5 October 2017 – Every year, the world marks World Mental Health Day on 10 October. The theme of this year's day is "mental health in the workplace" which focuses on how to create healthy work environment supportive to the mental health of employees. The aim is to help people avoid anxiety, depression or any mental conditions that may arise due to stressful work situations and affect their productivity.

World Mental Health Day is observed every year to raise awareness of mental health issues and mobilize efforts in support of better mental health.

During our adult lives, much of our time is spent at work. Our experience in the workplace is one of the factors determining our overall well-being.

Employers and managers who put in place workplace initiatives to promote mental health and to support employees who have mental disorders see gains not only in the health of their employees but also in their productivity at work and the financial health of their organizations.

A negative working environment, on the other hand, may lead to physical and mental health problems among employees, harmful use of substances or alcohol, absenteeism and lost productivity.

Depression and anxiety disorders are common mental disorders that have an impact on our ability to work, and to work productively.

Globally, more than 300 million people suffer from depression, the leading cause of disability. More than 260 million are living with anxiety disorders. Many of these people live with both.

A recent WHO-led study estimates that depression and anxiety disorders cost the global economy US$ 1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

The WHO Regional Office for the Eastern Mediterranean carried out a risk assessment of psychosocial risks at the workplace. The findings show that psychosocial risks pose a threat to the mental well-being of staff. Management and co-worker support, rewards, possibilities for development, and trust mitigate the negative impact of psychosocial risks. The results of this risk assessment are being used to develop interventions aimed at enhancing the well-being of staff.

Risk factors for mental health problems at work

- Poor communication and management practices
- Limited participation of employees in decision-making
- Unclear tasks or organizational objectives
- Nature of the job.

Creating a healthy workplace

Good practices for employers

- Put in place measures to identify mental health problems among employees
- Provide support for mental health problems and inform staff of treatment options
- Support a healthy work-life balance
- Involve employees in decision-making
- Recognize and reward good performance
- Provide paths for career development

Supporting people with mental disorders at work

- Help people with mental health disorders stay in or return to work

  – Address negative workplace dynamics
  – Consider job re-design and flexible working arrangements
  – Encourage regular communication to address issues of concern

Related link

[Additional information and resources](#)

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