacting organizational success. Furthermore, managers over control or micromanagement could be counterproductive that could lead to decreased productivity, lower creativity, and ineffectiveness.



Meanwhile, enhanced job control increases staff motivation, improves cognition and learning, and positively affects their emotional state.

2 - Act | Guidance Notes for Managers

Increasing Staff Engagement Around Job Control (where possible and within the specific organizational guidelines)



1| Empower with Autonomy and Task Variety:

Modify job roles to increase autonomy, allowing staff to decide how to approach their tasks and utilize a wider range of skills. This increases job satisfaction, motivation, and efficiency.



2| Enhance Schedule Control:

Provide flexibility in schedules, allowing staff to better manage work and personal life. Flexible scheduling options can reduce mental distress and improve overall well-being.



3| Create Opportunities for Staff Influence:

Involve staff in decision-making processes affecting their work. This participatory approach can enhance their sense of control and well-being.



4| Utilize a Development Leadership Strategy:

Using this approach will help personnel improve their abilities and meet the organizational goal. Team members may need different supervision as new hires may need more structure and directions and those with more years of experience may need more space and freedom to make decisions.



5| Embrace Innovation:

Create a safe space for your team to collaborate on new ideas, fail and continue learning. Analyze and adjust your own resistance to change and de-centralize control.



3 - Reflect | Things to be Mindful Of:

- **Emotional intelligence in your leadership** - actively listen to your team members, provide regular feedback, and guide them empathically. There may be different approaches to flexibility for different team members and you may need to moderate discussions around equity and fairness in diverse teams.
- **Avoid micromanagement**: over-supervision or micromanagement can strip away job control, leading to stress and disengagement. Encourage a culture that trusts staff with more responsibility and autonomy.
- **Recognition and reward**: acknowledge and celebrate staff achievements to reinforce their sense of value and contribution to the team and to the organization. You can initiate awards at your own team level, thereby leading by example in job control.
- **Be aware of your own personal feelings and limitations**: understanding that no one is perfect would help you understand the areas that you're not comfortable with. Reach out to your organization's HR or staff counselling office to seek support on leadership management and wellbeing resources to help you improve as a manager.

4 - Suggested Tools | + Model for Participatory Process

Participatory Work Design: this model involves engaging staff in identifying problems and collaborating in the creation of solutions that affect their work life. By giving them a voice in the process, it not only empowers them but also can lead to more effective and tailored workplace improvements.

- **1. Initiate dialogue**: Start with a survey (for a larger team or even for creating psychological safety) or open forums to gather staff input on their current job control levels and areas for improvement.

See this for appreciative inquiry which is a participatory approach: [Workplace Strategies for Mental Health presents: Using appreciative inquiry - Overview](#). (See assessment that follows below)
- **2. Analyze feedback** - identify common themes and areas needing attention from the collected feedback
- **3. Develop collaborative solutions** - work with staff to co-create actionable plans that enhance their job control. This could involve restructuring job roles, modifying schedules, or creating new channels for staff feedback and participation. Incorporate feedback from HR to ensure solutions are sustainable.
- **4. Implement and monitor** - apply the agreed-upon changes and continuously, jointly monitor their impact, adjusting as necessary.

By incorporating these strategies and the participatory work design model, managers can significantly enhance job control for their staff, leading to improved engagement, satisfaction, and overall organizational success.



Dig Deeper

- **HSE Management Standards Workbook** - Management Standard 2: Control Page 49: [Stress Workbook \(hse.gov.uk\)](#)



10 to Go Guide - Lifestyle Equilibrium in the Context of Mental Health in the Workplace

1 - Know

Understanding the Home/Work Interface

Lifestyle Equilibrium: it is the person's ability to attend to both personal and professional needs effectively without carrying over the demands of one role onto the other. Lifestyle Equilibrium will allow individuals to commit adequate amount of time and energy to tasks and responsibilities in their personal or professional life. their recovery path and therefore will create further problems for you as a manager.

Some risks are around conflicting home/work demands, and being away from home for work, whether longer term as a posting in a non-family duty station or duty travel. Periods of increased workload or work pace too. For personnel who work atypical work shifts that might constrain them from being readily available to respond to personal needs.

Good practices the strategy advocates for are - flexible working arrangements and support for careers.

McKinsey – Supporting employees in the work-life balancing act suggest two other things:

- Offering good benefits and encouraging their use, for example parental leave and,
- Providing positive role models. Managers and leaders play a critical role here.



Knowing your team well and taking time to catch up about non-work priorities may lead to early signals that a teammate is struggling in this area. Get to know yourself and your personnel as people, as human beings with strengths, characteristics and vulnerabilities we all have. This is so you can notice if, and when, changes occur that might be signals that you need to check in by asking "Am I OK?" or "Are you OK?".

