10 key ingredients you're missing in your wellness programme

Presented by:



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at the Wellness Breakfast by Intellect and MercerMarsh Benefits

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It's time we go above and beyond medical and dental benefits.



Gone are the days of merely focusing on physical wellbeing. Today, organisations need a holistic approach that encompasses mental, emotional, social, financial, and intellectual wellness.

As the world evolves, what worked last year may not work today. To quote Charles Darwin, it's not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent. It's the one most adaptable to change.

For HR professionals and company leaders on the cusp of transformation, the following pages offer a rare peek into the finest practices and innovative solutions of organisations out there.

Make a business case

How will your wellbeing programme translate into organisational outcomes?



Justifying new mental health benefits can be an uphill task as some organisational outcomes, such as morale, are hard to quantify. How does one measure "good vibes"?

Solution

Tie employee wellbeing to tangible business outcomes using a validated methodology and mental health assessments.

What you can do



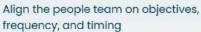
i) Identify priority organisational outcomes:

Pinpoint key metrics such as productivity, pulse survey scores, and job satisfaction. Make sure they align with your organisation's goals and values.

ii) Collaborate with your **Employee Assistance Program** (EAP) provider:

Establish robust measurements for these metrics and leverage tools like platform screenings and employee listening for comprehensive insights.

STAGET Conceptualise



- O Do take stock of recent and upcoming surveys to prevent repetition.
- 🖸 Don't run surveys in the thick of events that may skew responses.

STAGE 2 Develop

Base your questions on an existing EAP or wellness framework

- Do ask open-ended questions for both quantitative and aualitative results.
- 2 Don't ask double-barelled questions that will make interpretation tricky:

"I enjoy my work and share good relationships with my co-workers"

STAGE 3 Implement

Communicate the survey's intent and assure employees of anonymity

- Do track response rate and send reminders nearing the deadline.
- Don't deploy the survey without first testing the

STAGE 4 Follow up

Acknowledge employees who took the time and effort to give feedback

- Do update employees on findings and follow-up
- O Don't go quiet after the survey has concluded.



iii) Craft a compelling message:

Highlight the benefits that your proposal will offer employees. Emphasise the effect of personal growth on professional development, and how overall wellbeing may reduce absenteeism and presenteeism.

Intellect's approach

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If productivity and absenteeism are critical organisational outcomes of yours, our objective is to increase work-related outcomes and reduce absenteeism (and healthcare costs). Using Intellect Dimensions, here's a simulation showcasing Intellect's Return on Investment (ROI) based on various adoption rates over an 8-week period.

Making the business case for mental health

Problem Statement:

How do I translate my wellbeing program into business outcomes?

Productivity

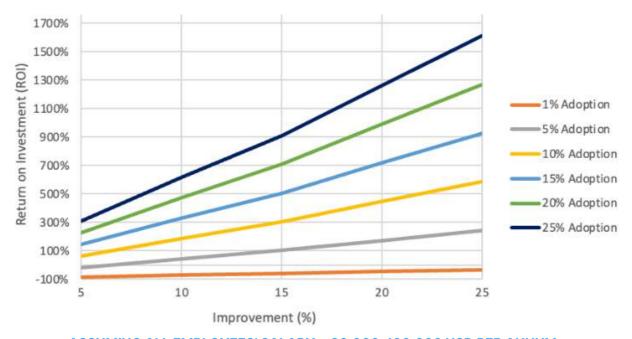
Increase in work-related



Absenteeism

Decrease in healthcare costs and absences

- Psychological resources
- Work outcomes
- · Emotional state
- Days missed



ASSUMING ALL EMPLOYEES' SALARY = 30,000-100,000 USD PER ANNUM

This methodology is conservatively estimated to deliver 5-12x returns for your business.

