



Re-thinking Mental Health in the Workplace: An Ecosystem Approach



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A faint, light teal illustration in the background shows a hand holding a brain. The hand is positioned at the bottom, with fingers slightly curled as if supporting the brain from underneath. The brain is depicted with several curved lines representing its surface.

**PREVENTION IS BETTER
THAN CURE!**

WHY PAY ATTENTION TO EMPLOYEE MENTAL HEALTH?



It's the smart thing to do – making mental health a priority in the workplace makes good business sense and helps contribute to a higher performing workforce and economy in general through:

- improved worker morale and engagement
- decreased disruptions and costs resulting from work-related harm
- improved performance and productivity
- reduced worker turnover, absenteeism and presenteeism
- enhanced organisational reputation as an employer of choice.



How would you describe your organisation's current mental health strategy in 4 words?

existing ewp
non-existent
underutilized
annual campaign
needs to be prioritized
poor
under-utilised
flawed
stigmatized
basic approach
minimal
available
lacking
essential



How would you describe your mental health strategy in four words?

reactive
zero-harm
supportive
home safe



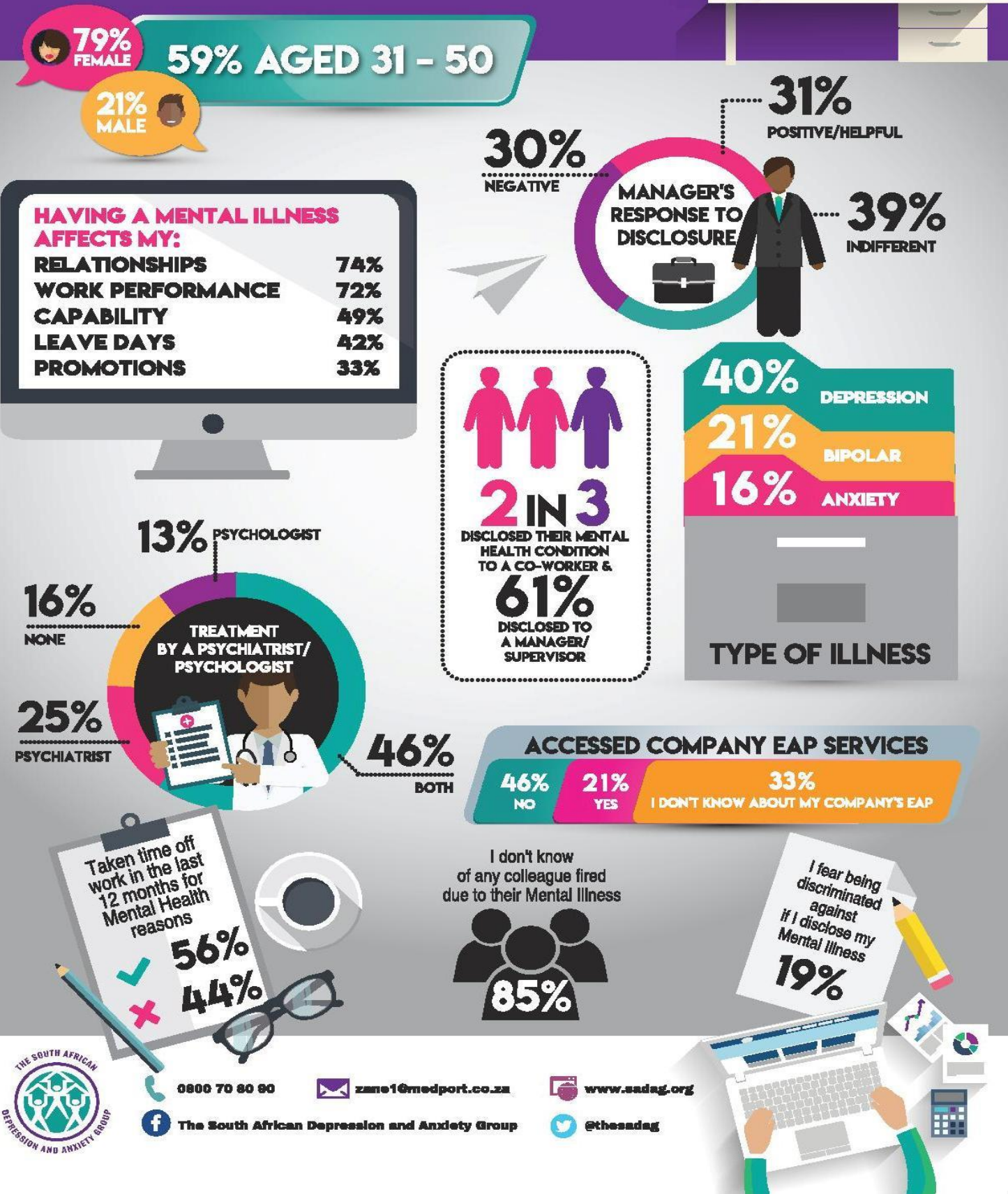
QUESTIONS INCREASINGLY ASKED IN WORKPLACES

“one of my co-workers told a colleague that he had, depression, couldn't sleep and didn't want to go on living. That message came to me as a manager, what should I do?”

“I want to include mental health in our wellness programme to reduce absenteeism but I don't know HOW to do it or how to measure outcomes”.



MENTAL HEALTH & STIGMA IN THE WORKPLACE



Top areas affected by Mental Health:

- Relationships
- Work Performance
- capabilities
- leave days – On average, people with depression took 18 days off work due to depression (outside of their normal stipulated leave days)
- promotions. – 56% of participants took time off in the past 12 months due to mental health

Diagnosed conditions from professionals in the sample group:

- Depression 40%,
- Bipolar 21%,
- Anxiety 16%. –

Managers' response to participants' disclosure of their conditions:

- Indifferent – 39 %

- Positive – 31%
- Negative – 30%
- Only 25% of managers felt that they had very good support in dealing with employees with depression or mental health conditions.
- 50% of managers don't know how many sick days taken are due to employees having depression

Current Approaches to Employee Mental Health

1. Crisis-centred
2. Reactive rather than proactive and preventative
3. Focuses more on education and awareness and overlooks prevention and elimination of psychological harm
4. Focuses on point solutions which ignore related issues, needs and dependencies.
5. Punitive