2 - Reflect | Guidance Notes and Reflection Questions for Managers

1. How familiar are you with your teammates so trust is built, and they can either come to you or you to them for personal issues impacting on work?
2. How familiar are you with your organization's flexible working arrangements
3. Who are the key stakeholders you can partner with in your organization for you and your team to get a good understanding of available flexible working arrangements and benefits?
4. As a manager how you can you:
 - **Promote** awareness of home/work interface and actions one can take for flexibility?
 - **Prevent** or address workplace stressors from leading to mental health issues to the extent possible?
 - **Protect** those who are experiencing home/work interface challenges from further stress, discrimination or stigmatization so they feel welcome, supported and included as they take available flexible working arrangements or other support?
 - **Model** positive behavior in taking regular breaks, your leave, being open about balancing home and work life, for example taking flexible time to attend to your own personal things?



3 - Act | Promoting lifestyle equilibrium

As an output from your reflections in the previous section, what were your main insights?

What specific action can you take to:



1. Respond to and protect personnel on your team who are experiencing a challenging home/life interface?
2. Promote life equilibrium and prevent home life imbalance for your team?

Some suggestions follow, you can also use this simple table for your action plan:

Risk	What is currently being done	What else I can do	Who else to involve



At a team level, you can manage psychosocial risks in the workplace through organizational interventions, which can include being supportive of flexible working arrangements or frameworks to address these. Encouraging personnel to take their annual leave, R&R (Rest & Recuperation) and other breaks regularly and supporting them to switch off in their time away.



Invite representatives of your organization's staff assistance programs to present to your team on flexible working arrangements and discretionary options as well as other benefits which may be available.



Regular check-ins with teammates at your one on ones and in team meetings – building trust and psychological safety to discuss non-work activities as appropriate and identifying those who may need support for more flexibility. Regular check-ins can be a vital tool in assessing the workforce's wellbeing and tailoring support accordingly.



Model and encourage Lifestyle Equilibrium by yourself taking regular breaks, etc. Get feedback on your own leadership style and approach.

Dig Deeper



- [UN Women's Brief on Flexible Working Arrangements](#) articulates a good business case and some case studies
- [Emotional Intelligence self-assessment](#)
- [Self-care tool](#)
- [How to provide constructive feedback](#)



10 to Go Guide - Nurturing Inclusion and Good Interpersonal Relationships at Work

1 - Know

Nurturing Inclusion and Good Interpersonal Relationships at Work.

Nurturing inclusion and good interpersonal relationships at work involves creating an environment where every member of the team feels valued, respected, and supported. This is crucial for mental health in the workplace.

It is vital for personnel engagement as it fosters a sense of belonging and trust, which are key to high-functioning and healthy teams and organizations.

Psychological safety, a component of this nurturing environment, allows individuals to feel safe, valued, and empowered, which in turn boosts innovation and productivity. It also reduces conflict and strengthens team cohesion.

2 - Reflect

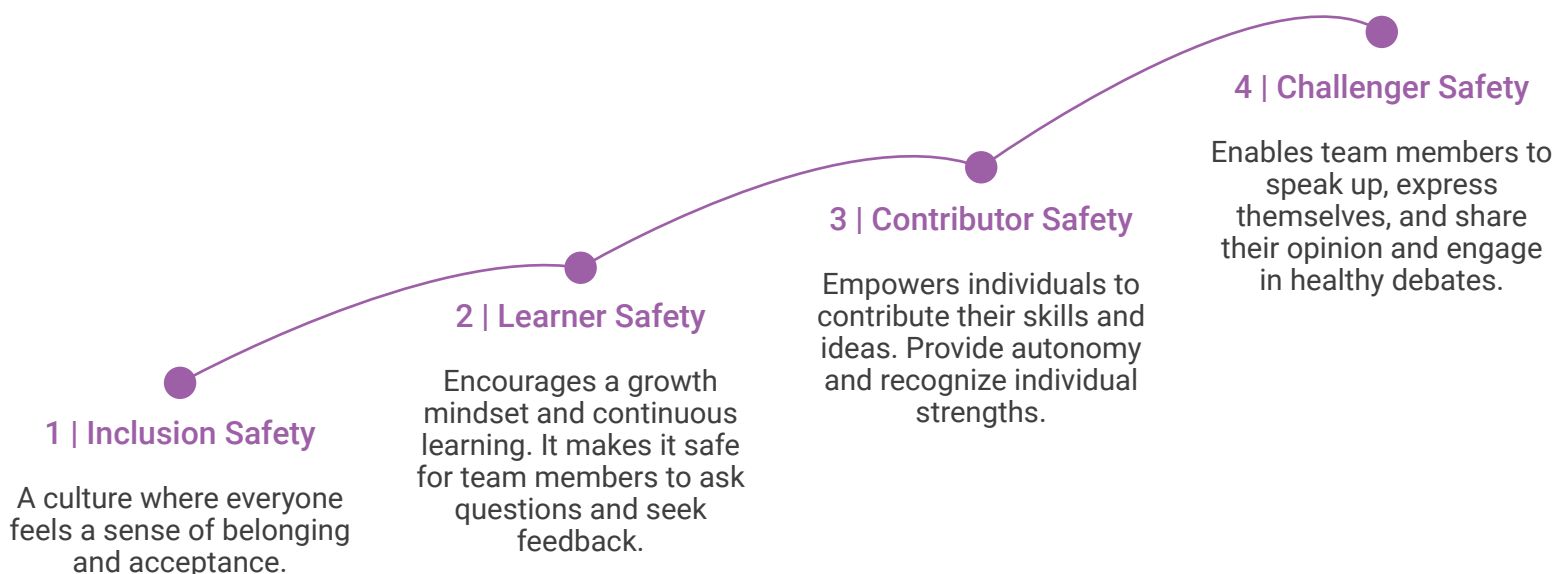
Increasing personnel Engagement and Support for Inclusion.