For more information on Intellect Dimensions:

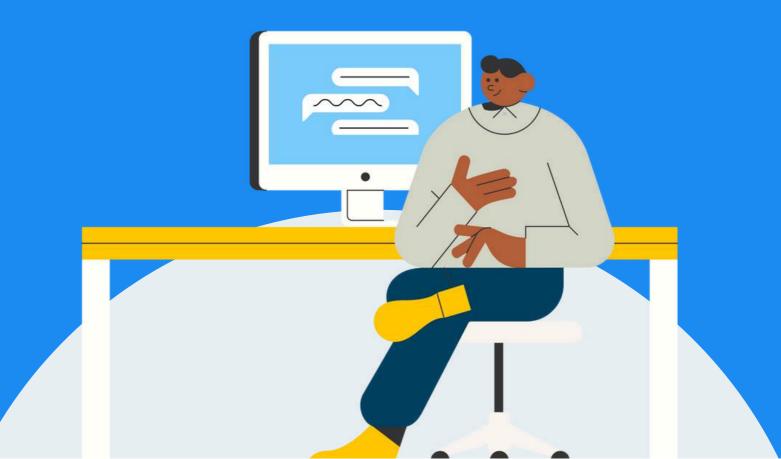
https://intellect.co/read/intellect-version-two/

Intellect Dimensions has been scientifically validated with an n=1,000 research study with Singapore-based employees in 2022. It also provides data on your employees' wellbeing, enabling you to craft well-informed strategies.



2. Adapt your global framework for local realities

How can we make mass initiatives relevant to individual needs?



Headquarters-driven programmes may provide a solid roadmap and infrastructure, but they often overlook:

- i) Local relevance: Are the topics and activities truly hitting home in each region?
- ii) Vendor availability: Do local providers have the resources to support your initiatives?

- iii) Demographics, needs & preferences: Language and cultural barriers between providers and employees may compromise the effectiveness of care.
- iv) On-the-ground engagement: A more visible and personal approach is needed to engage a remote workforce.

Solution

Localise your programme and cater to employee needs across unique contexts.

What you can do



Embrace the "Global Initiatives, Local Interventions" approach by:

i) Building connections:

Work with the local offices of your global vendors to drive engagement and address market-specific concerns. This ensures that every region feels heard and valued.

ii) Tap into local offerings:

Consult your local Third-Party Administrators (TPAs), providers, or vendors for relevant add-ons that can supplement your global efforts.

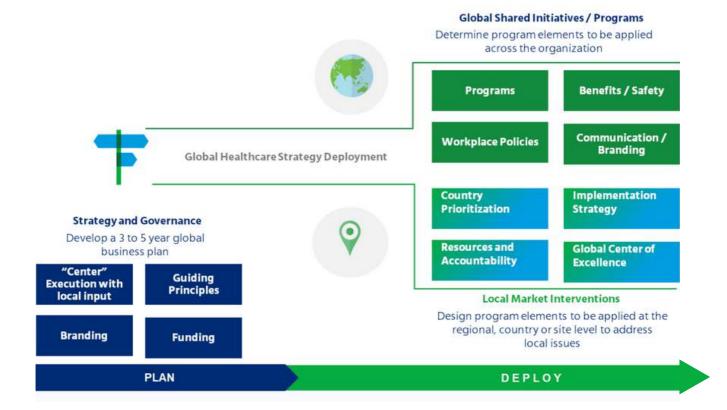
iii) Join forces with Intellect & MMB:

Our dynamic partnership can help you localise your global program and meet the diverse wellness needs of every community.

Mercer's approach



Adapting a global framework for local realities



"Wellbeing should be about a thoughtful, well-considered benefits package that addresses real employee needs." "If we have team members in a certain part of Thailand, what triggers them to be stressed out will be quite different from that in Singapore."

- Kenny Tai CEO, MediExpress



"ShopBackers can speak in their own local languages and (Intellect's) coaches would be able to understand them perfectly fine and communicate with them in a manner that feels closer to home and more personal."

Yishan Teo
 Associate, ShopBack's CEO Office



3. Normalise the act of seeking help

How can we address the prevailing perceptions in ASEAN workplaces?

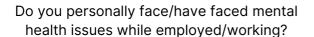


Mental health concerns are suppressed in ASEAN workplaces. According to a survey by Intellect, 24% of employees who have access to mental health resources felt uncomfortable using them.

