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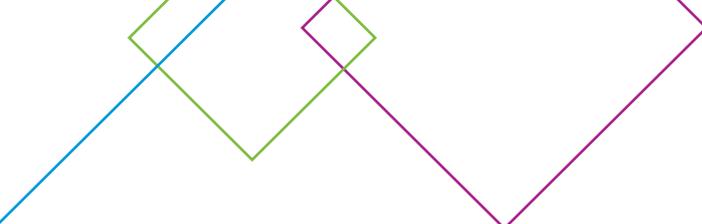
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Foreword

Working people, like all people, deserve an inherent right to the highest attainable standard of mental health at work, regardless of their type of employment. And people living with mental health conditions have a right to access, participate and thrive in work. Governments and employers have a responsibility to uphold that right by providing work that simultaneously prevents workers from experiencing excessive stress and mental health risks; protects and promotes workers' mental health and well-being; and supports people to fully and effectively participate in the workforce, free from stigma, discrimination or abuse.

Yet the world of work is changing. Across the globe, technology, globalization, demographic shifts, emergencies and climate change are reshaping how and where we work. The COVID-19 pandemic has disrupted labour markets and accelerated the pace of change – especially in remote work, e-commerce and automation. Some jobs are being lost; some are being created; almost all are changing. For many, these changes are creating new pressures or exacerbating existing stresses around work that have the potential to undermine workers' mental health.

Addressing mental health at work effectively will help prepare for the future of work and a changing world.

Managing mental health at work can appear challenging. But it should not be seen as onerous. Rather, it offers an opportunity for growth and sustainable development. Safe, healthy and inclusive workplaces not only enhance mental and physical health but likely also reduce absenteeism, improve work performance and productivity, boost staff morale and motivation, and minimize conflict between colleagues. When people have good mental health, they are better able to cope with the stresses of life, realize their own abilities, learn and work well and contribute actively to their communities. And when people have good working conditions, their mental health is protected.

These guidelines provide evidence-based recommendations on interventions that can be implemented to better prevent, protect and promote, and support the mental health of workers. It highlights the importance of organizational interventions, manager and worker training and interventions for individuals. Particular attention is given to workers living with mental health conditions and the interventions that can be used to support them to gain employment, return to work following an absence or to be supported by reasonable accommodations at work.

The World Health Organization (WHO) is committed to supporting Member States to promote and protect the mental health of workers. Indeed, the Comprehensive mental health action plan 2013–2030 emphasizes the need for countries to promote safe, supportive and decent working conditions for all. The WHO Global Strategy on Health, Environment and Climate Change identifies workplaces as an essential setting for the prevention of a range of modifiable risks, particularly for non-communicable diseases. These guidelines mark a milestone in leveraging workplaces as a platform for action, providing a framework for the evidence-based action required to ensure effective prevention, promotion and support for mental health at work.

In all countries and across sectors, the wealth of enterprises and societies depends on the mental health of workers.

We encourage governments, enterprises and all stakeholders in the world of work to use and implement these guidelines as an effective tool for securing safe, healthy and inclusive workplaces that promote and protect mental health.



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