Practical Guidance (based on the model Four Stage of Psychological Safety, Clark, TR).

Psychological safety is a condition in which you feel (1) included, (2) safe to learn, (3) safe to contribute, and (4) safe to challenge the status quo—all without fear of being embarrassed, marginalized, or punished in some way.



Familiarize yourself with the Four Stages of Psychological Safety:



Take them as steps as you build up your own confidence in addressing each stage. Be aware and open to listening and facilitating as the behaviors may not mean the same to everyone on the team. Rather than a prescription, nurturing inclusion is about seeking understanding and accepting that there may be more than one perspective as each team member expresses and becomes more comfortable being authentic at work.



Leadership role you will need to model inclusive behaviors:



Actively listen and show interest.

They should create space for open dialogue and value diverse perspectives. Get the basics right: look people in the eyes, save enough time for conversations, avoid making assumptions – especially about negative aspects (e.g., this person is trying to take advantage or fool me), use the correct pronunciation of teammates names, remembering key personal information such as nationality, cultural and religious background.



Promote collaboration, compassion, open and respectful communication, and regular team-building activities.

You can organize retreats or team building activities, etc.- promote opportunities for skill-building and workshops to enhance self-awareness, emotional intelligence, empathy, and communication skills.



Promote empathy and understanding in daily interactions.

Lead by example in treating people well, being respectful, show openness to listen to personnel and identify solutions. The following are some examples of showing empathy at the workplace: a) acknowledge another colleague's perspective, feelings. This is not agreement but rather showing that you understand where they are coming from. b) stay away from providing advice unsolicited, c) listen well but share similar experiences as well d) practice gratitude at work, e) ask team members how you can help, f) find similarities and focus on them rather than emphasizing differences. --- checking proper understanding with team members. Rephrasing, repetition, etc.



Foster social skills through team activities and open communication.

You can promote joint breakfast or lunches, birthday celebration or other relevant dates, encourage "gratitude" week, volunteering together, etc.

3 - Suggested Tools

Ladder of vulnerability: [Ladder of Vulnerability Guide & Self-Assessment \(leaderfactor.com\)](https://www.leaderfactor.com/ladder-of-vulnerability-guide/)

- Read** the guide and take the assessment first, then,
- Introduce** the concept of? ladder,
- Invite** your team to take the assessment, careful to ensure they understand it is for enhancing interpersonal relationships and to nurture understanding and tolerance as called for in the ICSC Code of Conduct.
- Compare** your ladders and start the conversation around vulnerability in your team and workplace.

- **Feedback Loops:** Implement regular feedback sessions focusing on strengths, growth areas, and improvement opportunities. Celebrate achievements and recognize efforts. Use the ladder consistently as it provides a shared language and model.

- **Develop some team routines for psychological safety** – for example, consider beginning meetings with appreciation or acknowledgment. Encourage open discussions and constructive debates.



Dig Deeper

Podcasts, guides, and other resources on: LeaderFactor Psychological Safety (<https://www.psychologicallysafeleader.com/>)



10 to Go Guide - Guide for Organizational Culture

1 - Know

Understanding Organizational Culture in the Context of Mental Health in the Workplace

Organizational culture plays a pivotal role in shaping workplace mental health. A healthy work culture is characterized by balanced workloads, respect for work-life boundaries, recognition of staff efforts, and positive and safe workplace relationships. It's crucial as it directly influences Personnel productivity, satisfaction, and overall well-being. A safe and respectful work culture is more beneficial for mental health than merely providing self-care resources. Organizational culture is a collective of everyone's experiences and everyone plays a part in changing it for better or worse. A supportive culture fosters a sense of belonging, motivation, and loyalty among staff, leading to increased engagement and productivity.