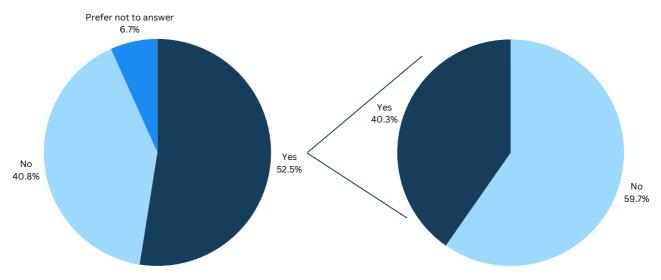
Proactive approach to destigmatise mental health

Problem Statement:

How can we address the mental health stigma in ASEAN workplaces?



If you said yes, did you tell your manager about your mental health issues?



Source: ASEAN Human Development Organization (AHDO) Survey

Solution

Give employees options and make them easily accessible.

What you can do



If you're currently using a traditional Employee Assistance Program (EAP), consider asking your provider:

i) Data:

What is the current adoption rate and can this data be shared in real time? Let's stay informed and track progress effectively.

ii) Convenience:

Can employees book appointments without having to make a phone call? Let's make reaching out as simple as possible.

iii) Cultural change:

How can we seize this opportunity to improve our culture? Let's invest in lasting transformation rather than band-aid solutions.

If you're contemplating a modern EAP, keep an eye out for these key features:

i) Content:

Look for resources that build resilience and nurture positive mental health. Let's shift the narrative away from "fixing" and towards strength and growth.

ii) Coaching:

Seek providers who can help employees with their individual development. This fosters an environment where employees can thrive both personally and professionally.

iii) Accessibility:

Include a variety of access points such as helplines, inperson sessions, apps, and websites. Let's meet employees where they are.

	Standard EAPs	intellect
Helpline Responders	Unqualified, call-centre responders	Experienced, vetted & trained local responders
Helpline Quality	Little to no quality control due to some outsourcing of APAC network	Responders have clear SOPs to effectively de- escalate and triage to appropriate levels of care
Helpline Speed to Booking	Call-back service (30 min+)	Immediate confirmation 24/7, no call-back required
Speed to Appointment	1-4 weeks to appointment	Helpline: 3 days to appointment App: As soon as 24 hours, SLA of 3 days
Care Methodology	Short-term reactive support	A wellbeing solution for every employee, from proactive care to a strong safety net for distress support
Adoption Rate	1 - 3% average adoption	20 - 40% average adoption
Implementation Support	Standard HR training on EAPs	Full-year onboarding and engagement strategy with a dedicated client success team
HR Analytics & Reporting	Limited data shared annually	Live HR dashboard with adoption, utilisation, and productivity charts supplemented by QBRs
Clinical Research	Limited to no research	Proven efficacy of solution in top scientific journals

"Unfortunately, in Singapore, we are used to keeping quiet about our struggles. But we shouldn't. Keeping to ourselves makes us think we're alone in facing our problems. Talking about it makes it so much better."

- Quek Siu Rui, Ex-CEO/Co-Founder Carousell



"I constantly tell people about my experience on Intellect and that really helps them to feel that, hey, if Willis is using Intellect, it's okay that I use it as well. There's no judgement. There's no fear of being tracked. Or [the notion] that if you use it, you have a problem."

- Willis Wee, CEO, Tech in Asia



4. Cover the full mental wellbeing continuum

How can we support employees on good days, bad ones, and everything in-between?



Traditional EAPs address wellbeing concerns only after they have escalated and become more challenging to resolve.

Long waiting times also put employees' conditions at risk of deterioration.

Solution

Shift from a reactive approach to a preventive one and offer a comprehensive suite of solutions.

It's not about "troubleshooting", but about promoting resilience and positive mental health throughout the entire spectrum.

What you can do



i) Review your current mental wellbeing programme:

To what extent does it cater to the spectrum below?

- Well
- Resilient
- Thriving
- Surviving
- Struggling
- Distressed
- Not Functioning
- Crisis



COACH

Create action plans for growth



COUNSELLOR

Develop desirable thoughts and behaviours



THERAPIST

Heal and bring calm into daily life



ii) Map initiatives to each section of the spectrum: Reallocate your resources and match current initiatives to different sections of the spectrum. Identify gaps where additional support is needed.



Intellect's approach



This spectrum informs Intellect's wellbeing philosophy, and why we have a diverse panel of mental health practitioners.

They include coaches, counsellors, psychotherapists, clinical psychologists, and psychiatrists to support employees at every step of their mental health journey.

