

# Work Wellbeing Playbook



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# Work Wellbeing Interventions



The Work Wellbeing Playbook is a concise guide that distils insights from a large-scale systematic literature review of workplace wellbeing interventions. It presents high level insights in an accessible, and plain English format for ease-of use.

With support from Indeed, and in collaboration with our academic partner at the [University of Oxford's Wellbeing Research Centre](#), the World Wellbeing Movement has curated this Playbook of evidence-based interventions categorised by 12 key drivers of workplace wellbeing.

The researchers reviewed more than 3,000 academic studies of workplace wellbeing interventions to identify strategies proven to increase the wellbeing of employees across diverse work environments. Recognising that business leaders often face time constraints, we have condensed the key insights into this open-access resource and distilled them into an accessible, high-level summary to support busy professionals.

This playbook builds upon the World Wellbeing Movement's science-based recommendations for how to measure both [how employees are feeling at work](#), and [why they are feeling that way](#) - just like the [Indeed Work Wellbeing Score](#), also created alongside experts from the Wellbeing Research Centre, does. Once you have collected the data, you can then use this Playbook to address the areas for improvement within your organisation.

Business leaders are recommended to keep diversity top of mind when leveraging the playbook to craft a **holistic** employee wellbeing strategy for their organisation. When choosing interventions, employers should consider factors such as their workplace environment, industry, geographical location, and the unique needs of their employees.

Although there is no magic formula, and all interventions have their limitations, many companies start to affect positive change when they combine multiple interventions (*organisational-level interventions, group-level interventions and individual-level interventions*) across multiple drivers of employee wellbeing.

# Improving work with the Work Wellbeing Playbook

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## Work Wellbeing Playbook



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Watch the video now: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EUjWvb0A2rU>

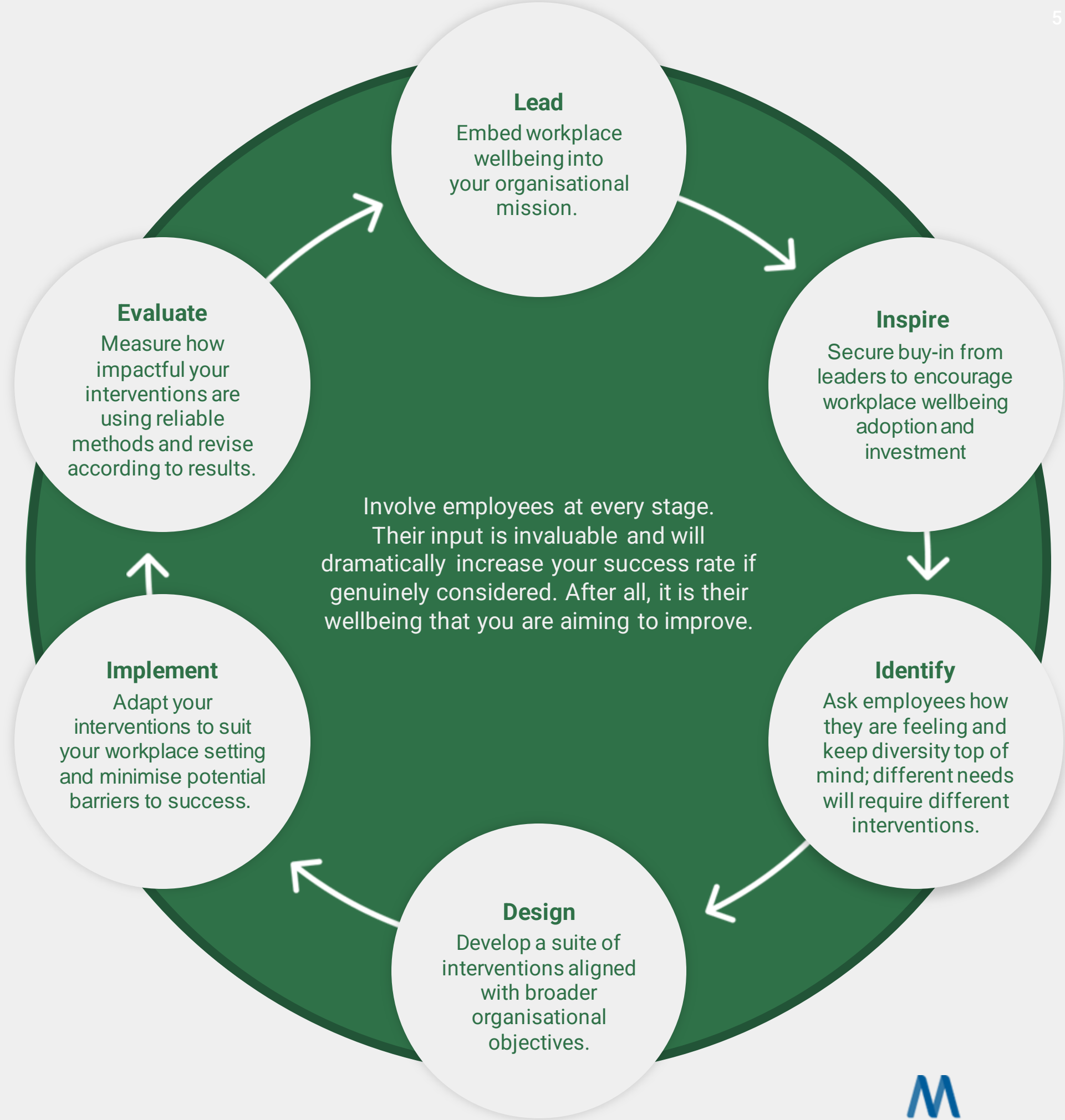




# How to get the most out of this deck

- 1** Encourage your employees to complete Indeed's Work Wellbeing Survey, and consider including these questions in your own company's internal employee wellbeing survey so you have comparable data.
- 2** Analyse your results and identify which drivers of workplace wellbeing you are underperforming in. The drivers are interconnected, so think critically about how they may be linked within your workplace setting.
- 3** Read this deck in full and give close attention to the interventions targeting the drivers that you seek to improve upon. Interventions are summarised at a high-level, but for those seeking a more in-depth understanding, a comprehensive list of academic citations is provided.
- 4** Further explore the interventions that are feasible to implement in your organisation and carefully consider how they may be adapted to address your specific wellbeing needs.

# Stages to achieve impactful and sustainable results





# Achievement

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Achievement** results from overcoming challenge through skill, effort, and dedication. Employee wellbeing is linked to the achievement of work-related goals that that employees themselves consider valuable.

Organisations that support employees in achieving goals that are meaningful to them will see improvements in both their wellbeing and productivity.



# Achievement Interventions

## Co-develop the performance review process

Enlisting employees to help design an effective, fair, and supportive performance review process and/or performance measures promotes greater transparency, generates higher quality feedback, and can lead to better performance outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup>

Involving employees in the selection of performance measurements for evaluative purposes, and the weighting of how those measures should be considered in evaluation, clarifies performance expectations for both employees and managers, thereby improving the integrity of the system.<sup>3</sup> However, organisations should be cautious if using co-developed performance measures as a basis for monetary compensation or non-monetary rewards since evidence for this remains mixed.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources:

1. Kleingard et al. (2004)
2. Lam and Shaubroeck (1999)
3. Groen et al. (2017)



# Achievement Interventions

## Set goals as a team to drive performance

Determining what goals to tackle as a team and then basing individual goals on these targets is an effective approach to optimising group performance.<sup>1</sup> However, it is important to consider the personality traits and preferences of team members, since evidence suggests some employees are more satisfied with jobs that involve goal-setting than others.<sup>2</sup>

Specific and challenging goals yield higher group performance compared to nonspecific or easy goals.<sup>1</sup> Individual goals aimed at maximising the individual's contribution to the group have a positive impact on group outcomes. In contrast, individual goals aimed at maximising individual performance can spur competition and erode trust, thereby undermining group performance.



### Sources:

1. Kleingeld et al. (2011)
2. Bipp and Kleingeld (2011)





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# Appreciation

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Expressions and actions of ***genuine appreciation*** can have a profound impact on your employees and co-workers' wellbeing. This simple action has been associated with numerous evidence-based wellbeing benefits for employees including increased job satisfaction, lower burnout, improved daily emotions, and stronger co-worker relationships.



# Appreciation Interventions

## Cultivate a culture of recognition

Employee recognition can come from multiple sources:  
the organisation, manager, peer, customer, patient, or even themselves.

Recognising both team and individual performance can reduce work-related stress by enhancing workplace collaboration and trust, while fostering a sense of belonging and organisational commitment.<sup>1</sup>

- Encourage peer-recognition and self-recognition.<sup>2,3</sup>
- Seek feedback from clients, customers or patients and celebrate positive reviews.<sup>3</sup>
- Encourage managers to lead by example by making time in their team's work schedule to come together for the purpose of expressing gratitude towards one another.<sup>4</sup>



### Sources:

1. Weziak-Bialowolska & Bialowolski (2022)
2. Tetrick & Haimann (2014)
3. Black (2023)
4. Angelopoulou & Panagopoulou (2020)



# Appreciation Interventions

## Be SAGE in how you deliver recognition

Employee recognition must be thoughtfully delivered to improve workplace wellbeing. Failure to do so can result in unintended negative consequences arising from conflict, inequality or a sense of injustice.