2 - Reflect | Guidance Notes for Increasing Staff Engagement Around Organizational Culture

- 1. Prioritize communication** - managers should prioritize open and transparent communication to foster a culture of engagement. This includes sharing team and organizational goals, plans, and challenges, and actively listening to staff's ideas and concerns.
- 2. Provide growth opportunities** – offering and exploring opportunities for staff development and growth can significantly improve engagement. This can be achieved through a variety of methods that your agency may already have in place like buddy systems, mentorship programs, training, and paths for career advancement.
- 3. Recognize and reward contributions** - acknowledging and rewarding staff contributions is essential for building trust, increasing motivation, and promoting engagement. This can include praise for a job well done, as well as tangible rewards and recognition programs both within your remit as a manager or by nominating teammates for organizational awards and recognition.
- 4. Create a supportive work environment** – make a commitment to your team to focus on creating a work environment that supports the staff's physical and mental health. This can involve initiatives such as flexible working options, promoting Lifestyle Equilibrium, and providing support for overall well-being.
- 5. Promote emotional intelligence** – invest in your own training in this area to deepen your own understanding and self-management and those of your team members. This can help in fostering a supportive and empathetic work environment.
- 6. Encourage a transparent workplace** – practice open communication, information sharing and honesty and create a space where everyone can share their opinions freely and comfortably. Address gossip in the office openly and directly to prevent its negative impacts (bullying, mistrust, working in silos, etc.) in the office and direct the conversation towards a more constructive discussion. The root of gossip is the absence of information where a void is felt by team members that can be filled with gossip if proper information is not being relayed.



By implementing these practical guidance notes, managers can effectively increase staff engagement around organizational culture, leading to a more positive and collaborative work environment.



Mindful Considerations:



Respecting individual differences - understanding and respecting different working styles and personal priorities outside of work and how people engage.



Consistency and integrity – paint a consistent image of yourself as a leader where your values, beliefs, and behaviors are congruent with what you say. Lack of consistency and integrity impacts our behavior and the ones around us.



Avoiding burnout - be mindful of workloads and work hours to prevent staff burnout. Timing of an intervention on organizational culture is critical for sustainability and engendering staff trust.

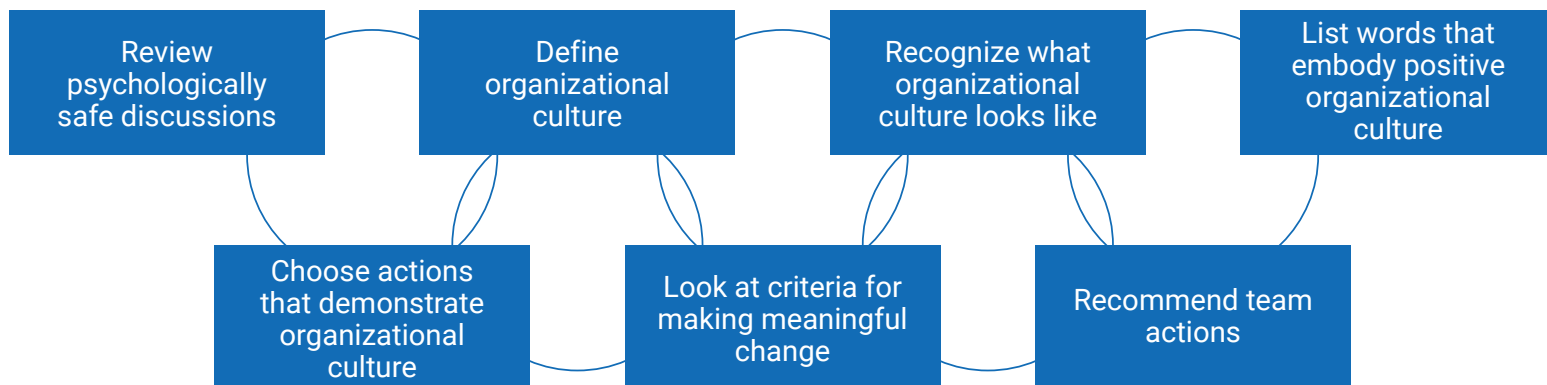


Consistent and authentic communication - ensure that communication and actions from you and leadership are consistent and authentic to build trust. Self-reflect on how you, as a manager, want to contribute to a more healthy, safe and respectful organizational culture and communicate it clearly and lead by example.

3 - Act | Tools for Intervention

Facilitate a team discussion/workshop on [Putting Organizational Culture on the Agenda](#).

This Process will help you and your team to:



Dig Deeper



- **Guide to facilitating mental health in the workplace workshops** for your team/organizational unit
- **Podcast** - [The Causal Chain Between Emotional Intelligence and Psychological Safety](#)
- **Team Energy Assessment – Module 1: Lead and Learn Workbook** from page 30
- **Beck Institute** - [Managing Mental Health in the Workplace](#)



10 to Go Guide - Supporting a Team Member Experiencing Poor Mental Health.