Intellect Proactive



Self-care Content & Skill-building Programmes

Self-guided CBT programmes & mini sessions that develop and support

Intellect Coaching



Coaching & Sub-Clinical Counseling

Text-based & live tele-coaching and counselling with licensed coaches & counsellors

Intellect Care



Clinical Counseling & Psychology

Access higher level care with licensed counsellors & clinical psychologists

Intellect Helpline



24/7 Helpline

On-demand support for urgent & distress care

Healthy State

Moderate to High Stress

Clinical Need

Crisis Need

Low to moderate risk

Moderate to higher risk

Urgent distress & high risk

"Mental health is not a black-and-white issue. It's not that you either have an illness or you don't. It actually goes from one being very healthy to moderately stressed to clinically distressed."

- Theodoric Chew CEO, Intellect

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"We saw the need to provide a platform where they can reach out for help when they need it. It doesn't (only) have to be when our ShopBackers are in critical condition."

Yishan Teo
 Associate, ShopBack's CEO Office



5. Leverage employee listening

How do we get employees to participate?



The days of traditional initiatives are numbered. Against a backdrop of rising costs investments, investments in employee wellbeing can't afford to miss the mark. Program failure now comes with higher stakes.

Solution

Collaborate with employees to design a user-centric wellness program.

According to a survey by MercerMarsh Benefits, 77% of employers in Asia are reviewing or changing their benefits packages this year while 68% are doing so as a result of employee surveys.

What you can do



i) Innovate through the eyes of your "customer"

Design your wellbeing programme with key personas in mind.

The workforce is experiencing demographic shifts including ageing employees, new generations, and increased diversity. As new stressors arise after the pandemic, a paradigm shift in work-life balance is also underway.

Don't let these changes pass you by - they're opportunities for innovation.

ii) Listen to employee voices

Engage your employees through surveys, listening sessions, executive leadership talks, focus groups, and even brainstorming sessions. This fosters a sense of ownership of the solutions provided.

iii) Review your claims data

Dive into your healthcare spending and claims data and identify areas where investments should be targeted at.



"If the agenda is just to tell shareholders or stakeholders [you're doing something] and check the checkbox, that's the wrong approach."

- Willis Wee, CEO, Tech in Asia



"There's no silver bullet in designing a wellbeing programme. It really does come down to understanding your organisation...
We're seeing many organisations reviewing their work environments, and what is encouraging is that 52% are co-creating [a new workspace] with employees."

Neil Narale,
 President, Mercer Singapore



6. Show up in the moments that matter

How can we address employee needs across different life stages?



Outreach efforts are often treated as an afterthought, causing valuable resources to go unnoticed.

Even the best programmes can flop if they don't reach the right people at the right time.

Solution

Ensure that your wellness programme is not only visible but also "sticky" in your employees' minds.

What you can do



i) Craft an outreach roadmap

Reach your employees via a targeted, creative, and multi-channel plan that considers their life stages, lifestyles, and preferences.

ii) Communicate its purpose

Don't keep employees guessing. Articulate the value they can expect but keep the messaging concise, engaging, and jargon-free.

iii) Embrace the "product placement" strategy

Ensure your programme is visible to the right people at the right time, whether it's during life transitions or organisational changes. Share supportive messages and reminders when employees are most receptive.

Lastly, promote and re-promote. Make the programme's presence known throughout the employee life cycle and their life stages, from new joiners fresh out of school or long-serving staff on the cusp of retirement.

From life transitions like motherhood...

Understanding signs and symptoms of Perinatal Mood and Anxiety Disorders



Feelings of sadness that last more than a few weeks



Fear and loss of interest of being a parent



Thoughts of self-harm or harming the baby



Restlessness and difficulty sleeping



Frequent headaches, heart palpitations, or hyperventilation

Tip: Reach out to a professional for support.

Tips to cope with perinatal mental health concerns



Find your support system.

Turn to your loved ones, join a support group, or get help from a coach, counsellor or therapist.



Look after yourself.

Prioritise self-care by doing things you enjoy and practising positive self-affirmations every day.



Stay informed and not let yourself be overwhelmed with advice.

People are keen to share advice but if it gets too much, turn to professionals who can help filter out unnecessary information.

...to organisational changes like layoffs.