Therefore, effective recognition should be SAGE:

- **Specific** about what the employee is being recognised for;
- **Appropriate** in terms of delivery timing, setting, and mode of communication;
- **Genuine**, authentic, and sincere; and
- **Equitably** distributed across the workforce (ensuring remote, hybrid and independent workers are not overlooked)







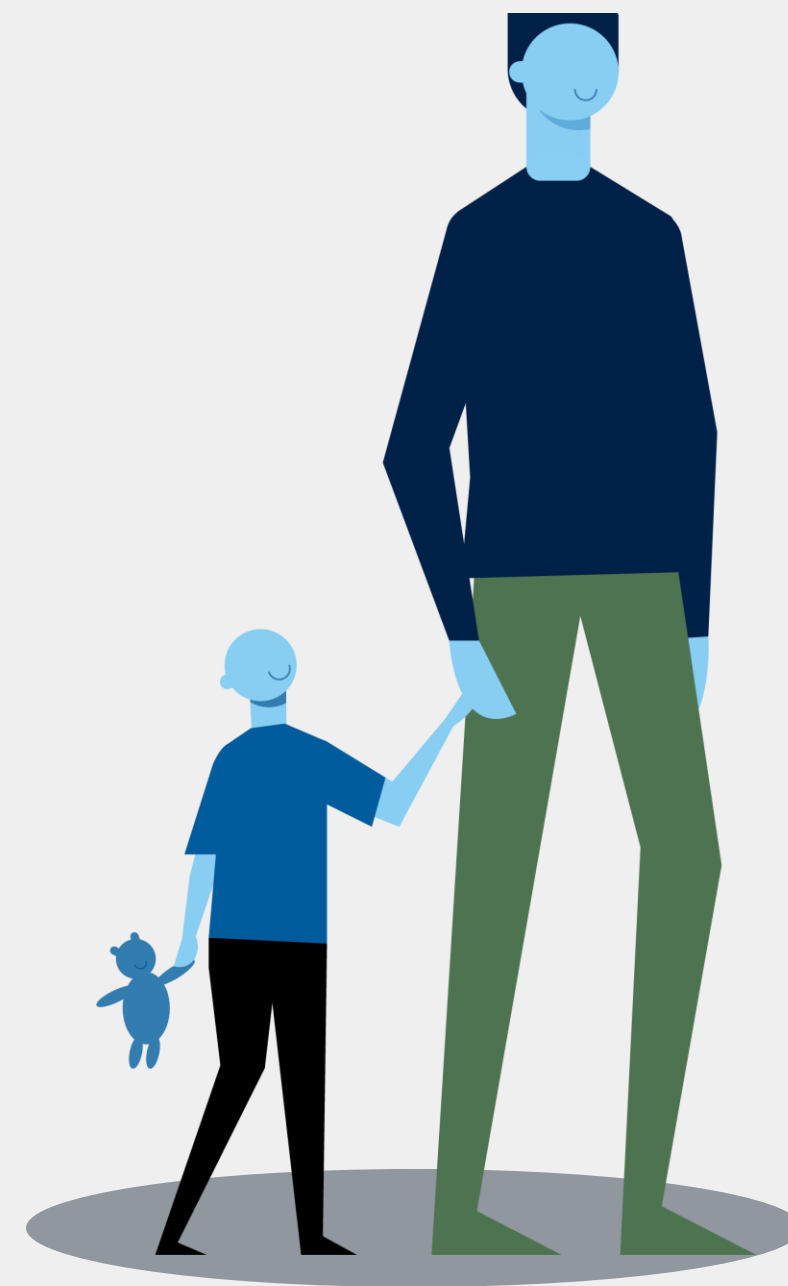
# Appreciation Interventions

## Reward employees for their effort

Rewarding employees for their work contributions is a valuable form of recognition that can play a role in protecting their wellbeing. **Monetary** rewards can off-set the negative impacts of demanding, repetitive, monotonous or less immediately rewarding work.<sup>1,2,3</sup> **Non-monetary** rewards and benefits such as flexible working options and paid volunteer days off can improve employee autonomy and work-life balance.<sup>4,5</sup>

### Key considerations:

- Consider employees' motivational needs when designing reward systems. Team based rewards encourage collaboration and avoids overly competitive behaviours
- Evaluate the impact of rewards on employees to ensure that they do not increase work-related pressure, competition, or inequality.



### Sources:

1. Victor and Hoole (2010)
2. van Vegchel et al. (2004)
3. Kosfeld et al. (2016)
4. Kelly et al. (2016)
5. Moen et al. (2016)



# Appreciation Interventions

## Prioritise decency, kindness and civility

Employee recognition programmes can have a greater impact on employee wellbeing in organisations that have a strong culture of decency, kindness, and civility. The former CEO of Mastercard, Ajay Banga, coined the term “Decency Quotient” (DQ):

**“DQ implies a person has not only empathy for employees and colleagues but also the genuine desire to care for them. DQ means wanting something positive for everyone in the workplace and ensuring everyone feels respected and valued. DQ is evident in daily interactions with others. DQ implies a focus on doing right by others.”<sup>1</sup>**

Psychiatrist Dr. Kelli Harding’s research reveals that kindness and human connection can positively impact our physical and mental health beyond traditional medicine. She suggests that having a good manager is just as critical as having a good doctor to avoid disease.<sup>2</sup>



Sources:

1. [Harvard Business Review \(2019\)](#)
2. [Harding \(2020\)](#)



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# Compensation

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Fair pay and other forms of compensation** are foundational to building workplace wellbeing. Employees who are paid fairly are typically more loyal to their organisations, better able to support their families and more active participants in their communities. Beyond fairness, organisations must also consider what types of behaviour their compensation structure incentivises to avoid unintended consequences.





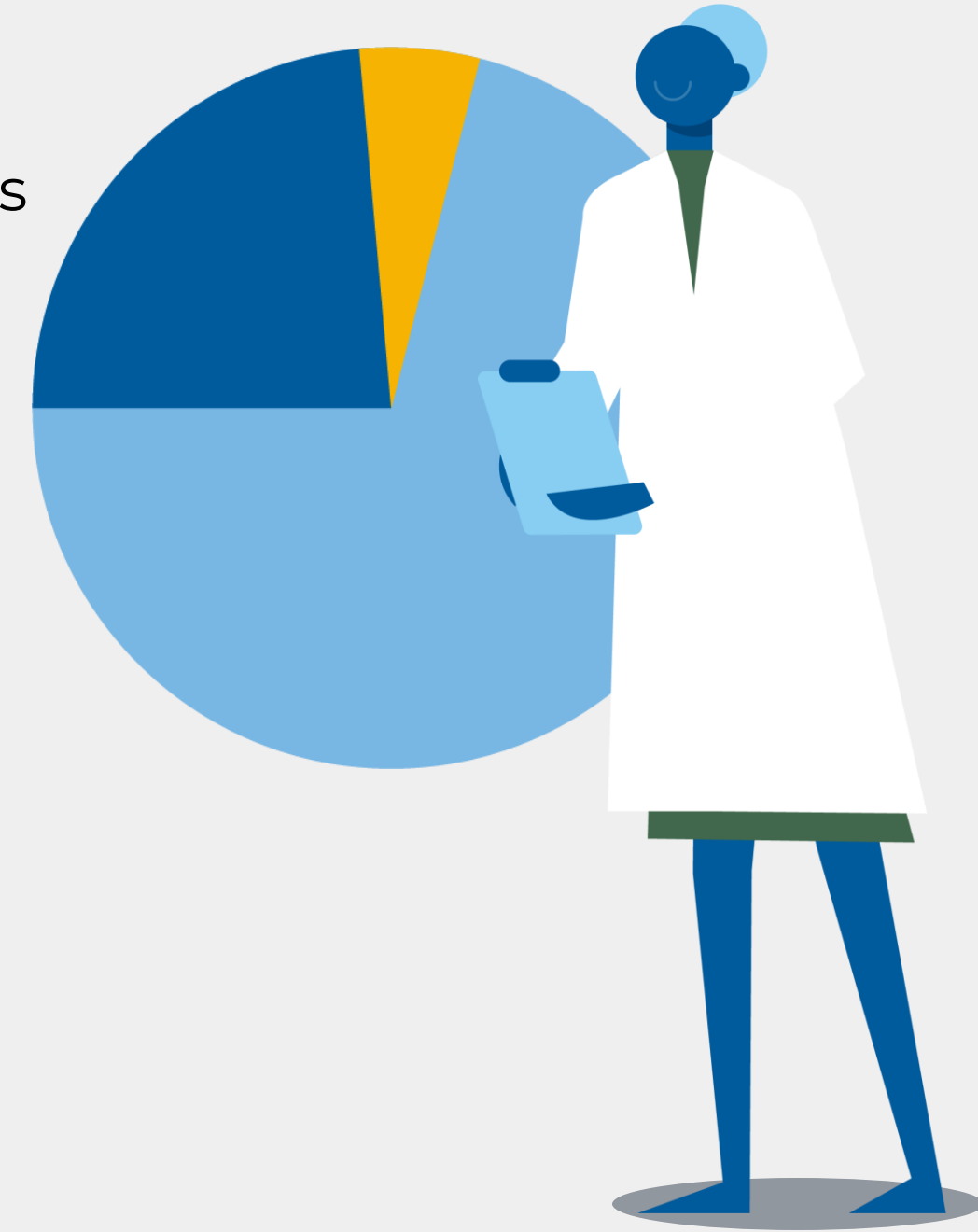
# Compensation Interventions

## Be transparent about pay to narrow inequalities

Organisations that institute pay transparency policies by revealing individual salaries or job pay scales can increase their likelihood of narrowing pay inequalities, specifically regarding gender, ethnicity or minority groups.<sup>1,2</sup>

For pay transparency to be successful, employees must have the capability and opportunity to renegotiate their pay, and managers must be open to giving raises to employees, especially for those who are paid below average.<sup>3</sup> If employees are less well-paid than their colleagues, dissatisfaction will rise.

Organisations should be clear about their intentions for implementing pay transparency to minimise negative attitudes and workplace conflict.



### Sources:

1. Gamage et al. (2020)
2. Oblog and Zenger (2022)
3. Cullen and Pakzad-Hurson (2023)



# Compensation Interventions

## Specify terms for salary negotiations when recruiting

When employers fail to communicate that salaries are negotiable, gender pay gaps persist. One study reveals that when job postings do not outline terms for salary negotiations, men are more likely to negotiate for higher pay whereas women are more likely to signal their willingness to work for less.<sup>1</sup> Conversely, when employers explicitly state on job postings that salaries are negotiable, the gender pay gap decreases.

