

Your Employee Assistance Program is a support service that can help you take the first step toward change.

10 hallmarks of a psychologically safe workplace

With the average working adult spending about 1,900 hours per year on the job, it's no surprise that workplace conditions can deeply affect how employees feel.

Experts in workplace mental health have identified factors that can influence our psychological health and well-being while on the job. As a people leader, it's important to understand each of the factors to ensure you're contributing to a psychologically healthy workplace.

1. **Psychological support:** Organizations that are psychologically supportive take action to safeguard the mental well-being of employees and provide appropriate resources when employees need help. When employees feel they have psychological support at work, they are more loyal to the company, more satisfied with their job, more effective at what they do and happier to go to work.
2. **Organizational culture:** Trust, honesty and fairness are all trademarks of organizations with healthy corporate cultures. A positive culture can have a dramatic effect on the mental well-being of its employees and contributes significantly to workplace satisfaction.
3. **Clear leadership and expectations:** Effective leadership and clearly defined expectations create an environment where employees know what it means to succeed. It also leads to high employee morale and organizational trust. Lack of leadership and unclear expectations can increase frustration and stress.
4. **Civility and respect:** Work cultures that are respectful and considerate foster good employee morale, low absenteeism, excellent teamwork and high levels of perceived fairness. The result? A culture marked by positivity and widespread job satisfaction.
5. **Growth and development:** Employees that are given opportunities to grow and develop their professional and interpersonal skills create a more committed workforce that performs better in current and future roles.
6. **Recognition and reward:** Organizations that are good at recognition and reward know how to appropriately appreciate the efforts of their employees in a timely way. Workforces that are recognized and rewarded are more motivated, confident and tend to exceed expectations.
7. **Involvement and influence:** Employees want to feel that they have a voice at work. When employees are engaged and empowered effectively, the result is higher morale, job satisfaction and a healthier corporate culture. When employees feel like their opinion doesn't matter or they aren't permitted to make decisions in areas that should logically be within their authority, stress builds and job satisfaction suffers.
8. **Workload management:** Environments that consistently overburden staff with an unreasonable workload can cause stress and emotional havoc. However, a challenging yet realistic workload creates job satisfaction and builds confidence.
9. **Balance:** Employers that recognize the importance of work-life balance and feature flexible policies that respect the demands of the individual's home life create a happier, less stressed and more productive employment culture.
10. **Psychological protection:** Employers that promote mental well-being at work and take proactive steps to prevent psychological harm create an environment of openness and trust - employees feel confident that they can speak up and voice their opinion or concern without fear of consequence.

A psychologically safe workplace benefits everyone - it reduces turnover, reduces cost and creates a productive, effective working environment that people enjoy.

For more information on how you can contribute to a psychologically safe workplace, contact your
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Employee Assistance Program (EAP) provider for professional support and confidential People Leader Consultations.