1 - Know

Why would you support someone at your workplace who is experiencing poor mental health?

You want to support colleagues, because it is the human thing to do, and it is part of your responsibility as a manager. The sooner the problem of a colleague with poor mental health is attended to, the faster the person will recover and return to work. How we attend to people with poor mental health is a critical factor. Unsupportive behaviours will delay their recovery path and therefore will create further problems for you as a manager.



Specifically

- 1| Silence and/or non-action have consequences.**
Poor mental health stops people from performing their best at work and in life. It can lead to feelings of helplessness, and at the extreme, to the loss of desire to continue living. Many people feel ashamed of those feelings and find it hard to ask for help; this does not mean help is not wanted.
- 2| Poor mental health of one team member affects everyone else.**
Inaction sends a message to all team members that their mental health is not important and the organization does not care or is unable to help. Inaction creates stress for the other team members, who may be trying to compensate for the reduced performance of one individual. Supporting good mental health leads to healthier staff, and better relationships and performance.
- 3| People have the right to work regardless of their health and disability.**
As a manager you are required to support your team member's right to work in line with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights. Attending to the physical health of staff in your workplace, but not attending to the mental health and well-being of staff in your workplace, is discriminatory management and leadership.



Your role as a manager therefore is to:

Learn about mental health and be non-judgmental.

Understand the workplace psychosocial risks that may affect mental health.

Understand how your own stress affects the well-being of the team.

Invest on your selfcare and serve as a role model for staff to take care of their health

Show a clear message that you value self-care and social support in the team.

Learn to recognize the signs of mental health problems.

Act early and appropriately (each individual is different).

Communicate in a way that is in the best interest of the person, work, team and your own self.

Enable, support and navigate recovery by making workplace accommodations if needed and planning the staff member's return to work.



2 - Reflect

Take time to think about the different responsibilities we have just identified.

On a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 is “not at all confident” and 5 is “fully confident”:

- How confident are you engaging in a conversation about mental health and providing support?
- Why did you select that number?
- If you are rating yourself below 5, what would help you to move your self-assessment up by one step toward more confidence?
- What possible barriers could be preventing you from being more confident?

➔ **Whatever your score, please be reassured that you don’t need to know how to treat someone or be a therapist, be an expert in mental health or be a counsellor or know how to fix the problem and make judgements.**

Your role is to get to know your team members as people and understand any significant changes in their lives. Get good at observing your team’s behaviour, such as typical working styles and how people interact, and be aware of any changes (either good or not so good).

Notice the effects significant workplace changes may trigger on people, such as changes in workload or extended placements in tough duty stations. Many times mental health struggles will show up first as performance issues or behaviours change.

When you notice signs of poor mental health:

Act by starting a compassionate conversation without delay, to determine the person’s readiness/willingness to talk about their mental health. Encourage self-care and help seeking. And ensure that the person knows that everyone may suffer from poor mental health at times.

For example, changes in:

- **General mood** (withdrawal, crying, non-responsiveness, restlessness)
- **Concentration** (forgetfulness, absent-mindedness, errors)
- **Punctuality** (lateness in keeping appointments or deadlines)
- **Ability to manage conflict** (irritability, anger, micro-aggressions)
- **Appearance** (grooming, facial expression) Presence (repeated or extended time away from work)

Enable, support and navigate recovery – a collaborative approach:

Seek advice if you are worried. You can seek advice from a number of sources, depending on the issues – for example Counsellors, Medical Office, Human Resources, Ombudsperson’s Office

Be informed about what you can do if someone needs support or is not able to take care of usual duties.

Make simple short-term workplace adjustments if no time off work is required.

Discuss and decide with the person the planning of workplace adjustments; otherwise, it may look like you are taking pieces of the job away from the person and giving them to others. The person may think, “I am useless, and everybody sees that.”

Understand your role in planning the person’s return to work.



3 - Act

Preparing for a meaningful conversation:

- 1| Note any signs of poor mental health that indicate the need for a conversation. Are there any early signs that you had not noticed before that you see now?
- 2| Create a climate of trust. Approach the colleague with respect. Check if they are ready to have a conversation; and give them control over how much they want to share. Pay attention to confidentiality: team members need to feel safe to talk about anything they'd like, without fear of that information leaving the room.
- 3| Check in with your readiness:
How is my well-being? | Am I irritated and pressed for time, or am I relaxed and open? | How can I be in a good space for an important conversation?
How will my intention determine the course of the conversation? Do I want to....
Understand what is going on? | Fix the person? | Know how to best discipline the person? | Understand how to best support the person? | In which scenario will I learn something new?
- 4| You do need to:
Express your observations and concerns clearly and warmly, and be prepared for a possible response of denial, which you must respect. Listen more than talk. Your presence will be more reassuring than your speech. Ask what help would be appreciated rather than suggesting solutions. Most people know what would help. Be prepared with support resources, referrals or other information. Leave the door open – ask if it would be okay to follow up.