Consider implementing a workplace policy outlining the process for salary negotiations or encourage managers to bring up the topic with their teams. Employees may wrongfully assume that their pay is locked in until they earn a promotion or fear starting the conversation.



### Sources:

1. Leibbrandt and List (2015)



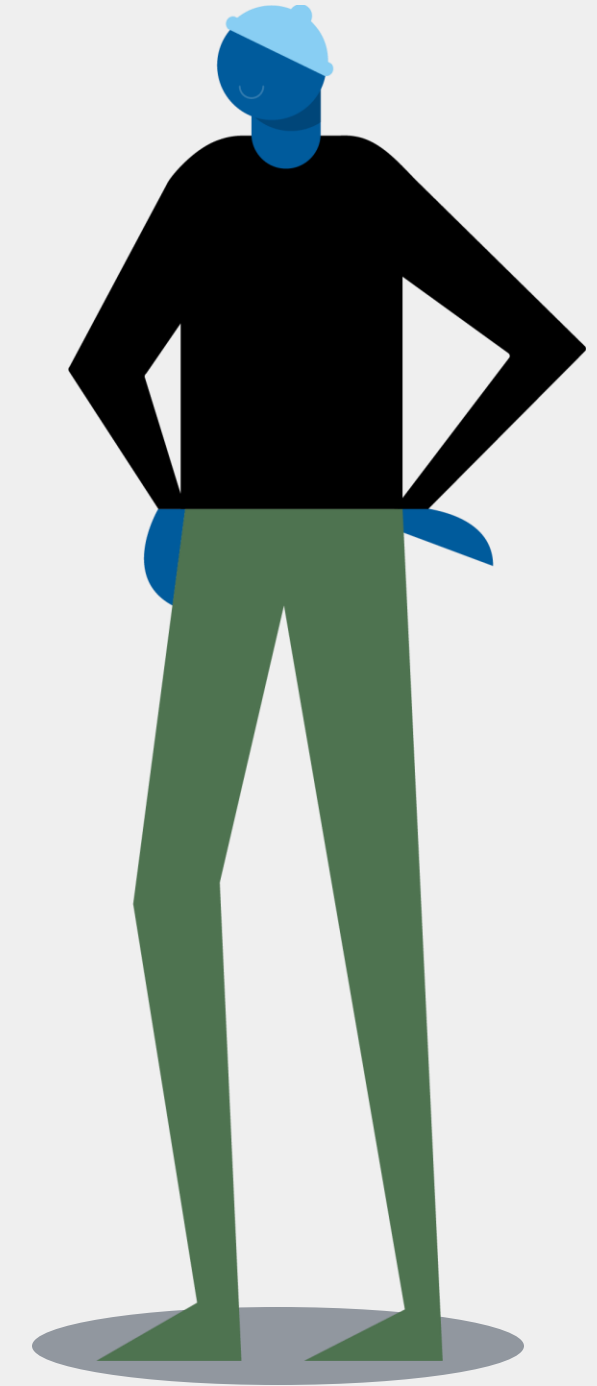
# Compensation Interventions

## Pay a living wage at minimum

A living wage reflects what a worker needs to cover basic expenses according to the cost of living in their community. It is typically higher than minimum wage and has significant benefits to both employee and societal wellbeing.

Consider signing on to your local living wage campaign to ensure all of your employees can meet their basic needs including food, housing, transportation, and childcare. Research shows that a living wage improves self-rated health, social status, and reduces symptoms of mental illness.<sup>1,2</sup> If you contract staff through agencies, ensure they are paid the living wage.

Want to learn more? Visit the [MIT Living Wage Calculator](#) for the United States. Similar living wage calculators can be found online for other countries.



Sources:

1. Linneker and Willis (2016)
2. Burmaster et al. (2016)



# Compensation Interventions

## Share profits with employees

Providing stock options or bonuses to employees, especially during times of significant organisational success, can increase motivation, retention, workplace trust, and job satisfaction. A longitudinal study of British and European workers revealed that employees compensated according to group-based performance were more satisfied with their jobs.<sup>1</sup> This association was partly due to increased perceptions of fairness and loyalty.

Group-based performance pay may mask the negative impact of poor working conditions on worker wellbeing, which can pose risks to organisational performance in the long-term if left undetected. Organisations can uncover such issues by asking employees to identify workplace stressors and then taking actions to minimise those stressors beyond compensation.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources:

1. Bryson et al. (2016)
2. Fox et al. (2022)





# Compensation Interventions

## Group incentive pay

An analysis of the top 100 Best Companies to Work for in America revealed that employees who receive group incentive pay participate more in decisions, exhibit greater information sharing, trust management more, and report a more positive workplace culture compared to employees who do not.<sup>1</sup>

There are several compensation structures that support group incentive pay including team bonuses, employee ownership, profit sharing, and stock options. The appropriate approach will depend on the nature of work within a particular organisation and their strategic goals. It is important that work demands are shared equitably among team-members to avoid “free-riding” which can foster resentment and perceptions of unfairness among employees.



Sources:  
1. Blasi et al. (2016)



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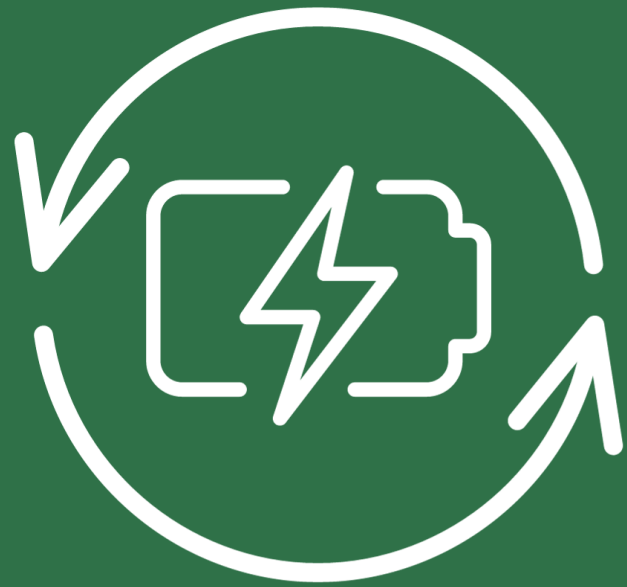
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# Energy

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Compared to tired workers, **energised employees** are more engaged, productive and happy at work. Work-related stress is a common source of energy drain, so getting this under control is key to improving workplace wellbeing.



# Energy Interventions

## Build employee resilience

Building employee resilience enhances their ability to cope with stress and in turn, protects their energy. Effective resilience-building initiatives involve self and group reflection to identify personal strengths and work-related stressors, as well as problem solving to resolve conflict, and cognitive behavioural therapy to reduce negative self-talk.<sup>1</sup>

Employees with poor work-life balance are susceptible to exhaustion and burnout, so programmes that help them set boundaries between their work and personal life can improve their resilience.<sup>1,2,3</sup> For example, a workplace policy outlining digital communication etiquette outside of working hours can prevent over-connectivity and excessive overtime.



### Sources:

1. Liosis et al. (2009)
2. Foster et al. (2018)
3. Ejlertsson et al. (2021)





# Energy Interventions

## Empower employees through job crafting

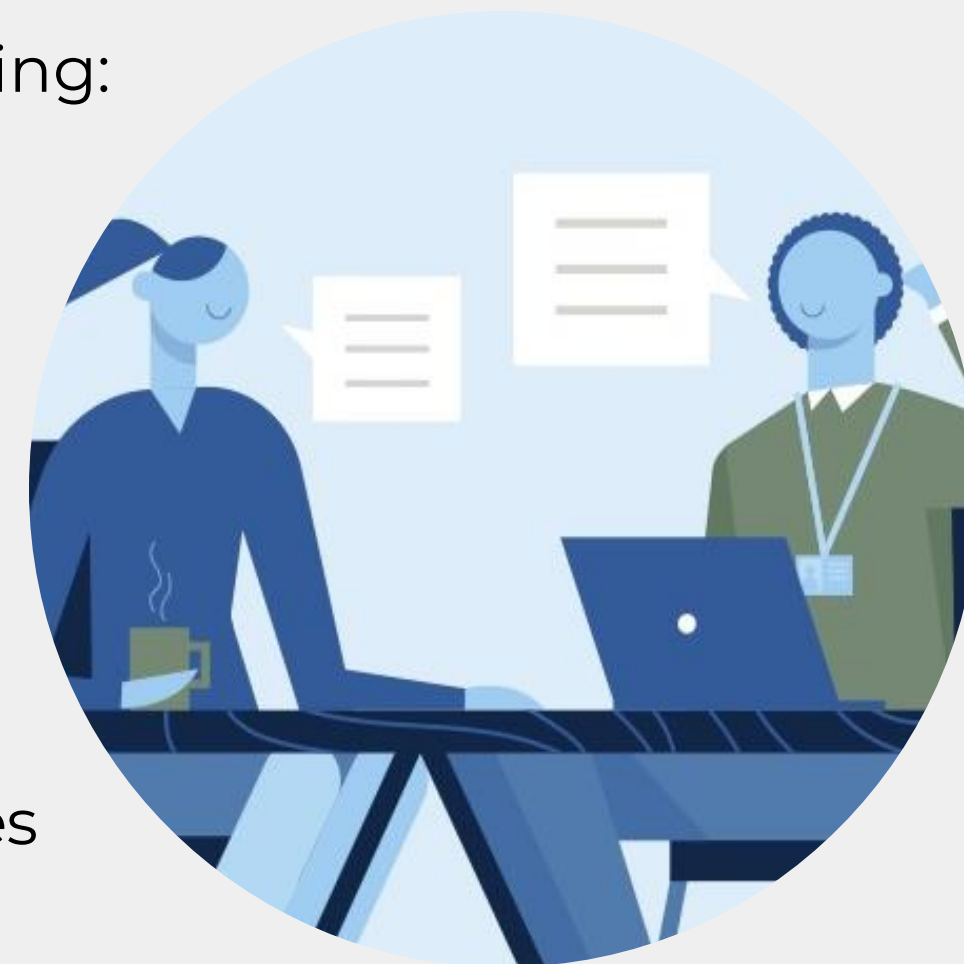
Job crafting provides employees with opportunities to customise their jobs in a way that better supports their wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> There are three main forms of job crafting:

**Task crafting:** altering the type, scope, sequence, and number of tasks

**Relationship crafting:** altering social interactions at work

**Perspective crafting:** altering perceptions of work

Studies conducted in various workplace settings including healthcare, education, manufacturing, and hospitality show the positive benefits of job crafting to employees including improved energy, engagement, and job satisfaction.<sup>2,3,4</sup>



### Sources:

1. [Harvard Business Review \(2020\)](#)
2. [Frederick and VanderWeele \(2020\)](#)
3. [Gordon et al. \(2018\)](#)
4. [Van Wingerten et al. \(2017\)](#)



# Energy Interventions

## Schedule micro-breaks

Encouraging employees to take short breaks throughout their work day can stabilise energy and productivity levels. Studies show that employees who take breaks are more attentive and alert later in the day and require less recovery time after work.<sup>1, 2</sup>

How employees spend their break and when they choose to take their break can influence wellbeing outcomes. The optimal approach will depend on the nature of their work, socioeconomic background, and cultural norms.

