

Employee Mental Health Handbook

A handy HR guide with steps to support employee health and strengthen company culture.



Foreword



Many of us spend a large portion of our days at work. And so, it's vital that as we work, we are happy and healthy.

As an HR leader, you see your workforce spending a sizeable chunk of their time between the four walls. And there many of their needs are met from the most basic like overall health including mental health to safety and security needs like financial security to social needs like friendships, and esteem needs like personal growth. With the massive shifts in the way we work, today more than ever, it's important to cater to all your employees' needs.

Basic care for employees' overall wellbeing is the fundamental expectation for today's competitive and successful businesses. It's time you actively support staff well-being and promote good mental health in the workplace, just like you do for physical health.

At Amzo, we believe healthier employees not only take fewer sick days but also work better and stay engaged on the days they show up. This has a clear and direct impact on a company's bottom line. For each dollar spent on employee wellness programs, companies earn up to 3 dollars in return. So, an investment in employee healthcare is not just a welfarist but also a strategic one.

So, what's our plan? Well, it's simple! Engaging with your employees, empowering them with high-touch point care, and earning their trust. From our unique clinical model to our health coverage design, our claims support to our app, fast and simple is the basis of all we do. That's how we operate, always.

The UAE healthcare system is flawed. Hospitals react to sickness but do not offer quality care. Doctors tend to the patients but do not give them enough time and care. Bills are soaring, booking an appointment is cumbersome, and lab tests are getting expensive.

You see, there are many areas that need attention. And that's what we, at Amzo, are aiming to fix. At scale. **We've built an insurance and care platform that makes employee health benefits simple, useful, and holistic.**

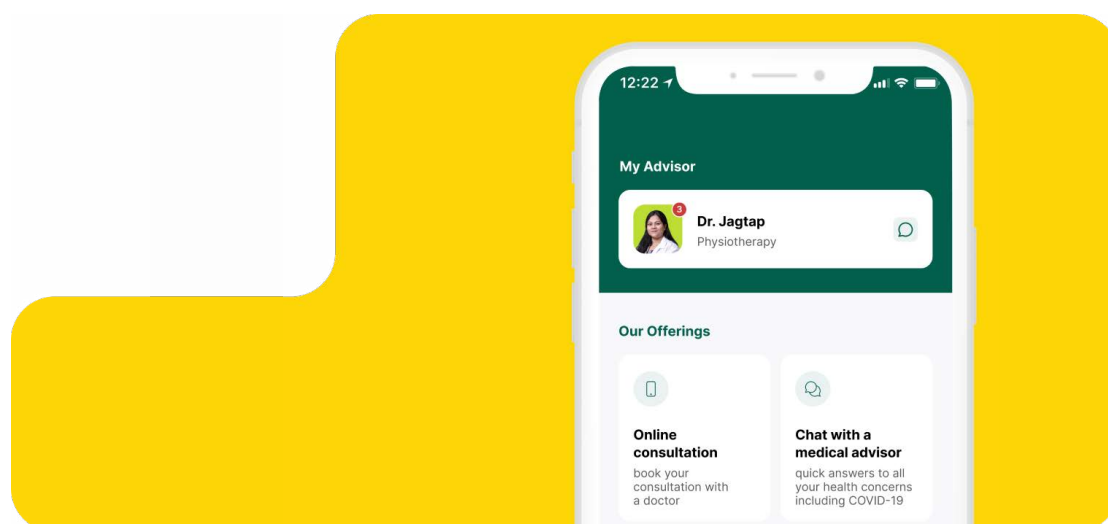


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Why do organizations need to focus on Mental Health?

Anxiety, stress, and depression are becoming the biggest health problems at work. The latest global study by Mercer found that 81% of workers are burned out. A report by Deloitte states that around **80% of the UAE workforce** have **reported mental health issues** over the past year **costing companies \$14 billion yearly**.

The impact of mental health problems on businesses is very real. The extent to which employees can invest energy, collaborate effectively, focus their efforts, and make good decisions is unquestionably affected by their mental fitness.

Diminished work performance, morale and engagement, high rates of absenteeism and lost productivity are common and **costly organizational consequences** of mental illness.