For managers



Get clarity on your own thoughts and feelings

- Process your emotions to act logically
- Assess your decisions and their risks through coaching



Communicate openly and honestly

- Listen to different concerns and empathise with them
- Recognise that individuals process major changes differently



Provide support for outplacements

- Assure outgoing employee that "it's the position, not the person"
- Offer a listening ear or referral letter
 whatever is within your means

For outgoing employees



Be gentle with yourself

- Allow yourself time and space to process the announcement
- Reach out to your trusted circle or a mental healthcare practitioner



Practise prudence

- Run a check and explore sources of financial support
- Manage your severance pay by separating needs from wants



Focus on your strengths

- Reframe your circumstances to identify opportunities
- Set new goals for yourself and devise a game plan

For remaining employees



Acknowledge your emotions

- It's natural to experience survivor's guilt and resentment, so don't invalidate them
- Take time and space to heal with self-care



Find ways to adapt

- Connect with co-workers you may not have worked with previously
- Arrange for detailed handovers of projects coming your way



Communicate with your manager

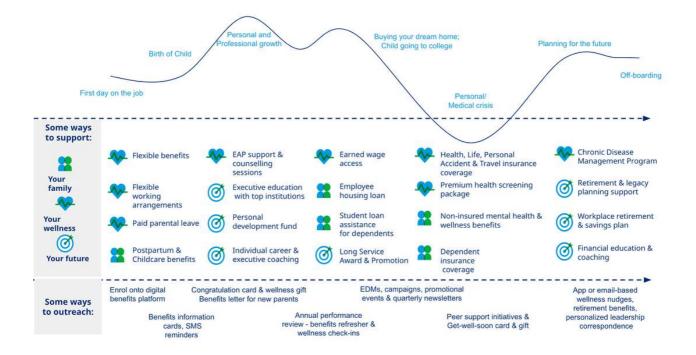
- Express concerns you may have about an increasing workload
- Collaborate on strategies to manage the transition

Mercer's approach



Showing up in the moments that matter

Message to employees: We're with you each step of the way



"We've introduced new types of leave and found new ways to build communities across global offices. We are not wasting a crisis. We are taking the opportunity to evolve the way that we work for the generations to come."

- Gilberto Gaeta

Global HR Operations Director, Google



7. Create an ongoing engagement plan

How can we drive a continuous agenda beyond a launch webinar?



According to Gallup (2022), the average adoption rate of employee assistance programs (EAPs) is disappointingly low, ranging between 2-3%.

Solution

Instead of treating your initiatives as one-time events, use tailored content to engage employees beyond the initial rollout and onboarding.

What you can do



i) Identify year-round touchpoints

These can include onboarding slides, corporate events, physical posters, monthly newsletters, and more. Consider requesting personalised communications from your EAP to stay relevant.

ii) Highlight use cases

Work with your EAP to showcase everyday scenarios the program can help address. This will drive usage and encourage employees to take the first step towards accessing the support they need.

Guide to performance review When giving feedback

- 1. Focus on behaviours, not personal traits
 - X "You are such a tardy person."
 - "I noticed you tend to be late on Monday mornings."
- 2. Give specific examples
 - X "Your tone is too harsh."
 - "Your tone can be harsh when speaking to interns."
- 3. Word constructive criticism carefully
 - X "You never respond to my messages."
 - "Often, you do not reply until the end of the day and that holds up my work."



Guide to performance review

When receiving feedback

1. Ask clarifying questions

"Can you explain what you meant by...?" "Can you give me another example?"

2. Use pause statements when needed

"I'd like some time to consider what you have said" "I am not ready to respond yet"

3. Separate the message from its messenger

Approaching feedback with curiosity helps you to learn. Ultimately, you decide what to internalise and act on.



Intellect's approach

intellect

During onboarding, engaging webinars, on-site sessions, and localised launch toolkits raise awareness among employees. Subsequently, a year-long roster of personalised communications nudges employees into taking the first step, directing them to our library of multilingual content. We also organise topical programmes such as the World Mental Health Day event in 2022 which attracted over 1,000 clients to tune in.

"Providing a portfolio of choices, creating a sense of agency, creating awareness, and making employees feel like these things are important along with the choices they can make is very important,."