- Research suggests that engaging in movement over breaks such as stretching or a short walk can be beneficial.<sup>3</sup> A randomised control trial of a group-based exercise programme administered across 31 Japanese workplaces increased vigor, social support and job satisfaction among participants.<sup>4</sup>
- A large-scale field experiment of low-income workers in India showed improvements in cognition, psychological wellbeing, and productivity following a 30 minutes afternoon nap.<sup>5, 6</sup>



### Sources:

1. Steidle et al. (2017)
2. Bennett et al. (2020)
3. Fuegen and Breitenbecher (2018)
4. Michishita et al. (2017)
5. Bessone et al. (2021)
6. Schwartz (2010)



# Energy Interventions

## Educate employees on sleep hygiene

Educating employees about the importance of restful sleep in their overall wellbeing is a simple intervention that can yield several benefits including reduced incidences of sleep deprivation, presenteeism, and workplace injury.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Sleep hygiene training should empower employees to make simple adjustments to their daily routines that promote better quality sleep such as morning sun exposure and evening screen-time reduction. This training is especially important for shift workers who often struggle to maintain healthy sleep schedules.

### Sources:

1. Robbins et al. (2022)
2. Redeker et al. (2019)
3. Takano et al. (2021)





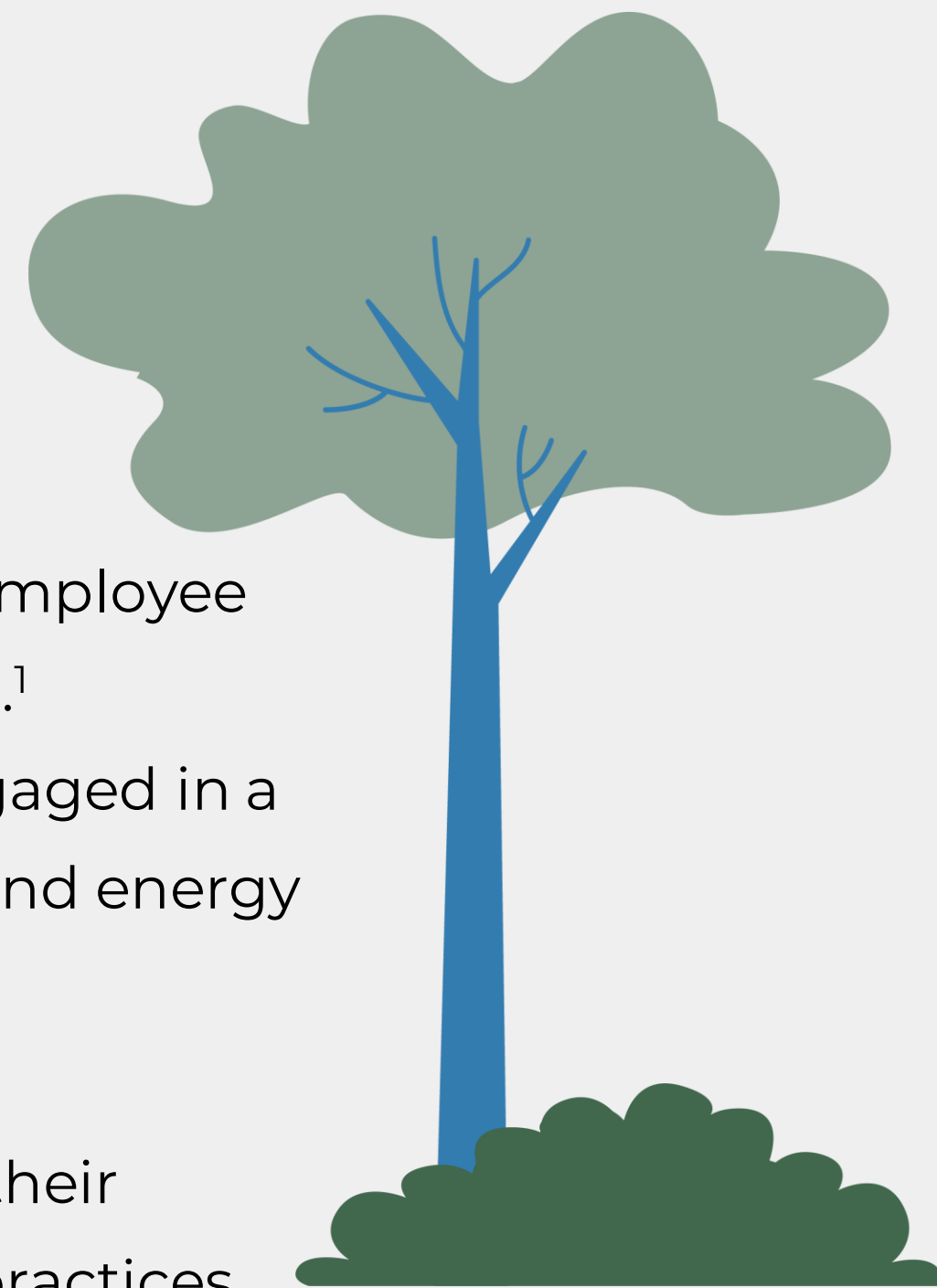
# Energy Interventions

## Offer mindfulness, meditation and yoga courses

Mindfulness, meditation, and yoga are widely studied practices that offer valuable benefits to employee wellbeing if they are adhered to in the long-term.

- A seven-week online mindfulness course increased resiliency and vigour among employee participants of a chemical company, and benefits were sustained after six-months.<sup>1</sup>
- A randomized control trial at a British University revealed that employees who engaged in a 60 minute yoga class once per week reported greater mental clarity, confidence, and energy compared to those who did not.<sup>2</sup>

Consistency is key to sustainable results, so help employees minimise any factors in their working conditions that may be impeding their ability to regularly engage in these practices.



### Sources:

1. Aikens et al. (2014)
2. Hartfiel et al. (2011)





# Energy Interventions

## Integrate wellbeing initiatives into workplace culture

Recent research analysing data from >46,000 employees found that various corporate wellbeing and stress management initiatives including mindfulness classes, yoga classes, and resilience training had **no effect** on mental health.<sup>1</sup> These initiatives are doomed to fail if working conditions do not support their implementation.

80% of employees in a recent Deloitte survey reported that they were struggling with heavy workloads and stressful jobs.<sup>2</sup> Leaders should focus on changing job conditions to reduce employee stress and facilitate opportunities to integrate personal development into their workday before attempting to change how employees manages stress through practices that require additional work to realise benefits.



Sources:

1. Fleming (2024)
2. [Deloitte Insights](#)





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# Energy

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# Flexibility

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Granting your employees with more freedom over **when** and **where** they work can improve their wellbeing and productivity.

**Flexibility** can also be offered through **leaves** for personal or professional reasons that promote rejuvenation and inspiration.



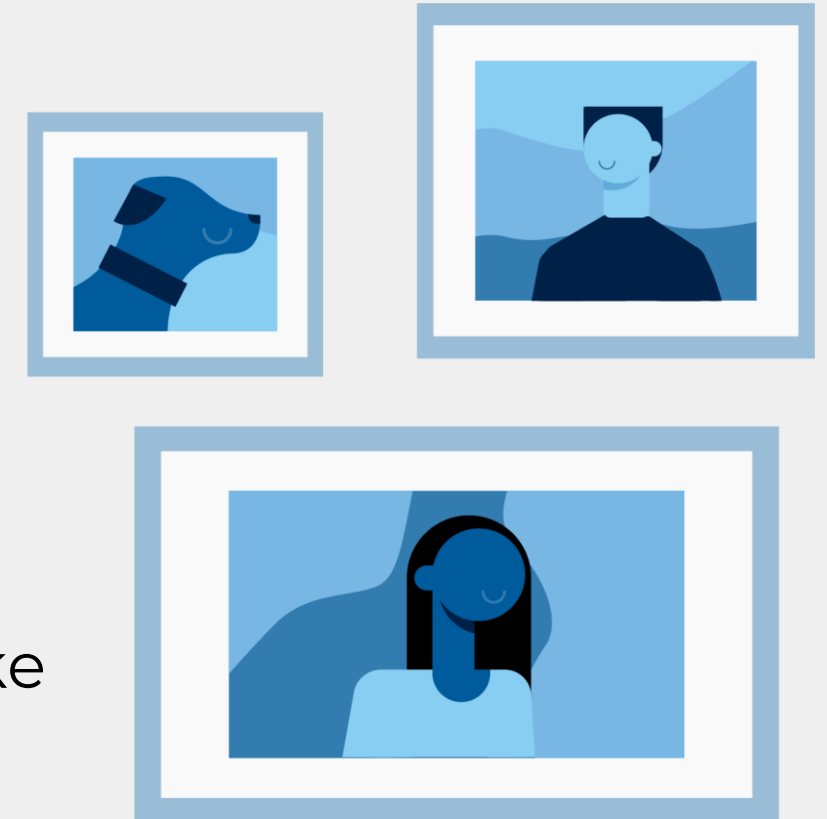


# Flexibility Interventions

## Give employees the option to work from home

Giving employees the choice to work from home (WFH) can boost employee wellbeing and productivity, especially as workplaces transition away from fully remote work during and in the aftermath of the COVID-19 pandemic, and explore alternative ways of working.