Questions to ask and avoid, a conversation checklist:

Try to ask:

- I've noticed that you have been...I wanted to take the time to check how you are?
- I wanted to check if you are okay and if there is anything I can do to support you?
- What support do you think might help? How can I support you?

Avoid asking:

- You are clearly struggling. What's up?
- Why can't you just get your act together?
- Do you expect me or the others to do your work?
- Your performance is really unacceptable right now. What's wrong with you?
- Everyone else is in the same boat and they're okay. Why aren't you?
- Who do you expect to pick up all the work that you can't manage?

Post conversation:

If additional help is needed, seek advice, supporting a colleague is a collaborative effort. Connect the colleague with the appropriate support person/office and encourage them to seek help.

Do not assume the person needs time off work, this may be detrimental to their mental health. Instead, discuss possible options to support them. Seek help from HR in determining the way forward in relation to policies, entitlements and processes.

Dig Deeper



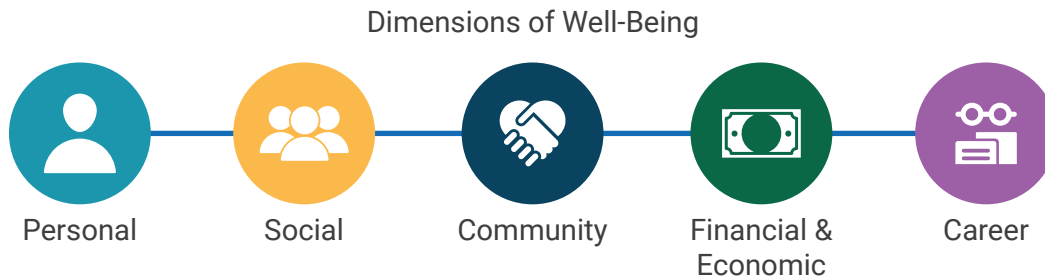
- **Factsheet** – [Supporting others.pdf \(un.org\)](#) – recognising when someone may be developing a mental health condition and how to support that person.
- **Lead and Learn Module 3** – [Workplace Mental Health and Well-being: Lead and Learn | UNSSC | United Nations System Staff College](#)
- **Factsheet** – [Living and working with Mental Health Conditions.pdf \(un.org\)](#)



10 to Go Guide - Taking Care of your Mental Health

1 - Know

The Well-Being Model



→ Why is mental health and well-being important?

Mental health and well-being in the workplace matters because:

- It significantly affects staff, teams and yourself (professionally and personally). It also affects your role and performance as a manager.
- Within UN organizations and the UN system, it enables and sustains performance, reduces costs (sick-leave/turnover) and helps us achieve results.
- As global humanitarian and development leaders, we are expected to model the guidance contained in the UN Declaration of Human Rights, the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and the goals of Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good health and well-being.

There is no shame to experiencing poor mental health or a mental health condition. As with physical health and well-being, all of us are always somewhere on the continuum, and the place where we find ourselves can and does shift.

There is often stigma related to poor mental health. All of us need to challenge our own and other people's attitudes and increase our knowledge about mental health and poor mental health.



What is well-being?

Well-being is a personal experience: while there are some basic or universal shared practices that keep us healthy as humans, the aspects and experiences of well-being can be very unique to you individually.

"Well-being is about people and creating the conditions to thrive. It's quality of life and prosperity, positive physical and mental health, sustainable thriving communities." (From ILO well-being work)

Thriving as a leader and manager means making a daily investment in your mental health and well-being, and acting early when you notice signs of change that are having negative impacts on your mental health and well-being. If you don't act early, you may suffer, potentially needing time off to recover, and you will affect others.



2 - Reflect

Daily investment in your well-being, nurturing good health, and acting early when you notice that you are experiencing poor health will enable you to thrive in your role as a manager or leader.

What to notice in yourself?

To evaluate your stress level, you need to look for changes in yourself and in your behaviour, what we call stress markers and fatigue. This takes practice. Self-assessments can be a helpful starting point.

Take real world activity - lesson 3.3 How does the way you think affect your level of stress?

3 - Act

- 1| What affects your mental health and well-being most?
 - Which aspects can you control or influence?
- 2| What are two or three areas you want to prioritize in order to minimize and manage stress?
 - What is a simple action that you could take to address these areas in the next two weeks?