Positive mental health at the workplace helps teams face difficult challenges while remaining agile, boosts resilience, manage stress, flourish in their roles and ultimately reaching their full potential.

The employer's role

Employers can make a difference in three critical ways - **protect, educate, and support teams**. To protect employee mental health, employers must be educated on how to recognize mental illnesses and where to seek help. Support should be available to help employees manage the impact of mental illness along with access to the care they need.

Factors That Affect Employee Health

Number of hours worked / stress

In the book ‘Great at Work’ by Morten Hansen, he finds the greater the work hours, the lower the productivity per hour worked. Further, long work hours negatively affect health causing diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, mental health issues, and more.

The leading causes for increased mental health challenges and stress are the unhealthy behaviors associated with working overtime, like the lack of exercise, loss of quality sleep, the ability to relax, and not seeking the proper treatment when ill.

Employees must abandon the stigma of ‘leaving early’ and allow employees to leave once their work is done to enjoy time with friends and family.

What you can do:



Work hours - Set working hours so all your employees know when they must clock in and when they can clock out.



Wellbeing programs - Introduce programs that focus on overall wellbeing. For example, ‘bring your dog to work’ doesn’t take too much of an investment, but helps reduce stress and improves engagement. Similarly, donation drives do the same.



Time off - Incorporate sufficient time off in the calendar year, including wellness days, paid time off, mental health days, and more.

Work-life balance

UAE teams can face work-life balance pressure, especially in high-growth cities like Dubai, Abu Dhabi, and Sharjah. Without flexible work design, recovery time, and manager support, long hours can turn into stress, mistakes, and lower output.

- **Poor work-life balance** can have a more significant impact than just skipping the gym. The lack of self-care results in stress-related issues, fatigue, and burnout. Many studies found that poor work-life balance leads to health issues like stroke, anxiety, depression, disturbed sleep, and more.
- **Good work-life** is not just important for health but also improves employee productivity. Simply put, if work is not viewed as a chore, people will work harder, make fewer mistakes, and ultimately boost performance.

What you can do:



Short breaks - You can't take off all the time, instead take small breaks throughout the day. If it's in the office, you can have a games room for people to socialize and take their minds off work. If you work remotely, try taking your meetings while taking a walk outside or invite friends to cowork with you. All this positively impacts workplace happiness, productivity, and performance.



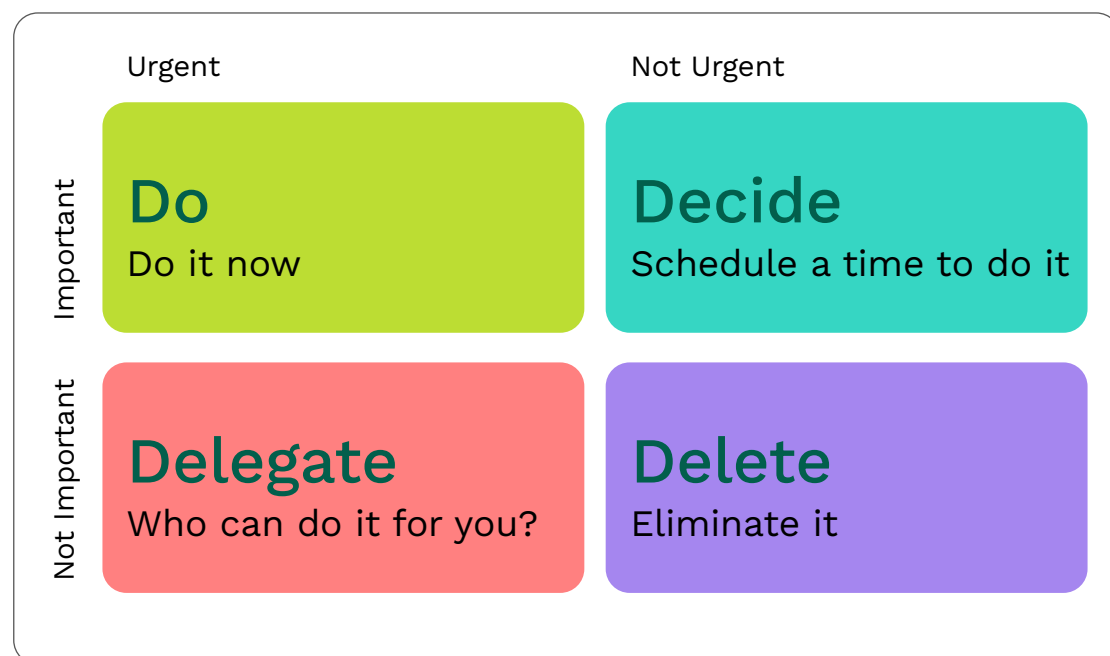
Set goals and priorities and stick to them - Time management strategies help cut out tasks that have little to no value. Structuring your day can increase productivity and ensure you set boundaries and work hours.