- According to findings from a choice experiment, the average job seeker is willing to take an 8% pay cut for a WFH option.<sup>1</sup>
- A longitudinal analysis in the US showed that new mothers returning to work with a WFH option were less likely to experience depressive symptoms 6 to 24-months post-childbirth.<sup>2</sup> (See section on **Inclusion and Belonging**).
- Post-pandemic, a randomised controlled trial showed that workers in a large IT office in Bangladesh were more productive and had higher wellbeing when working hybridly (2-3 days in office).<sup>3</sup>



### Sources:

1. Mas and Pallais (2017)
2. Shepherd-Banigan et al. (2016)
3. Choudhary et al. (2022)

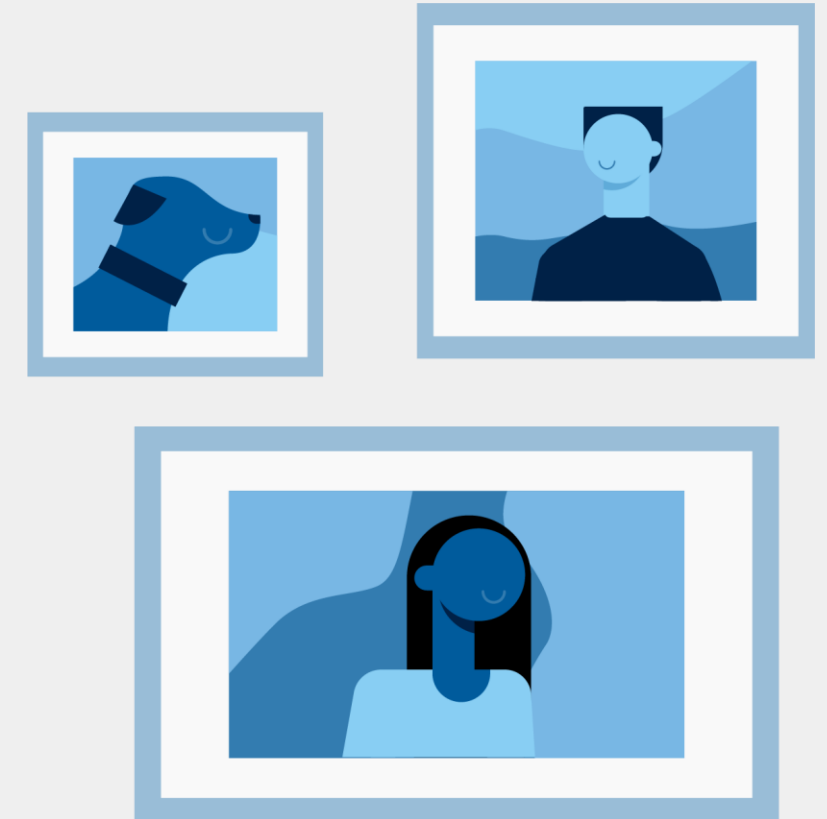


# Flexibility Interventions

## Give employees the option to work from home (contd.)

There are several risk factors that can impact the success of working from home on employee wellbeing and productivity that organisations should consider:

- **Poor working conditions:** Ensure employees' home working environments are suitable including workstation ergonomics, noise, lighting, and air quality.<sup>1</sup> Simply offering screen monitors and headsets can go a long way.
- **Collaborative work:** Research suggests that collaborative work is compromised when attempted remotely.<sup>2,3</sup> Encourage teams to be strategic and schedule in-office time together to complete such tasks.
- **Work overload:** Remind employees to take breaks and consider implementing a digital disconnection policy to help employees set boundaries between their work and personal life.<sup>4</sup>



### Sources:

1. Becker and Fisher (2022)
2. Yang et al. (2022)
3. [MIT Sloan Management Review](#)
4. Chung (2022)



# Flexibility Interventions

## Let your employees have say over their schedule

Employees who have control over their schedule report lower levels of stress, exhaustion, and greater work-life balance.<sup>1</sup> In contrast, employees with limited to no control over their schedule are less happy and at higher risk of poor health.<sup>2</sup>

Research suggests that schedule control is highly valued among workers. The results of a choice experiment showed that job seekers were willing to give up 20% of their income to avoid having no say with limited notice regarding their schedules.<sup>3</sup>

Empowering employees to determine their schedules collaboratively can improve work-life balance and perceptions of social support.<sup>4</sup> Kraft Foods created *Fast Adapts* for shift workers to make shift swaps and single-day vacation requests easier.<sup>5</sup>



#### Sources:

1. Moen et al. (2016)
2. Schneider and Harknett (2019)
3. Mas and Pallais (2017)
4. Albertson et al. (2014)
5. [Georgetown University Law Center](#)



# Flexibility Interventions

## Recharge employees with leave options

Giving employees a break from their routine work frees up time and mental space that they can put towards other goals. Employees returning from leave often report feelings of inspiration and rejuvenation.<sup>1,2</sup>

**Sabbaticals** are paid leaves for employees to focus on professional development. For example, many universities offer sabbaticals that relieve them of their teaching and administrative duties to concentrate on their research. At Monzo bank, employees get a 3 month sabbatical for every 4 years they work for the company.

**Deferred compensation leave** provides employees with the option to defer a portion of their salary over time to self-fund a leave for any purpose. This type of leave works best when the employee's job remains secure and they are notified of potential promotional opportunities while away.



Sources:

1. Davidson et al. (2010)
2. Jacobson and Kennedy (1997)





# Flexibility Interventions

## Encourage employees to take paid parental leave

Providing mothers and fathers with paid parental leave beyond the statutory minimum for the birth, adoption, or surrogacy of a new child can protect their mental health.<sup>1</sup> One study found that women who took paid leave were 53% less likely to seek mental health care compared to women who did not.<sup>2</sup> Research also suggests that there may be an extra wellbeing boost to families when both parents take parental leave.<sup>3</sup>

Reduce workplace stigma by encouraging fathers to take parental leave and put mechanisms in place to mitigate negative career consequences such as missed training or promotional opportunities for both women and men. All employees should have equality of opportunity regardless of their leave status.



### Sources:

1. [McKinsey](#)
2. [Jou et al. \(2018\)](#)
3. [Cardenas et al. \(2021\)](#)



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# Inclusion & Belonging

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Diversity** describes the demographic breakdown of a group. **Inclusion** is the degree to which all groups are **heard and involved** in **organisational** processes and decisions. **Belonging** is when people feel accepted, secure and supported as their authentic selves. It is only by combining all three that organisations can realise the full benefits.



# Inclusion & Belonging

## Interventions

### Inclusivity is good for business

Diverse teams with an inclusive culture not only supports employee wellbeing, but can boost business performance through innovation and leadership.

- A recent study found that organisations with greater diversity in leadership reported higher payoffs from innovation and stronger financial performance.<sup>1</sup>
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are up to 25% more likely to achieve above-average profitability.<sup>2</sup>
- A field experiment on business students demonstrated stronger performance in terms of sales and profits among equal gendered teams compared to male-dominated teams.<sup>3</sup>
- Healthy attitudes arise among gender-mixed teams, even in the military.<sup>4</sup>



Sources:

1. [Boston Consulting Group](#)  
2. [McKinsey](#)

3. Hoogendoorn et al. (2013)  
4. Dahl et al. (2021)





# Inclusion & Belonging

## Interventions

### Reduce systematic biases in hiring and promotion processes

Unconscious bias among managers can lead to discriminatory hiring decisions. Whilst this is a complex challenge without a single solution, there are several evidence-informed interventions that may minimise the impact of unconscious bias:

- Remove words associated with gender stereotypes from job adverts.<sup>1</sup>
- Anonymise applicants to overcome stereotyping.<sup>2, 3, 4</sup>
- Provide diversity training for hiring managers.<sup>5</sup>
- Test applicants (e.g. work samples or cognitive ability tests) in later stages of the hiring process.<sup>6,7</sup>



#### Sources:

1. Gaucher et al. (2011)
2. Goldin and Rouse (2000)
3. Oreopoulos (2011)
4. Bertrand and Duflp (2016)
5. Smith et al. (2015)
6. Bohnet (2016)
7. Schmidt et al. (1998)



# Inclusion & Belonging

## Interventions

### Offer flexible working options to accommodate diverse needs

Enabling all employees the flexibility to work from different locations can drive inclusivity and belonging among underrepresented groups, caregivers, and individuals with disabilities or intellectual differences, by reducing work related stressors that are unique to them.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

Business leaders should put measures in place to ensure that employees who work remotely are considered for promotion,<sup>4</sup> receive sufficient feedback,<sup>5</sup> and work appropriate hours to prevent excessive overtime.<sup>6</sup>



Sources:

1. [Economic Innovation Group](#)
2. [Lyttelton et al. \(2022\)](#)
3. [Murphy and Thomas \(2023\)](#)
4. [Harrington and Emanuel \(2021\)](#)

5. [Emanuel et al. \(2022\)](#)
6. [Noonan and Glass \(2022\)](#)



# Inclusion & Belonging

## Interventions

### Engage employees in decision-making processes

Inclusive organisations empower employees by giving them a voice in organisational decisions that affect their work and broader life. Employee voice fosters greater workplace democracy which can lead to significant improvements in wellbeing and performance in the short and long-term.<sup>1,2,3</sup>

- A study analysing the effects of employee involvement in team decisions regarding how work gets done increased employees' self-reported levels of autonomy and wellbeing.<sup>4</sup>
- Leaders who build team engagement in critical decision-making processes cultivate inclusive workplace climates that spark innovation and improve employee job satisfaction.<sup>5</sup>



#### Sources:

1. Battilina et al. (2022)
2. Fox et al. (2022)
3. Mowbray et al. (2022)
5. Nielsen and Randall (2012)
6. Brimhall (2019)



# Inclusion & Belonging

## Interventions

### Improve senior-level representation through mentoring and sponsorship

Typically led by senior managers, mentoring programmes create supportive bonds with employees. Studies show that underrepresented employee groups especially stand to gain.<sup>1,2</sup>

- An analysis of 829 U.S. firms revealed that mentoring programmes increased representation of black, Hispanic, Asian-American women, and Hispanic and Asian-American men from 9% to 24%.<sup>3</sup>

A recent survey reports that less than half (40%) of employees have a mentor at work and less than a quarter (23%) have a sponsor.<sup>4</sup>



Sources:

1. [Harvard Business Review](#)
2. [Lewis et al. \(2016\)](#)
3. [Harvard Business Review](#)
4. [Gallup](#)





# Inclusion & Belonging

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# Inclusion & Belonging

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# Learning

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Fostering **a culture of continuous learning** yields several benefits to employee performance and wellbeing. Empowering employees with autonomy and access to learning and development opportunities elevates engagement and job satisfaction, facilitates flexibility and adaptation, and improves productivity.