Employee Mental Health as a Continuum



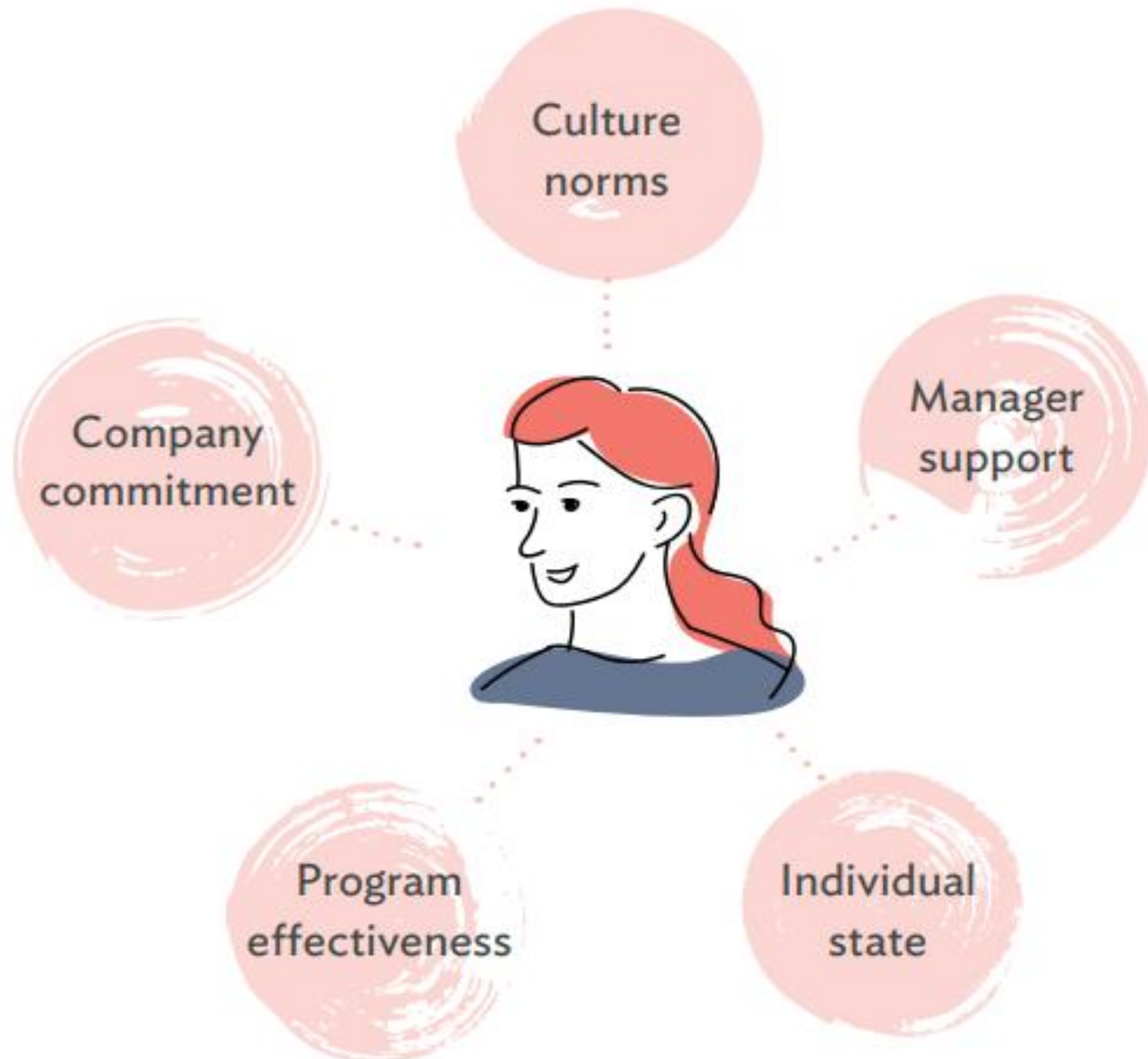
- We view employee mental health as a continuum and not a binary state where an employee is either well or unwell.
- In between the extreme ends of either thriving (Green Zone) and being in a crisis (Red Zone), employees experience some level of difficulties with managing their mental health which may lead to them reaching the Crisis Zone

WorkWell equips organisations to identify and respond to employees in those 'in-between' zones in order to prevent crises and also ensure that all employees are in the green zone.



*Establishing a company culture which is supportive of mental health requires deliberately building the right structure or ecosystem rather than simply focusing on **individuals**. This means that you need to address things such as the **company's commitment to wellbeing, culture norms, manager support and any programs or initiatives in place.***





The Workplace Mental Health Ecosystem





Elements of an effective

Workplace Mental Health

Strategy

1. Critical Reflection: where have we been, where are we now and where do we want to be?
2. Gain a sense of reality i.e. the facts. Your mental health strategy is not worth much if it does not accurately reflect the reality of the situation. Employee Wellness Surveys, Mental Health Audits and Risk Assessment surveys can shed great insights to inform your strategy
3. Balances Listening to Employees and business objectives.
4. Is embedded in the fabric of the organisation – policies, training, messaging, etc.
5. Understands that Mental Health cannot be addressed in a vacuum but requires an ecosystem which the organisation forms a critical part of. EAPs are part of the ecosystem





NORMALISE CONSTANT CHECKING
IN WITH YOUR EMPLOYEES



A graphic on a dark blue background showing a spectrum of four colored circles: green (Thriving), yellow (Reacting), orange (Struggling), and red (In Crisis). A hand is pointing to the green circle. The WorkWell logo and the text "Promoting a Culture of Wellness in the Workplace" are also present.