If you have significant concerns about your level of stress and the impact it is having on your mental health and well-being, and/or your performance at work:

- Don't wait. Talk to a friend or your manager.
- Reprioritize your work and take time for breaks.
- Seek advice or help from Staff Welfare/Staff Counsellor or Medical Services.

Seeking help is not a weakness. It is the courageous thing to do, the smart thing to do.

Dig Deeper



- **Factsheet 1** – [Personal well-being and managing stress for managers and leaders](#)
- **Lead and Learn Module 2** – [Entirety](#)
- **Factsheet 3, Section 3** – [Looking after yourself](#)



- **Increasing the positive perception of mental health** – [UN Mental Health and Well-being Strategy Retreat - 01](#)
- **IOM Self Care Video** – [Self Care \(English\)](#)



- **Podcast 1: Lead & Learn: Why it is important and how you can improve it** – [Episode 1 - Lead & Learn](#)
- **Podcast 2: Lead & Learn: What can help you thrive!** – [Episode 2: What can help you thrive?](#)



10 to Go Guide - Work Scheduling with a Focus on Atypical Work Patterns

1 - Know

What is work scheduling that is supportive to mental health in the workplace?

Work scheduling supportive to mental health in the workplace refers to the process of **planning and organizing staff work hours and shifts in a way that considers their mental well-being**. It is important for staff engagement as it directly impacts their work-life balance, stress levels, and overall mental health. By offering flexible and supportive work scheduling and working in supportive facilities, staff are more likely to feel valued, motivated, and engaged, leading to increased productivity and a positive work environment.

2 - Act | Guidance Notes for Managers

Managers can increase staff engagement and offer support around work scheduling by:



1| Promoting Flexibility:

Offering flexible work arrangements, such as remote work options or flexible hours, to accommodate staff's personal needs and promote a healthy work-life balance.



2| Open Communication:

Encouraging open communication with staff about their scheduling preferences and any challenges they may face, and working collaboratively to find solutions that work for both the staff and the organization.



3| Training on Emotional Intelligence:

Providing training for supervisors on recognizing signs of mental distress, offering support, and referring staff to appropriate resources when necessary. This can help managers to be more empathetic and understanding of their team members' needs.



4| Regular observation:

Routinely observing staff mental health and well-being by understanding and addressing the impact of work scheduling on their stress levels and overall mental health.

Tool: Implementing a Listening Campaign



Although originally formulated for community organizing, this tool adapts well for the workplace and teams. It is a valuable tool for managers to **identify concerns and priorities specific to their teams that work atypical work hours, unsocial or even emergency situations**.



It focuses effort on **building community through initial one on one listening conversations or very small group meetings** facilitated by the manager or other trusted team leader, which could be an emergent leader in the group, not necessarily a formal titled leader.

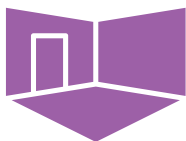


These listening meetings create **space for staff to share their own stories so the facilitator can better understand their perspectives and experiences**. As these stories are overlaid, a shared picture of life for that team emerges and together the team gains empathy, a deeper sense of understanding and belonging from which they can co-create solutions that are sustainable.



For example, as part of the listening campaign, it emerges that staff are concerned about not being able to observe their religious rites, spiritual activities, or personal commitments due to the nature of their work.

Some examples of welfare facilities that managers can provide to support staff with different backgrounds who are working at atypical hours include:



Quiet room or even sheltered corner for prayer or reflection -

Providing a designated quiet space for staff to engage in personal wellness practices such as religious practices, personal reflection, and meditation during their work hours and yet be safe and in proximity should an emergency arise.



Flexible break areas -

Creating flexible break areas that can accommodate staff needs, such as providing a clean and quiet space for staffs to eat and drink during their breaks, especially for those observing specific dietary restrictions and cleanliness.



Accommodating cultural/religious clothing -

Allowing staff to wear their native culture or religious clothing or symbols as part of their work attire and providing appropriate changing facilities if necessary. This may have to be discreet for security reasons.



Flexible working arrangements -

Offering flexible work scheduling options to help staff meet their personal obligations without having to sacrifice their work; for example, staggered team breaks to allow for earlier/later lunch break, formalize prayer break and still ensure coverage.



Tolerance and understanding -

The ICSC Code of Conduct calls for UN staff to nurture tolerance and understanding for each other and uphold human dignity. Providing education and training to encourage a greater understanding of different religious beliefs and practices that may be seen in the workplace.



Inclusion -

Offer team commemoration or celebrating cultural and religious holidays and events to promote an inclusive environment – this may even be in form of ensuring staff who are working over a religious or other holiday have themed refreshments or such to commemorate.

Use the listening campaign often as it gives insight into nuances particular to your team.



Dig Deeper



• **Listening Campaign Seven Steps for designing and structuring one.** – [Listening Campaign Toolkit | AMA \(ama-assn.org\)](https://ama-assn.org/listening-campaign-toolkit)



10 to Go Guide - Workload and Work Pace Impact on Mental Health in the Workplace

1 - Know

What is work overload and work pace?