# Learning Interventions

## Give employees autonomy to accelerate their learning

Employees who possess autonomy overcome workplace challenges quickly through accelerated learning and adaptation.<sup>1</sup> Autonomy means employees having control of how they do their job. This sense of empowerment and achievement increases their confidence and wellbeing at work.<sup>2</sup> However, the benefits of autonomy are only revealed when employees feel trusted by their supervisors.<sup>3</sup> One step that managers can take to build trust and increase employee autonomy is to avoid micromanaging. (See section on **Trust**). This is also known as job enrichment, and can involve introducing more challenging tasks that employees welcome to continue their development.

Several longitudinal studies have demonstrated the benefits of autonomy to learning:

- High autonomous call center employees learned and adapted to a new internal software system more quickly than their low autonomous peers.<sup>4</sup>
- Empowered manufacturing workers identified and fixed production faults more often than their less empowered peers, and effects were greater for novice workers.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources:

1. Schooler et al. (2004)  
2. Leach et al. (2003)

3. Luring and Kubovcikova (2022)  
4. Bond and Flaxman (2006)

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# Learning Interventions

## Offer relevant and diverse learning opportunities

Employees who continuously engage in learning opportunities relevant to their field are more creative, engaged, and better equipped to deal with contemporary challenges. Evidence tells us that employee learning is a key driver of their professional development and wellbeing.<sup>1</sup>

There are several types of learning initiatives that impact wellbeing.

The strongest evidence supports learning that develops personal resources for wellbeing, and emerging evidence supports learning that develops professional capabilities such as leadership training.<sup>1</sup> Encourage your team to complete a training needs analysis to identify areas where they would benefit from enhanced learning support.



Sources:

1. Watson et al. (2018)



# Learning Interventions

## Foster a culture of continuous learning

Organisations that value continuous learning not only invest into their employees' professional development, but embed learning into their daily activities. Wide adoption of this mindset can yield several benefits such as enhanced employee engagement, job satisfaction, and retention. It also increases ROI from training by motivating employees to apply their newly acquired knowledge on the job.<sup>1</sup>

A survey of 2,810 employees in the United Kingdom revealed that expansive learning opportunities will likely benefit 'deep learners' but can cause stress for 'surface learners.'<sup>2</sup>



Sources:

1. Egan et al. (2004)
2. Felstead et al. (2015)



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# Management

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Supportive management** is fundamental to how people feel at work and to ensuring the job gets done. Continuously invest in managers' learning and development to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to support both their own wellbeing, and the wellbeing of their team members.





# Management Interventions

## Invest in manager training

Managers' commitment to workplace wellbeing increases the likelihood of wellbeing initiatives producing successful outcomes.<sup>1,2</sup> Continuously invest in managers' learning and development to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and resources they need to support their team's wellbeing.<sup>3</sup>

- An evaluation of a manager training programme on mental health improved managers' mental health knowledge, changed their attitudes towards mental illness, and enhanced their confidence for managing mental health issues within their teams.<sup>4</sup>
- A two-year management training programme in health and safety significantly improved health and safety management and employees' satisfaction with their physical and social working environment, including their perception of manager support.<sup>5</sup>



### Sources:

1. Daniels et al. (2017)
2. Daniels et al. (2021)
3. Lundmark et al. (2017)
4. Hanisch et al. (2017)
5. Torp (2008)

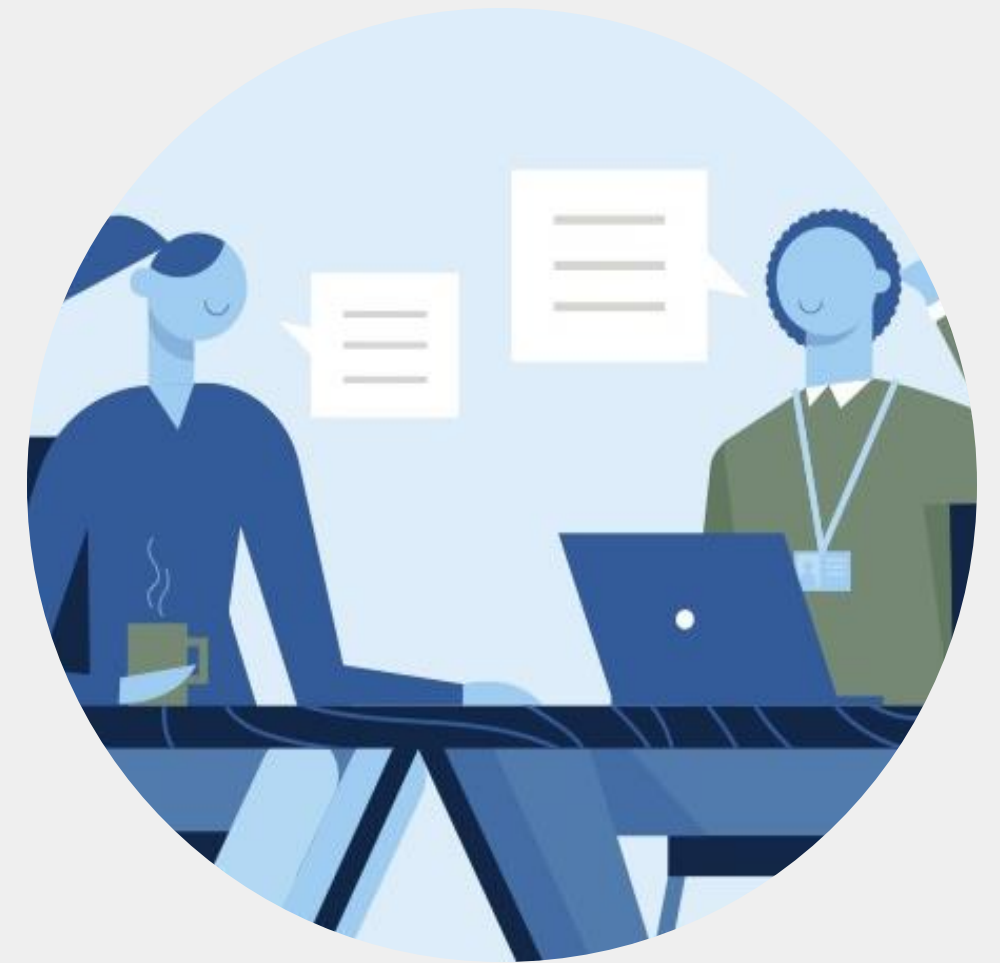


# Management Interventions

## Reduce manager stress

Interventions that reduce manager stress not only protect managers' wellbeing, but provides them with greater capacity to support the wellbeing of others. Work stress often arises from poor working conditions such as excessive work demands or low job security. In such cases, interventions that improve job quality can reduce stress.<sup>1</sup>

Sometimes the nature of the job itself is stressful and cannot be changed. In such cases, interventions that help employees cope with stress better can improve their wellbeing. For example, a three day stress-management workshop delivered to middle-manager firefighters increased social support and vigour among their teams compared to those who did not participate in the workshop.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources:

1. Fox et al. (2022)
2. Angelo and Chambel (2013)



# Management Interventions

## Enhance managerial support and accessibility

Studies reveal that employees with supportive and accessible managers who communicate with them often are more resilient to work-related stressors, particularly during organisational change or environmental disruption.