Thriving

Reacting

Struggling

In Crisis

WorkWell

" Promoting a Culture of Wellness in the Workplace "



- Workplace factors which have the potential to cause Psychological harm to employees.
- By identifying Psychosocial hazards and risks means that as a company you are able to directly address any of the areas, rather than just provide support.
- When it comes to understanding, measuring, improving employee wellbeing we want to focus on areas that are actionable within a work context.

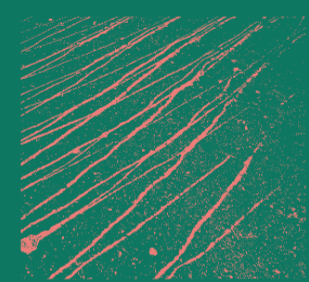
Identifying and Managing Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace



Examples of Psychosocial Hazards in the Workplace

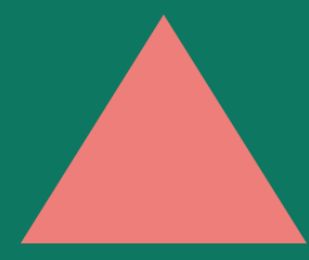
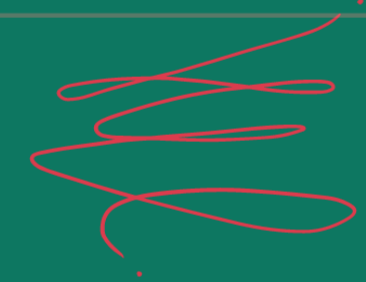
Definition

Psychosocial Hazards are those aspects of the design and management of work that have the potential for causing psychological harm to employees



Job Demands

Overloaded workers experience fatigue, loss of concentration, a feeling of being overwhelmed, and stress.



Job Control

A key to reducing the risk of psychological distress work is to allow workers to have more control over their work and working conditions.



Poor support

Good management-worker relations facilitate mutual support for solving workplace problems and reducing the risk to psychological harm. A supportive atmosphere through both formal and informal means should be encouraged.



Low role clarity

Reflects the degree to which employees are expected to perform two or more mutually exclusive tasks simultaneously and has been described as incompatible demands and expectations placed on an employee.

Leadership and Justice at Work

By addressing workplace problems promptly, fairly and justly when they occur, a workplace climate can be created for dealing effectively with stress at work.

MENTAL HEALTH FIRST AID IN THE WORKPLACE (MHFA)

In the very same way that a lot of people might know how to give CPR, treat a burn or stabilise someone who is having an epileptic seizure, MHFA informs people in the workplace on what to do should something go wrong with an employee and equipping them with the necessary MHFA skills to handle such situations.

This would also include the specifics on how to go about administering MHFA for different Mental Health conditions.



- Do you have a mental health policy (or is similar content contained in other OHS/HR policies)?
- Are the main psychosocial hazards in the workplace known?
- Are psychosocial risks covered in the organization/site risk register?
- Is there a process to consult with employees regarding mental health risks (e.g. health and safety representatives/working groups/surveys)?
- Are employees provided mental health literacy/awareness training?

**How committed is
your organisation
to employee
mental health?**

- In addition to all-employee mental health literacy training, are leaders/managers provided with additional training on how to prevent harm and respond to mental health risks at work?
- Have relevant people received mental health first aid training (e.g. line managers/human resource professionals)?
- Is there additional support available to employees to address mental health concerns (e.g. employee assistance program/telephone hotline)?
- Is there a return to work policy to help employees return to work (or stay at work) following absence from work due to mental health?

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**How committed is
your organisation
to employee
mental health?**

About Us



The WorkWell programme assists organisations to design and implement effective workplace mental health strategies. This includes encouraging organisations to adopt proactive and preventative approach to employee mental health as would be the case with physical wellbeing. Through our programme, organisations are equipped and empowered to creatively formulate strategies in the workplace to identify, understand and respond to employee mental health needs and concerns.

Key to our approach to employee mental health is prevention, early intervention and ongoing support.

The programme is targeted at Senior leaders, HR, line managers and OHS Reps.



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