

SPECIAL EDITION – WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY

What Healthy Workplaces Have in Common

What does a mentally healthy workplace actually look like?

Think about what happens at work. A manager sends a “quick question” at 11pm; someone checks emails while on leave; everything seems urgent. People are encouraged to speak up, but may hold back after seeing others dismissed or criticised for raising a concern or disagreeing.

These may seem like small things, but when they happen regularly, they affect how people experience work. This is why having an EAP (Employee Assistance Programme), wellbeing talks, flexible work or mental health days, while important, is only part of creating a healthy workplace.



Our Human Dynamic data gives us a closer look at some of the pressures people experience at work. Across more than 8,000 support sessions in nine APAC markets, 56% of job-stress cases involved high work demands, 39% of workplace conflicts involved managers, and 62% of career concerns were related to growth.

So, what can we take from this?

Pay attention to what keeps coming up.

If similar issues keep coming up, step back and look for the pattern. Is the same team struggling with workload? Are priorities constantly changing? Are concerns repeatedly linked to a particular way of working? Repeated issues can be a signal that something in the work environment needs attention.

Make it easier to raise things early.

Notice how we respond when someone says, “I’m struggling”, “I disagree” or “I need help”. Do we listen and ask questions, or immediately explain, defend or dismiss the concerns? How managers respond in these small moments often determines whether people will raise things early the next time.

Look at what is driving the stress.

Resilience and coping skills have their place. But if people are constantly overwhelmed, another wellbeing activity may not address the real issue. Sometimes the answer is clearer priorities, more realistic expectations, better manager support or simply enough time to recover.

Healthy workplaces can still be demanding. What's important is whether the pressure is manageable and people have the support and space to recover.

This World Mental Health Day, perhaps we can ask a slightly different question:



Are we only helping people cope, or are there things about the way we work that could also change?



Because when we make work healthier, we give people a better chance to stay well and perform at their best.



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