- An intervention designed to improve managers' support for work-life balance at a large US tech firm reduced negative emotions and stress among employees during a merger.<sup>1</sup>
- A study of Canadian healthcare workers in a period of organisational change showed that more supportive and communicative management acted as a buffer against the stresses of change.<sup>2</sup>



Sources:

1. Leger et al. (2022)
2. Day et al. (2017)

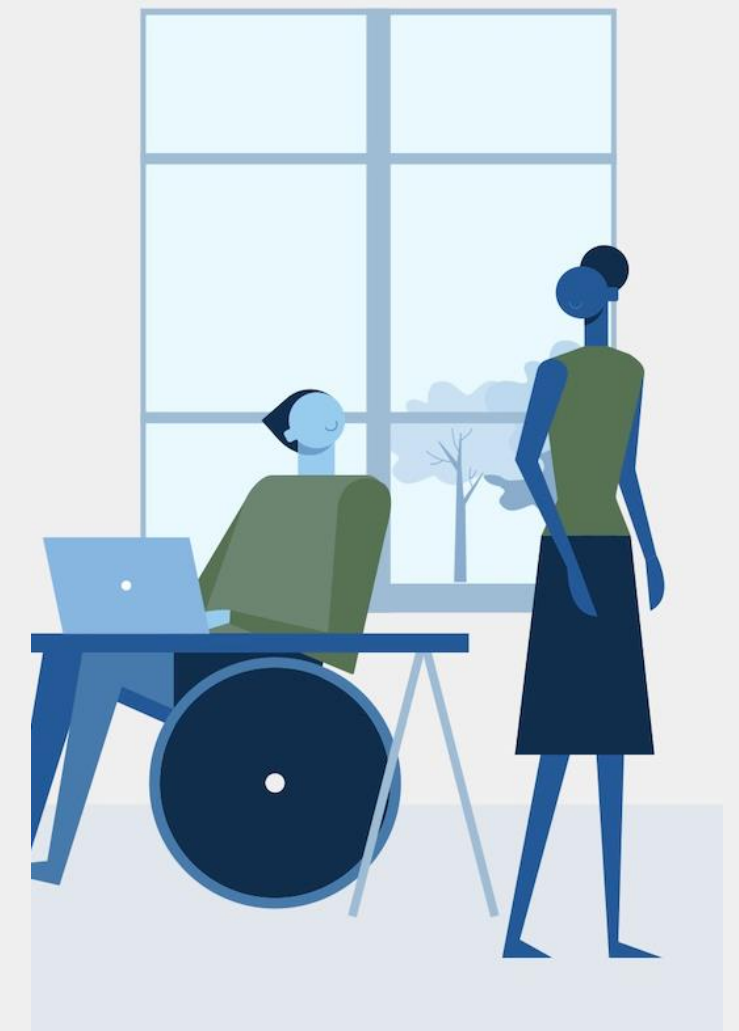


# Management Interventions

## Develop your managers' emotional intelligence (EI)

EI encompasses qualities that go beyond general intellectual intelligence and technical abilities to include **self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competency**.<sup>1</sup> Managers with high EI make successful leaders because they are able to identify and manage their own emotions as well as the emotions of others. The good news for organisations is that EI can be strengthened through effective training.

A meta-analysis of 24 EI adult training evaluations showed improvements in EI that sustained over time.<sup>2</sup> More specific to workplaces, training on emotional intelligence for managers over an intensive 15-hour training programme showed improvements in stress, wellbeing and relationships at work.<sup>3</sup> 20 minutes of post-work journaling at the end of a workday can also help.<sup>4</sup> Repeated training over time is encouraged to produce optimal results.



Sources:

1. Sterrett (2000)

2. Hodzik et al. (2013)

3. Kotsou et al. (2011)

4. Kirk et al. (2011)

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# Management

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# Purpose

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Purpose** can be a powerful motivator in the workplace that allows people to feel a sense of meaning in their working lives. This promotes engagement, productivity, and satisfaction. Leaders will improve employees' sense of purpose if they help them to understand both their strengths and how their work contributes to the broader organisational mission.



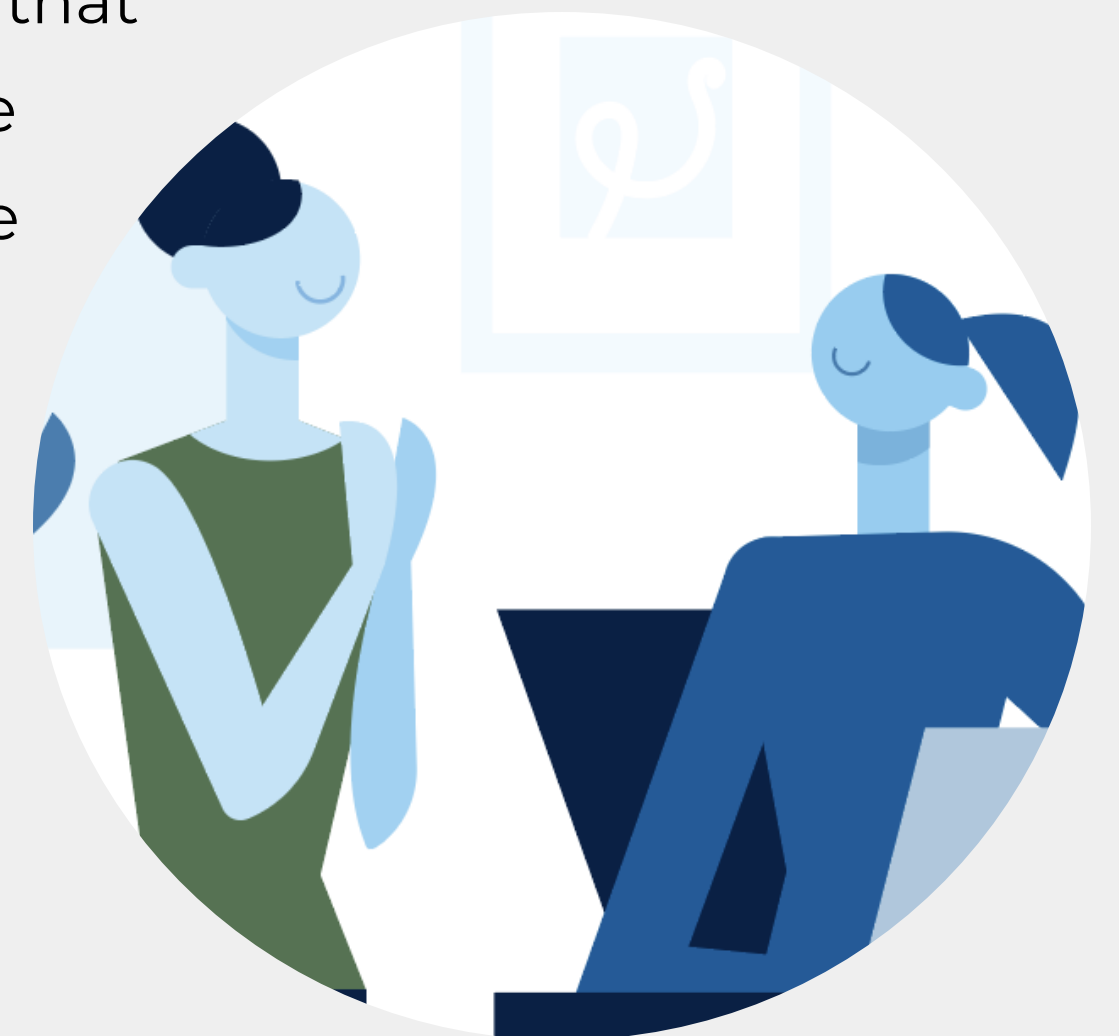
# Purpose Interventions

## Highlight the prosocial elements of work

Employees experience greater meaningfulness in their work when they believe that they are helping others.<sup>1</sup> Emphasising to employees how their work benefits the wellbeing of others (i.e. prosocial task framing) can ignite motivation, encourage teamwork, and improve performance.<sup>2</sup>

Three field experiments examining the impact of prosocial task framing on employee performance revealed positive effects:<sup>2</sup>

- Call center workers increased their productivity by 51%
- Lifeguards were more willing to give volunteer hours
- Fundraisers' productivity increased by 400%



Sources:

1. Allan et al. (2018)
2. Grant (2008)



# Purpose Interventions

## Promote a strengths-based approach

Give employees the opportunity to reflect on their strengths and utilise them in their job to improve their sense of purpose and satisfaction.<sup>1</sup> Applying one's strengths can lower stress, improve self-esteem, and sustain positive emotions over time.<sup>2</sup> There are several ways to help employees unlock their strengths ranging from questionnaires, group-based reflection, and performance management techniques.

A randomised control trial of a series of small-group sessions designed to promote and develop employees' strengths in an Australian government organisation showed improvements in self awareness, job meaningfulness, and subjective and psychological wellbeing.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources:

1. Harzer and Ruch (2016)
2. Wood et al. (2011)
3. Page and Vella-Brodrick (2013)





# Purpose Interventions

## Support employees through job crafting

Job crafting empowers employees to customise their jobs in a way that better aligns with their strengths, passions, interests, and values.<sup>1,2</sup>

There are three main forms of job crafting:

**Task crafting:** altering the type, scope, sequence, and number of tasks

**Relationship crafting:** altering work-related social interactions

**Perspective crafting:** altering perceptions of work

A study in the Netherlands showed that employees who engaged in job crafting behaviour reported higher levels of meaningfulness in their job.<sup>3</sup> Encourage your employees to identify opportunities in their job where they can derive greater meaning, and support them through job crafting to capitalise on these opportunities.



### Sources

1. Berg et al. (2010)

2. [Harvard Business Review \(2020\)](#)

3. Tims et al. (2016)

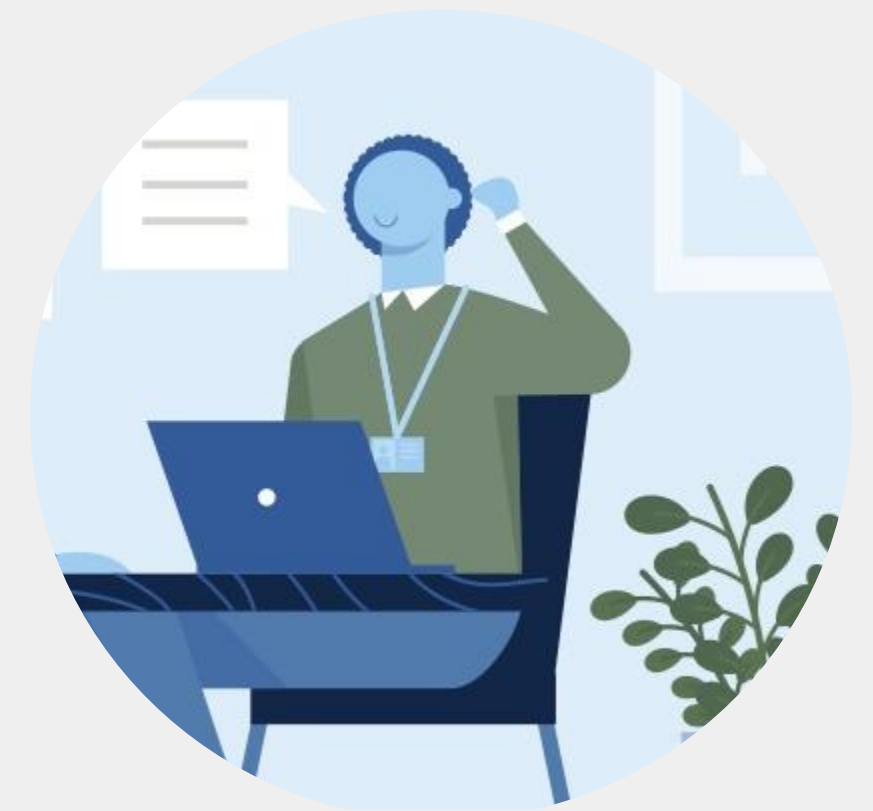


# Purpose Interventions

## Build reflection into your workflow

Encourage your employees to reflect on their purpose by empowering them through conversations, coaching, and workshops.<sup>1</sup> Keeping purpose top of mind helps employees set goals, generates energy in the workplace, and reduces stress.<sup>1,2</sup>

