THE MOST IMPORTANT CORPORATE ASSET

Employee Mental Health
Did you know?
Depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy USD 1 trillion* annually in work productivity.

42.5% of corporate employees in India have depression or general anxiety disorder**

But...
only 6% of employees with access to EAP services utilize them.***

A White Swan Foundation survey found that...

64.3% people know someone at their workplace with a mental health issue

45.7% would reach out to a trusted colleague

30.5% would not reach out to anyone at work

*WHO estimate
**Preventive Healthcare: Impact on Corporate Sector, a 2016 study from ASSOCHAM
People with mental health issues hesitate to speak up at the workplace because of cues they pick up from the organizational culture and the behavior of those around them:

- I've heard talk that people with mental health issues are ‘too sensitive’.
- I’m afraid they’ll fire me.
- I feel HR would use it against me in a salary negotiation.
- It’s a taboo subject at our workplace.
- I think it may create awkwardness in my team.
- Managers at my workplace think it’s a sign of weakness to speak about these issues.
- I’m afraid of being judged. I don’t know how they’ll react.
- I have heard insensitive comments about mental health at my workplace.

Ignoring mental health issues at the workplace can lead to:

- Employee stress
- Reduced productivity
- Absenteeism
- Attrition
- Interpersonal challenges
- Counterproductive workplace behaviors
- Attrition

All of these can directly or indirectly impact employees as well as the organization.

Source: Mental Health at the Workplace: White Swan Foundation Survey
EAP services are only one part of the solution, because challenges at the workplace aren’t only clinical.

Organizations must address existing challenges in the environment so that the workplace is healthier, and people who need help are more likely to seek those services. White Swan Foundation’s Workplace Mental Health program is a holistic program that will help organizations to:

- Reduce stigma around mental health
- Create a community of informed allies
- Implement policies and best practices that create an inclusive environment for mental health at the workplace
WHAT DOES A SUPPORTIVE ATMOSPHERE LOOK LIKE?

- Awareness of mental health issues - from illness to wellness
- Understanding of mental health issues at work
- An encouraging environment to seek accessible care
- Access to help
- Reasonable allowances
- Recognition and management of triggers at the workplace
- Open communication on the subject
- Empathy towards those who need help
- Environment that promotes wellbeing

More importantly, these can be truly realized when leaders drive mental health awareness and wellbeing initiatives, and regularly communicate their vision towards creating a supportive environment.

...and policies to support all of the above.
OUR APPROACH

WHO

WHAT

Complementary to services of EAP
Timeline-specific
Clearly defined outcomes
Impact assessment

HOW

- Training sessions
- Internal communication
- Products
- Toolkits
- Impact assessment

EDUCATION

EMPOWERMENT

EVALUATION

EMPLOYEES
KEY STAKEHOLDERS
HR FUNCTION
MANAGERS
LEADERS
So far, our awareness sessions have reached out to:

>20,000 people from different communities including teachers, college students, public health workers, social workers, managers and employees at workplaces

White Swan Foundation has developed India’s largest knowledge repository on mental health

~1,000 pieces of content
>500,000 users per year
6 languages (English, Bengali, Hindi, Kannada, Malayalam, Tamil)

>30,000 social media followers
2,000 new viewers everyday

Performances
Offline campaigns
Training sessions
Panel discussions
Music videos
Public talks
Storytelling
White Swan Foundation’s workplace mental health program focuses on designing a knowledge-led holistic initiative that addresses the social, personal, systemic, preventive and curative mental health related challenges at the workplace.

We believe that the first step to affect an environmental transformation at the workplace is to empower all stakeholders. Our offerings include:

**Assimilating employees** into talking about mental health through communication campaigns.

**Enabling key members of the HR function** to acquire the right knowledge and perspective on the subject in a range of spaces, namely regulatory, rights of people with disability, language, communication, systemic changes, processes and best practices.

**Training managers and leaders** on the various steps they could take for the mental health of their employees.

**Encouraging leaders** to sponsor various initiatives that are launched for employee mental health.

We curate a series of communications that leaders of the organizations can make to their employees on mental healthcare.
Assimilation of mental healthcare among employees

Each of us has the ability to make a difference in the interactions we have with our colleagues. But in a workplace environment, even the most empathetic of us may have our own concerns:

I know my colleague is struggling, but is it okay to talk about it?

How do I do it respectfully and with care for their privacy?

Is it even appropriate?

But I don’t know enough about it to be supportive!

Enabling HR and key support functions as catalysts

The Human Resource function is key to the several changes that need to take place in the organization for employee mental health. Members of the HR function must acquire the right knowledge of mental health from a range of perspectives. This module covers aspects pertaining to policy and inclusion.

Train managers and leaders

An organization that is mental health inclusive and promotes wellbeing is driven by clear and comprehensive policies that address inclusion at every level. Leaders of the organization drive this change in culture in two ways: leading by example to show that conversations around mental health are welcome in the organization; and by setting in place practices that promote wellbeing.

The module for managers addresses managers’ concerns and questions, and offers practical ideas on how they can support their team members. They are trained on ways to detect issues, extend support and remove any stigmatic attitude that might exist among other members of the team.

Leaders as sponsors

We believe that any set of initiatives to bring about a social transformation among employees on mental healthcare is possible only when the top leaders communicate their vision. Leaders must emphasize the need for a mindset shift and demonstrate their inclusive attitude towards those with mental health issues. White Swan Foundation will closely work with the leaders of the organization to curate the communication that they need to make to employees.
White Swan Foundation has truly helped me demystify my beliefs and assumptions around many mental illnesses. I commend the team for creating support for persons with mental illness through sharing knowledge and creating awareness. Their deep understanding of the issues faced by persons going through illnesses coupled with the amazing partnership and knowledge sharing is also admirable.

- Anjana Chiramel,
  Manager, human resources, Microsoft India

For more information, please visit http://www.whiteswanfoundation.org.

If you’d like to know more about our Workplace Mental Health program, write to outreach@whiteswanfoundation.org