This refers to both the amount of work and the rate at which people are expected to deliver. They become problematic when there is:



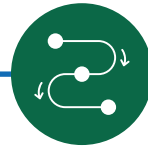
Overwork
or Work
Underload



High Levels
of Time
Pressure



Understaffing
or New Team
Members Joining



Workflow/
Distribution
of work



Poor Management:
Priorities, Organization,
Deadlines, Boundaries



Lack of
Autonomy on
Task Definition

Work-related stress can be due to several general conditions such as design of tasks, management style, organizational structure, interpersonal relationships, work roles, career concerns and even environmental concerns. All these factors could contribute to unbalanced/disproportionate workload and unsuitable workspace at the workplace. Brief definitions and examples can be found below:

Design of tasks - Heavy workload, infrequent breaks, long work hours and shiftwork, hectic and routine tasks with little meaning for the responsible personnel, lack of proper resources, lack of skills needed, little sense of control.

Management style - Lack of participation by workers in decision-making, poor communication in the organization, lack of family-friendly policies, over-supervision, micromanagement, lack of autonomy

Organizational structure and/or culture - The way the organization is structured and how its culture may limit certain people and favor others. Lack of trust, authoritarianism, favoritism (or perception of it) may play a significant role in the distribution of workload. Some people get different treatment due to their race, gender, personal connection, etc. Furthermore, where organization culture values workaholism and expects staff to give extra hours/energy (e.g. do more with less), this will lead to work-related stress.

Interpersonal relationships - Underdeveloped team relationships with poor coordination and alignment on common tasks, resulting in a lack of support or help from co-workers and supervisors

Work roles - Conflicting or uncertain job expectations, too much responsibility, too many roles.

Career concerns - Job insecurity, lack of opportunity for growth, advancement or promotion, rapid changes for which workers are unprepared

Environmental concerns - Unpleasant or dangerous physical conditions such as crowding, noise, air pollution or poor ergonomic conditions.



Some guiding principles are:

- Limits on working hours and/or number of shifts
- Achievable deadlines and targets within the working hours
- Flexible working schedules
- Systems are in place to respond to individual concerns
- Positive work culture such as having office lunch, having regular check-ins with employees either in person or through office surveys, etc.

Some signs that your team, or individual staff may be struggling in this area may include changes in behavior or performance, disengagement, loss of motivation and other signs of stress.

2 - Reflect | Guidance Notes for Managers

Reflection questions

- 1| What assumptions do I hold about well-being, mental health, and workload or work pace? What do I need to know about risks and protective factors?
- 2| What else might be helpful for me to know about work demands on my team i.e., work cycles/rhythms, individual and team capacity in relation to organizational expectations or other things that potentially cause tension in relation to workload and work pace in our workplace?
- 3| How can I assess my workplace for workload or work pace related risks or vulnerabilities that may affect the team's or an individual's mental health and well-being?
- 4| What should I look out for? How do I notice if someone may need help or more support? Is there anyone in the team who may need some support?
- 5| Has my team or others already raised any specific issues over workload and work pace?
- 6| Do I know whom I can go to for advice? Do I know how to access help for people in my team?

3 - Act | Suggested Tool or Model for Intervention

Implementation Steps

- 1| Identify your team's capacity and each team member's workload. Break down each task into smaller portions and prioritize them based on importance, urgency, and deadlines to effectively distribute tasks to team members for optimum delivery. Ensure enough resources are allocated to each task/team member.
- 2| Take time with your team to reflect on your current working environment. Involve personnel in discussions about workload management and work pace through an appropriate channel. Ask for feedback from team members through face-to-face conversations, focus groups, and/or office surveys. Establish anonymous feedback mechanisms if needed. Review regular staff survey results to better understand issues that your team are facing and identify possible stressors.
- 3| Select the three things that you are most concerned about in relation to workload and work pace in your team.




List what is being done and what more could be done to resolve the workload/work pace risk. Co-develop actions to address the identified issues. You can use the table below to help you.

Risk/Issue	What is being done to help?	What more could be done to help address this?

4| Monitor and Review: Continuously and jointly monitor the effectiveness of implemented measures and adjust as needed. You can also run the exercise periodically or as the team composition changes and you see the stress signs rising.

Things to note:



Whatever your own preference for workload, lead by example in your working hours, take regular breaks, reschedule deadlines, negotiate work sharing with other teams where there may be overlap, consider if there is budget for temporary support etc.

Work pace may involve more long term and involve others outside your team, for example adjustments to planning horizons. Other resources:

[Thriving at Work Mental Health Standards \(mind.org.uk\)](#) | [Lead and Learn Workbook 1](#)