



System-Wide Approach to Workplace Mental Health and Well-Being

Key Messages for Larger Organizations

Why This Matters

Given the current situation—with ongoing realignments, restructurings, shifting geopolitical priorities, and intensifying financial pressures—the UN is operating in a highly dynamic and demanding environment. These pressures are already taking a visible toll on staff well-being. Larger UN organizations play a vital role in shaping and supporting a system-wide approach to mental health. Their participation ensures smarter use of resources, stronger data, and greater impact across the UN system.

Objectives of a System-Wide Approach

- **Save time and money:** By joining the Mental Health Strategy (MHS) Implementation Board and Working Groups, larger organizations help avoid duplication of efforts and make better use of shared tools and expertise.
- **Make better decisions with data:** The MHS Team collects and analyses data across the UN system. This helps organizations identify mental health risks and take informed action.
- **Lead by example:** Larger agencies can set the tone for the UN system by modelling best practices, driving innovation, and encouraging collaboration.

What the Strategy Includes

Efficient use of resources

- **Cost-sharing:** Pooling funds helps build strong mental health programmes while keeping individual costs low—especially important in times of budget pressure.
- **Use what already works:** Instead of starting from scratch, organizations can adopt and adapt proven UN tools and initiatives, saving time and encouraging interagency cooperation.

Data-Driven Insights

- **Spot the gaps:** MHS-led reviews can identify where mental health policies and programmes fall short. Organizations then receive targeted support to strengthen these areas.
- **Track impact and ROI:** A new psychosocial risk management system links HR data (e.g. absenteeism) to psychosocial risk assessments. This helps quantify the return on investment in mental health initiatives—especially important when budgets are tight.

Leadership by Example

- **Show commitment:** When large organizations participate, it demonstrates the importance of mental health to the whole system. Sharing expertise and tools helps smaller agencies improve their own mental health support, building system-wide capacity.

Strategic Benefits

- **Better collaboration:** A shared approach strengthens partnerships and breaks down silos across agencies.
- **Scalable solutions:** Pilot projects and tools developed by larger organizations can be used system-wide, benefiting all.
- **Stronger business case:** Demonstrating value through data builds support for continued investment in mental health.



Examples of Scalable Programming

- **The MHS scorecard exercise** provides actionable insights through annual system-wide reviews, enabling agencies to identify gaps, measure progress, and make targeted improvements.
- **The Psychosocial Risk Assessment and Mitigation Tool**, piloted by UNHCR and UNICEF, offers a scalable framework for identifying and mitigating workplace risks that impact engagement, sick leave and efficiency. This tool integrates HR data, like presence and absence records, to create predictive models and calculate ROI on mitigation efforts. As this tool can predict the impact of workplace risk on staffing metrics important to the delivery of the mandate, it represents a significant improvement over the use of costly 3rd party staff assessment tools used by most entities. As the first UN-owned psychosocial risk model, it sets a precedent for resilience-building across the UN system.
- **The Mental Health Literacy Programme** was developed to address the widespread gap in mental health understanding across UN entities. Larger agencies played a pivotal role by contributing advanced content and expertise, which was then consolidated into a basic, standardized training programme. This freely available resource ensures equitable access to essential mental health knowledge across the system, fostering a culture of awareness and collaboration.
- **Mental Health and Well-being Action Plan:** The sample document provides a structured framework to support entities without organization-specific mental health action plans. It outlines key pillars, actions, actors, and enablers critical to implementing the Mental Health Strategy, offering a practical starting point for entities to build or enhance their mental health initiatives.

Resources

[United Nations System Mental Health and Well-being Strategy for 2024 and beyond](#)
[Resources for implementing the Strategy](#)