Try this: The Eisenhower Matrix

The Eisenhower Matrix helps **differentiate between what's 'important' and what's 'urgent.'** This way, you spend your time during the day getting more done without spilling into after hours with family and friends.

How? Create 4 quadrants with 4 action points as seen below:



- Do: The most urgent and important tasks belong here.
- Decide: Tasks that are important but not urgent go here.
- Delegate: Delegate but not important tasks that others can take care of.
- Delete: Not urgent or important. Only do them when you have ample time.

Following through with this helps easily decide how to make the most of the time you have while achieving optimal outputs.

Strained workplace relationships

If an employee feels socially or emotionally detached at work and cannot seem to get along with colleagues or fit into the organization's culture, feelings of dissatisfaction arise. Negative attitudes can lead to isolation and loneliness. Rather than approaching the issue directly, it may instigate a desire to resign.

However, building workplace relationships contributes to an employee's overall wellbeing. **Positive relationships with colleagues who can provide compassionate advice and support in hard times can help to negate workplace stress.** Having someone to talk to, whether informally or formally, is a lifeline for someone who's facing stress and difficulties, is anxious, or dealing with depression.

Workplace relationships with coworkers are the top driver of engagement, productivity, job satisfaction, company loyalty, and more.

What you can do:



Invest in face-to-face interaction - 93% of the information you convey is via tone of voice and nonverbal expressions. Hence, encourage face-to-face interaction. If you work from the office, consider re-arranging furniture in thoughtful ways that encourage more face-to-face interaction. Those working remotely can have video conferences and monthly meetups to bring employees together.



Schedule some time to unwind - It's important for colleagues to socialize to help build positive relationships. In-person offices must allow some time for desk conversations and remote employees can enjoy some water cooler moments during video calls. This is a part of building positive workplace relationships.



Encourage team building - Whether it's conferences, workshops, events, or team lunches, good teambuilding exercises brings colleagues closer together resulting in a team that works effectively as a unit. You can also host inter-department projects so those who don't interact often can expand and build on their relationships.

Conflicts in the workplace

Workplace conflicts are inevitable, although they're unavoidable, you can become better at resolving disputes. How well employees handle conflict makes a world of a difference to your business. The key is to ensure that uncontrolled outbursts or bottled up emotions don't lead to toxicity at work.

Conflicts arise for a number of reasons:

- Opposing ideas, beliefs, or interests
- Different leadership styles
- Interdependent task conflicts

It's natural and bound to take place, especially when you have people from varied backgrounds and non-identical perspectives working alongside.

An employee can express conflicts in different ways like project failure, delayed work, poor quality of work, anger, bullying, verbal insults, lack of corporation, etc. Rather than fearing conflicts, deal with it appropriately and healthily.

What you can do:



Find the root cause - The way to solve the problem is finding the cause or the real reason behind it. Schedule a one-on-one with those involved to find out the issue. It's important to keep the conversation private so everyone feels comfortable speaking freely. Do listen to both sides of the story and allow them to clarify their perspectives before coming to a judgment. Don't misinterpret or overhear things as your main objective is to find the cause.



Let everyone have their say - Once you've come to a conclusion, you must also clear the air between the parties involved. Meet in a private, secure place and let them both have the opportunity to air out their perceptions and views. It's always good to set some grounds rules before you begin, so everyone's on the same page and open to sharing what's on their mind. Do not favor any one of them - look at the situation

objectively. This helps come to a resolution.



Decide preventive strategies for the future -

Look for key takeaways or lessons you can learn so that if such issues arise down the road, you can effectively handle them.