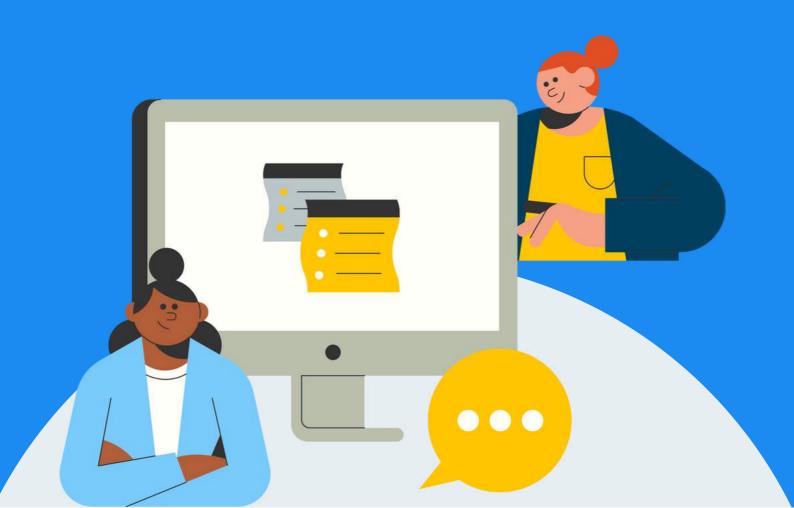
- Shailaja Sharma, Group Head of Learning and Leadership, IHH Healthcare





8. Support your managers and leaders

How can we take care of the people who care for our organisation?



Employees often turn to their managers who aren't trained to support them. While the modern leader is expected to prioritise employee wellbeing, the latter isn't typically taught in business schools. Leaders, despite being role models, are human beings who often struggle silently and sacrifice their own wellbeing.

Solution

Encourage managers and leaders in distress to put their physical and mental wellbeing first. Empower those who are in a good place with the know-how to support their teams.

3 strategies to combat leadership burnout



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Mercer's approach



What you can do



i) Upskill managers

Train managers to initiate conversations about wellbeing, champion wellbeing initiatives, and create an environment of psychological safety within their teams.

ii) Provide executive coaching

Equip your leaders with strategies to manage stress, practise self-care, and strengthen their own mental and physical health. This also transforms the way they lead their teams.

iii) Connect them with peer support

Ask managers and leaders how you can help them and what resources they need. Help them build support networks through leader-focused sessions where they can share experiences and learn from one another in a private setting.

Supporting your managers & leaders

The Wellness Pyramid: How can each level of a company organise to enhance wellness?

Organizations

How can they change their culture, wellbeing programs, and environment to enhance employee wellbeing?

What are their capabilities and how can they be trained and enabled to help employee wellbeing?

Teams

How can organizations customize job design to facilitate productivity, engagement, and wellness in a team?

Individuals

How are individuals empowered through EAPs, Assessment, and training?

"The tragedy is this: People who need the most support think about supporting themselves the least."

- Shailaja Sharma Group Head of Learning and Leadership, IHH Healthcare



"In the future workplace, employees will increasingly turn to their supervisors. Managers should not be a replacement for therapists or coaches, but they can set an example by being proactive in seeking out coaching or mental health support."

Dr Oliver Suendermann
 VP, Clinical at Intellect

intellect

"If you don't show up well, you're going to make poor decisions and your team will suffer for it. To avoid that, spend more time getting to know yourself and how to overcome your own roadblocks."

Benjamin Boh
 Managing Director, McDonald's Singapore



9. Train peers as the first line of defence

How can we include employees in the conversation meaningfully?



In hierarchical environments, some employees may reach out to their peers rather than their managers and leaders. But like the latter, peers aren't trained to handle complex situations.

Solution

Foster a network of peer supporters who can expand the reach of your organisation's wellbeing programme.

What you can do



i) Recruit volunteers

Create a peer supporter program that allows any employee to volunteer as a wellbeing ambassador. Provide training and define their responsibilities to ensure they are wellequipped.

ii) Enhance mental health literacy

Offer resources on topics such as embracing neurodivergence in the workplace, assisting colleagues in times of bereavement, and initiating conversations with managers about their own mental health.

