

INFLUENCER

AN OUTLOOK ON LEADERSHIP & CHANGE



HUMANdynamic

Issue 255 - October 2025

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

BEYOND AWARENESS TO EVERYDAY ACTION

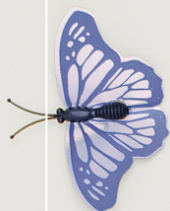
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Read September issue of **INFLUENCER**:
"An Outlook on Leadership & Change" on the go!



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Resilience Rituals



EVERYDAY HABITS THAT PROTECT MENTAL HEALTH

Rome wasn't built in one day, and neither was resilience. Though crises can testify to how resilient an individual is, they shouldn't be the main factor in building it up. Resilience is to be cultivated on a day-to-day basis. The good news is that resilience isn't a fixed trait; it is a strength that can be developed over time. Resilience is both a process (how we respond to adversities) and a capacity (internal and external resources we can rely on).

Highly resilient individuals show the ability to:

- Allow space to process emotions in the face of setbacks
- Regulate their emotions by using different approaches
- Able to accept unfavourable changes
- Focus on solutions instead of problems
- Apply a non-judgmental and open-minded lens
- Seek external support if needed

Resilience can be referred to as a skill, as being able to bounce back and recover from difficulties requires both knowledge and practice.

Knowledge is what is workable and how it works, meanwhile practice is to master the knowledge and realise the impact.

Resilience can be cultivated via daily practices such as:

- Permit yourself to take micro-breaks throughout the day
- Allow a gratitude pause to focus on something you're grateful for
- Create mini habits to soothe and regulate daily emotions
- Take a 5-minute sensory check-in to ground yourself in the present moment
- Practice self-compassion and accept what has already happened
- Keep a daily journal and reflect on self-growth ideas
- Be curious and explore possibilities with a beginner mindset
- Knowing your values & principles: unlearning, re-learning, keeping & challenging your beliefs

As the business world has become more competitive and unpredictable, leadership is also about coping with changes. The more changes, the more leadership it would demand in an environment. And one of the crucial determinants here is resilience. Resilience is not about being immune to changes, but responding constructively and maintaining effectiveness under challenging situations, leading to protecting energy in a leadership responsibility.

Ying Yin Lee

Consultant / Senior Learning
& Capacity Development
Executive, APAC



MANAGERS AS MENTAL HEALTH GATEKEEPERS: WHAT SUPPORT REALLY LOOKS LIKE

Managers are essential to the organization since they are the critical link between management and team. Their responsibility extends beyond the transmission of strategies from above to collaboration with their teams, providing guidance, encouragement, and support. Managers are not just the bosses or those who carry out orders. At their core, they are enablers who establish the optimal environment for people to thrive and maintain outstanding levels of performance.

That is why managers must deeply understand their teams, so they can step in with timely support when challenges appear. Here are four practical steps to help managers act as the “gatekeepers” of mental health within their teams:



1

RECOGNIZE EARLY WARNING SIGNS

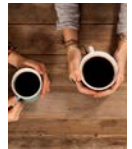
Stress and burnout don't usually happen within minutes. They often start with small changes, like not being focused, negative changes in behaviour & mood, or underworking. Managers can identify behaviors that are out of the ordinary for an employee by observing them regularly.

CHECK IN WITHOUT INTRUDING

Employees might not always feel comfortable talking to their supervisors about their problems. Beginning the conversations with honest care: “You look a little tired today, is there anything I can do for you?” Listen without judgment. Even if we cannot offer immediate solutions, giving them space to speak can ease their stress.

Discreetly checking with close colleagues can also provide useful insights, as employees are often more comfortable talking to their peers.

2



3

CONNECT TO PROFESSIONAL SUPPORT

If we find that employees' situation might need deeper support, connect them with professional resources such as HR, an Employees Assistance Program (EAP), or external experts. The most important thing is to be mindful and show that you care about them instead of just “handling off responsibility”. Make sure you check-in on them regularly even after they receive professional support.

FOSTER PSYCHOLOGICAL SAFETY ENVIRONMENT

Team meetings should not be limited to tasks and results. Provide an open space where employees can share their concerns or emotions without fear of judgment. A psychologically safe environment helps reduce stress while building stronger team cohesion.