Not focusing on holistic wellbeing

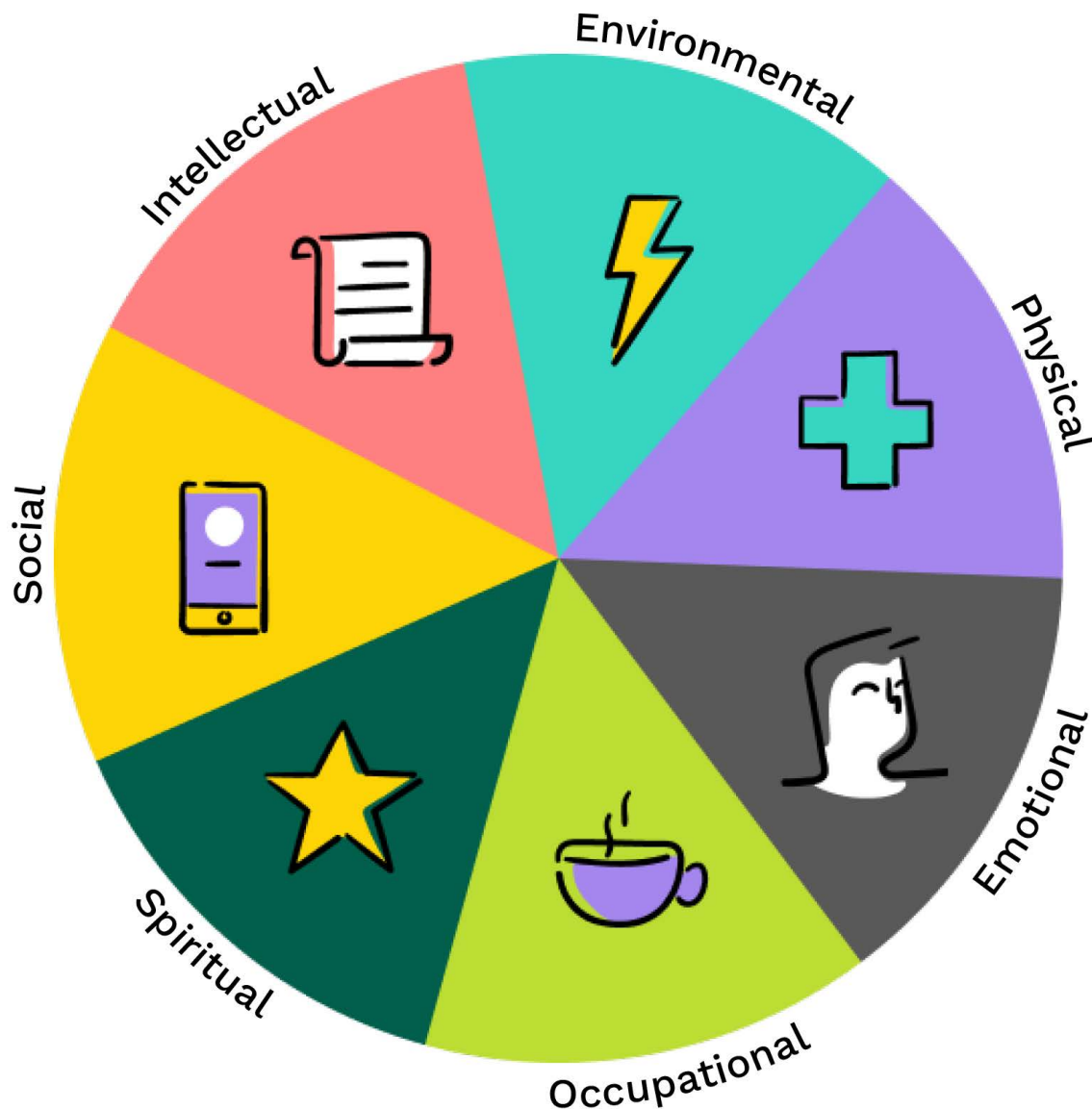
Taking care of your employees' well-being is just as important as building your brand and developing your product. Everyone knows that **happy and healthy employees are more productive.**

But when your employees may perhaps be dealing with multiple stressors such as finances, the fear of losing their job, working from home challenges, as well as safety and family concerns, **as an HR, how can you set the stage?** First off, **don't approach wellbeing as a firefighting measure.** For example, simply introducing an ad hoc wellbeing program when you see a dip in employee morale in the last survey to get numbers back up makes little sense.