Investing in your workforce's mental health literacy goes a long way to improve its culture.

iii) Invest in Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) training

Have your employees certified by MHFA, which equips them with both the theoretical knowledge and practical skills to support their peers effectively.

What (and what not) to say to grieving employees

They are in a better place now."

"Time will heal everything."



"At least they are not in pain anymore."

You may inadvertently invalidate their pain and imply they should stop hurting soon.



"It's OK to feel this way. Take as much time as you need."

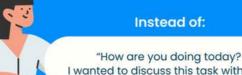


"This must be a difficult time for you. How are you coping today?"

"Today might not be the day, but I'll be happy to listen whenever you want to talk about it."

Reach out while respecting their need for space and keep their sharing confidential.

What (and what not) to say to grieving employees



Instead of:



I wanted to discuss this task with you."

Ask them about their wellbeing even when there are no work-related matters to discuss.

Managers can say:

"Hey, how have you been doing? Just wanted to check in on you."

When it gets overwhelming and you need a break, do let me know."

"You getting through these times is more important than anything else."

This reassures employees who may feel anxious about underperforming.

10. Consider your hourly workforce

How can we extend support to our lower-paid employees?



The pandemic has exacerbated the disparity in access to medical coverage and life insurance between high and low-income earners. Only 58% of part-time workers are confident that they can afford necessary healthcare.

Solution

Design a programme that caters to the specific needs of your part-time and hourly workers. Bridging the gap is key to promoting wellbeing and inclusivity.

What you can do



- i) Tailor a programme according to their limitations, preferences, and specific needs.
- ii) Collaborate with vendors that deliver relevant services for this particular group and ensure that their needs are met.
- iii) Rethink your communication approach for this group of employees. Consider the modes of training, language in which information is delivered, and avenues where information is shared.

Mercer's approach



Mercer offers several initiatives designed to support the well-being of hourly workers:

i) Virtual First Healthcare

Digital options for on-demand treatment of symptoms and conditions, including primary care, musculoskeletal care, and mental health services.

ii) Education and upskilling

Access to courses and learning materials through platforms like Coursera, LinkedIn Learning, and Khan Academy.

iii) Earned wage access

Access to earned income ahead of payday provides greater financial flexibility.

iv) Food as medicine

Access to healthy food options and tele-nutrition services for employees.

By implementing these tailored solutions, organisations can ensure that their hourly workforce receives the support and resources necessary to thrive both personally and professionally.

In a nutshell...

How to set your wellbeing program up for success:

Stage 1: Selection	Stage 2: Implementation	Stage 3: Sustainability
What does the post-pandemic workforce need?	How do you get the leadership's buy-in and employees' engagement?	How do you ensure that your investment pays "dividends"?
Adapt a global framework for local realities	Make a business case	Support your managers and leaders
Build connections, tap into local offerings, and join forces with Intellect and MMB.	Identify priority outcomes and collaborate with your EAP provider to measure results.	Upskill managers, provide executive coaching, and connect them with peer support.
Cover the full mental wellbeing continuum	Create an ongoing engagement plan	Train peers as the first line of defence
Review your current programme and match initiatives to each section of the spectrum.	Identify year-round touch points and highlight use cases.	Recruit volunteers, enhance mental health literacy, and invest in the Mental Health First Aid training.
Leverage employee listening	Showing up in the moments that matter	
Innovate through the eyes of your "customer", conduct listening sessions, and review your claims data.	Craft an outreach roadmap, communicate its purpose, and embrace the "product placement" strategy.	
Normalise the act of seeking help		
Ensure that your EAP is data- centric, accessible, and capable of driving cultural change via coaching and content.		
Consider your hourly workforce		
Collaborate with vendors that specialise in meeting their needs and rethink your communication approach.		

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No two organisations are the same, and not every workforce benefits from the same wellbeing program. Yours deserves a bespoke solution.

Intellect is a holistic mental wellbeing platform with 3 million happy users across 20 countries, including employees at leading employers like Shell, Singtel, and the National University of Singapore (NUS).

Available in 13 languages, Intellect gives your employees access to clinically-validated self-care programs and a diverse panel of mental health practitioners. They include local behavioural coaches, counsellors, psychotherapists, psychiatrists, and a 24/7 support helpline run by trained responders.

Learn more at www.intellect.co or contact us via email at team@intellect.co.