4



Anh Nguyen
Business Consultant, APAC

In the end, *managers are not expected to “fix” every issue. Their true responsibility is to recognize, listen, and guide their team toward the right support.* By doing this, they protect their team members' well-being while cultivating a resilient team.



THE ROI OF MENTAL WELLBEING:

WHY BUSINESS CAN'T AFFORD TO IGNORE WELLBEING

A few years ago, conversations about mental health at work often stopped at “awareness.” Posters went up, maybe there was a wellness week, and then life carried on. But today, awareness isn't enough. The real challenge is building workplaces where mental wellbeing is woven into how we work every day, not treated as an add-on.

Why does this matter for business? Because ignoring mental health is expensive. Stress, burnout, and absenteeism quietly drain productivity and talent and may even lead to higher attrition. On the other hand, when people feel supported and safe, they stay engaged, show up with energy, and stick around longer. In other words, wellbeing is not just a “nice to have” – it's a business advantage.

So how do organizations go beyond good intentions and create real change? It comes down to small, consistent actions that leaders, managers, and employees can all play a role in:

Make it part of performance, not separate from it

Track wellbeing alongside your usual KPIs. Healthier teams perform better.

Talk about it openly

When leaders share their own wellbeing practices or simply check in, it normalizes conversations and reduces stigma.

Design work with recovery in mind

Breaks, flexible schedules, and space to recharge aren't perks; they're what keep people at their best.

Match policy with culture.

Access to counselling or wellbeing programs only works if employees feel safe to use them without judgment.

Most importantly, culture isn't built by HR alone. It's created in everyday moments, when a manager respects boundaries, when teammates support each other, and when people feel they can be human at work.

The truth is simple: a workforce running on empty can't deliver sustainable results. But when people feel safe, supported, and valued, performance follows naturally.

So, here's the challenge: as a leader, what's one small action you can take this week to show your team that their wellbeing matters? Start there—the ROI will follow.

Shalini Gunarajan
Senior Consultant, Malaysia



BREAKING THE STIGMA

Conversations That Change Culture

Talking about mental health can feel uncertain, or maybe avoided altogether, but silence keeps stigma alive. Change happens when we lean in and choose words that open space for honesty and compassion, we contribute to a culture where wellbeing is normalized.

Here's a simple guide for these conversations.

Starting the Conversation

Instead of: "You look fine!" (focusing on appearance, not feelings & invalidates their experience) Try: "I've noticed you seem a bit quieter than usual. I just wanted to check in, how have you been doing lately?"

Instead of: "Snap out of it" or "Cheer up, it's not that bad." Try: "I'm here if you'd like to talk. And if not, that's okay. But I do hope that you have someone that you can trust to open up to."

Listen Without Judgment

If someone shares: "I've been feeling overwhelmed/sad/worried about....."
You can say:

"Thank you for trusting me with that."

"I may not have a solution to what you're going through, but I can definitely hear you out without judgement."

Closing with Care

"I'm really glad we talked. You're not alone in this, and I'm here whenever you'd like to talk. Let's check in again soon."

Encouraging Support

"Would it help to explore support options together?"

"Sometimes talking to a professional can bring relief or make things lighter. Would you like me to share resources?"

Normalizing the Experience

"Many of us face mental health struggles but it doesn't define who you are."

"It takes courage to ask for help, and you don't have to face this alone."

Ask open-ended questions like
"How are you really doing?"

Listen actively without interrupting

Validate feelings: What you're going through sounds really difficult. It's okay to feel like this."

Respect privacy and share ONLY with consent

Remind them they are not alone

DO'S

DON'TS

Don't minimize with "It's not a big deal; it could have been worse."

Don't give unsolicited advice like "Try not to think about it." or "You just need to calm down."

Don't label people as "crazy", "weak" or "you should be strong."

Don't rush. Silence can be supportive too

Don't push for details they aren't ready to share

Each time we choose empathy over avoidance, we challenge stigma and create a workplace where people feel safe, supported, and valued. It's not about having the perfect script, but about showing real care.

Sonia Hillary
Consultant, APAC