Rather than being a reactive measure, **you must implement well-being proactively and strategically.**

Employers can help foster their employees' well-being by thinking more holistically. By expanding the definition of wellness to **more than just physical health**, you have an opportunity to achieve “a healthy organization.”

The wellness wheel



A Healthy Organization

A healthy organization not only has healthy employees but also healthy business practices, job design, and reward systems. It's an organization that thrives under stress. And, it's a company with financial and business results to envy.

The Healthy Organization Maturity Model

Organizations fall into four levels depending on the wellbeing practices they deploy, with companies operating at Level 1 seeing the least positive impact and Level 4, the most.



Source: The Josh Bersin Company, 2021

Level 1:

Employee Safety - At the bottom level of maturity, companies focus on a physically safe environment - investing in accident prevention, mitigation of on-the-job injury, etc. Limited attention is paid to financial, social, or career health, and mental health.

Level 2:

Employee well-being - There's a change in mindset at this stage. Organizations begin to tune in to the voice of the employee, designing and delivering health-centric offerings with the workforce in mind. Here, well-being expands to include social, career, and financial elements.

Level 3:

Healthy Work - Here, organizations protect the holistic wellbeing of their people. Managers actively help balance workloads, and job processes are continually scrutinized to eliminate obstacles. Rewards and recognition feature at this level as well, and employees are provided with more opportunities to develop and grow. At this stage, leaders have begun to take more accountability for well-being, but it's not yet embedded in the culture.

Level 4:

Healthy Organization - Companies at Level 4 have moved away from the notion of delivering well-being offerings. They have a global view of health and continually seek to improve work, workers, and the organization. Business practices reflect the company's commitment to health, and well-being becomes a part of the culture. Leaders in Level 4 organizations actively sponsor wellbeing, and accountability is distributed across the enterprise. When companies reach this pinnacle of health, they outperform in every way—delighting customers, retaining the best talent, and unleashing innovation.

Now that you know where your company stands on the Healthy Organization Maturity Model, let's put this foundational knowledge to work. Here are some **actionable solutions** you can implement :

Strength of impact: ● Moderate ● Medium ● High ● Very high

Physical Health	Mental Wellbeing	Financial Fitness	Social Health	Safe Workplace	Healthy Culture
Access to personal health programs	Focus on positive mental health	Equitable compensation practices	Opportunities for workplace connections	Safety prioritized in all roles and jobs	Wellbeing across the company
Focus on preventive care	Coaching and communication	Financial counselling and support	Positive employee life experience	Inclusion, diversity, and psychological safety	Human-centered leaders and managers
Critical healthcare support	Balanced work-life integration	Meaningful rewards	Empathy and support for caregivers	Safe and healthy facilities and work sites	Healthy ways of working
Personalized benefits	Praise and appreciation	Opportunities for growth & progression	Community giveback and partnerships	Equity and accessibility for all employees	Commitment to the environment

These practical and action-oriented recommendations help advance your efforts in becoming a healthy organization. It will be worth it: companies at the highest level of maturity **dramatically outperform others on financial, people, and innovation metrics.**

At Amzo, we help build healthy organizations starting with your most important assets, your employees. **Our employee health insurance plan provides physical and financial security to both employees and their families.** Our added benefits, along with insurance, focus on holistic wellbeing to boost overall employee wellbeing. Sessions on mental health, financial wellbeing, emotional support, self-esteem and more ensure well-rounded individuals.

Conclusion

The longevity and success of an organization relies on the collective, positive mental health of its workforce.

Positive mental health gives a person resilience against both workplace and life setbacks, challenges, and stressors.

Being fortified against anxiety and negative emotions can help teams navigate through turbulent times with agility while remaining productive.

A mind that's healthy translates to a greater sense of happiness, self-worth, and higher creativity. These prized attributes help nurture high performance and strong company culture.

Lastly, remember that it is OK to ask for help when you need it.



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curve with modern
health benefit