SUMMARY NOTE

iFHP Mental Wellbeing Network Meeting | 17 Sept 2024

Presentation + discussion: Mental Wellbeing @ Work

Linda Opie is Head of Health and Wellbeing at HCF Australia and the Chair of iFHP's Mental Wellbeing Network.

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In September 2024, iFHP's Mental Wellbeing Network met to hear a presentation by Kathy Pike | LinkedIn, CEO of One Mind @ Work on the Mental Wellbeing @ Work Index.

Mental Wellbeing At Work presentation – summary

At the recent iFHP Mental Wellbeing Network meeting, experts from OneMind, a non-profit organisation focused on advancing mental health solutions, presented key insights into improving mental health in the workplace. Kathy Pike, CEO of OneMind, and David Ballard, a senior scientist, discussed their Mental Health at Work Index, a tool designed to help organisations assess and improve their support for employee mental health.

Kathy Pike, a clinical psychologist with global experience, outlined the growing need for organisations to adopt evidence-based strategies to protect and promote mental health at work. She emphasised that mental health initiatives must go beyond basic services, urging organisations to take a more structured and data-driven approach.

David Ballard explained how the Mental Health at Work Index functions as a comprehensive tool for organisations to evaluate their mental health programmes across three core areas: protection, promotion, and provision. These areas cover everything from identifying and minimising workplace risks to ensuring access to resources and supporting employees' psychological wellbeing.

The Mental Health at Work Index: A Strategic Tool for Employers

The index assesses organisations across 10 key categories, including leadership engagement, workplace culture, communication, and employee involvement. It allows companies to benchmark their mental health efforts, providing them with clear data to inform improvements.

David noted that, while many companies acknowledge the importance of mental health, few have formal strategies in place. Despite two-thirds of leaders stating that mental health is a priority, only 25% of organisations have a comprehensive strategy, which limits the effectiveness of their efforts. Organisations with formal strategies scored 54% higher on the index, illustrating the value of a structured approach.

Global Insights and Industry Benchmarks

The index has been applied globally, and benchmarks are being developed for different regions and industries. The data so far indicate that aligning mental health efforts with Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) initiatives significantly enhances organisational performance and employee engagement. Organisations that integrate these two areas score 40% higher on the index.

However, David highlighted that many organisations are still taking a reactive approach, focusing on individual interventions rather than addressing systemic risks that contribute to stress and burnout. Only 35% of organisations have systems in place to reduce workplace stressors, and fewer than 40% systematically measure the impact of their mental health initiatives.

Leadership and Culture as Key Drivers

The role of leadership in promoting mental health was another central theme of the discussion. The index measures how well senior leadership models healthy behaviours, holds managers accountable, and integrates mental health into broader organisational strategies. Establishing a supportive culture, where mental health is embedded into day-to-day operations rather than treated as a standalone programme, was emphasised as crucial for long-term success.

The meeting concluded with a focus on the need for organisations to adopt a more proactive stance, using data and strategic planning to address mental health in a comprehensive way. "Organisations that take a long-term view and integrate mental health into their core operations will see lasting benefits for both their employees and their business performance," David concluded.

More reading material on Mental Wellbeing At Work

1. Mental Health at Work Index | 2024 Annual Report
2. Etisphere | One Mind at Work
3. One Mind | First-of-its-Kind Standardized Assessment Tool for Workplace Mental Health Launches to Public, Available to All Employers

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Next Mental Health Network meeting

2024 meetings will be on:

Tue Feb 20th
Tue June 11th
Tue Sept 17th
Tue Nov 19th

Future topics for the network

1. Holistic health.
2. Prediction and prevention

Additional topics can be requested any time – this is YOUR network. Reach out to sophie@ifhp.com to add to the agenda of future meetings.

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