A randomised control trial of a 2.5 day immersive workshop designed to help employees align with their sense of purpose, increase their daily energy levels, and improve their overall quality of life led to significant improvements in participants self-reported general health, mental health, and social functioning in the short and long-term.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources

1. Voegtlin et al. (2015)
2. Grant et al. (2009)
3. Das et al. (2019)



# Purpose Interventions

## Connect employees' work to the organisational mission

Employees who derive a deep sense of meaning from their work are more resilient than those who do not. Leaders can elicit meaningful work for their employees by not only communicating a clear organisational mission, but helping them understand how their daily work contributes to that mission.<sup>1</sup>

An in-depth historical analysis of President John F. Kennedy's leadership of NASA in the 1960's when they put the first man on the moon revealed four practical insights:<sup>1</sup>

1. Have **one** organisational mission
2. Translate the organisational mission into a **concrete objective**
3. **Connect** employees' daily work to the concrete objective
4. **Inspire** employees using rhetorical language



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# Stress

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Stress** is the result of imbalance between the demands and expectations on people and the resources and abilities they have to manage those demands. Employee stress can pose serious risks to workplace wellbeing if left unaddressed, and can lead to several mental and physical health issues such as anxiety, depression and burnout. Interventions that help organisations identify and mitigate the main sources of stress are vital to achieving greater workplace wellbeing.

## Involve employees in workplace decision-making

Giving employees the opportunity to participate in workplace decision-making and allowing their ideas and concerns to influence workplace change can reduce stress and improve overall wellbeing.<sup>1</sup> This action is particularly important when implementing new interventions – asking employees to help co-design solutions to workplace problems can lead to greater success.

- A randomised control trial of a participatory problem-solving workshop showed a reduction in sick days and improvements in mental health among employees with stress symptoms or common mental disorders.<sup>2</sup>
- A 14-month participatory intervention rolled out across 6 Danish workplaces improved working conditions and psychological wellbeing among knowledge workers.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources

1. Astvik et al. (2021)
2. Keus van de Poll et al. (2020)
3. Sorenson and Holman (2014)

## Identify stressors in your organisation

Knowing the causes of stress for your employees is vital to reducing its impact. This is what is known as the psycho-social work environment. Only by identifying, understanding and minimising stressors can you help employees to thrive and deliver their best work.

Treating stress as an individual problem and not getting to the root cause is doomed to fail. Collecting data on your workplace will ensure you can target your interventions.

There are many tools for helping to identify the causes of stress. You can conduct a stress audit or stress risk assessment using multiple existing survey templates

- The UK's Health and Safety Executive Management Standards Indicator Tool measures demands, control, support, relationships, role and change
- A longer survey like ASSET: An Organisational Stress Screening Tool





# Stress Interventions

## Customise jobs through crafting

Job crafting gives employees the autonomy to proactively reshape their work task and relationships to better align with their personal needs, goals, and skills. It involves identifying the conditions that are hindering their wellbeing or productivity and making adjustments to reduce or eliminate them. Under **supportive** conditions, job crafting can improve employee stress and adaptability.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of 826 social service employees revealed that job crafting predicted work-life balance, work engagement, and burnout above and beyond age, gender, or seniority.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources

1. Devotto and Wechsler (2019)
2. Slowiak and DeLongchamp (2022)



# **Stress** Interventions

## Redesign jobs

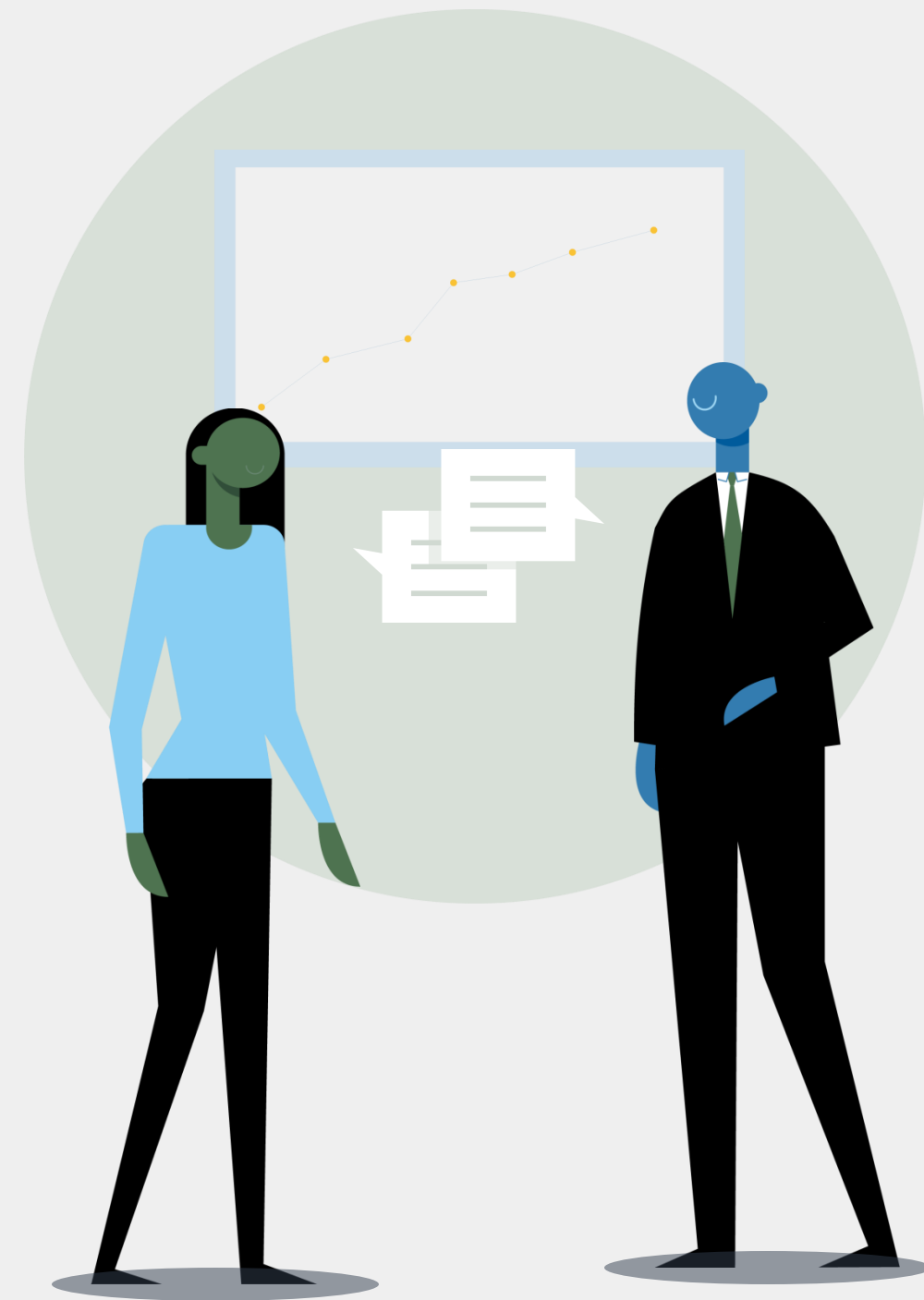
How job tasks and duties are structured and scheduled can strongly influence job quality.<sup>1</sup>

The practice of job redesign can facilitate improvements to workflow that better support employee wellbeing such as task variety and role clarity. Job redesign means breaking the job down with employees and collaboratively developing solutions to the main problems.

A systematic review of 33 intervention studies found that employee wellbeing and performance may be improved through:

- Direct improvements to job design
- Training employees to improve their own job design
- System wide approaches that enhance job design

Successful implementation of interventions was associated with employee involvement and engagement, managerial commitment, and integration with other organisational systems.<sup>1</sup>





# Stress Interventions

## Give employees flexibility & schedule control

Flexible work arrangements allow employees to alter how, when, and where they work on a temporary or permanent basis. A flexible approach coupled with managerial support can foster greater work-life balance, reduce stress, and improve job satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

An analysis of over 1000 employees across 50 organisations in South Korea revealed that work-life balance programmes and scheduling control are positively associated with job satisfaction and mental wellbeing, and the association is stronger when employees enjoy the benefits of both.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources

1. Hwang (2019)
2. Jang et al. (2011)

## Take care of your leaders

Employee wellbeing is dynamically influenced by leadership. The **wellbeing** and **behaviours** of leaders are linked to employee stress levels, absenteeism, and job satisfaction. Thus, interventions that reduce leaders' stress levels and encourage positive leadership behaviours can improve overall workplace wellbeing.

- A systematic review of leadership studies revealed that workplaces with leaders who were perceived to be **considerate** and **supportive** by their employees had higher wellbeing scores and fewer sick related absences.<sup>1</sup>
- A meta-analysis of studies assessing the impact of leadership on employee stress and wellbeing showed that employees with leaders who exhibit high stress levels and low moods are more likely to report the same symptoms.<sup>2</sup> Fortunately, the opposite is also true, suggesting that targeting leaders wellbeing has positive wellbeing spillover effects.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources

1. Kuoppala et al. (2008)
2. Shakon et al. (2010)



# Stress Interventions

## Promote relaxation

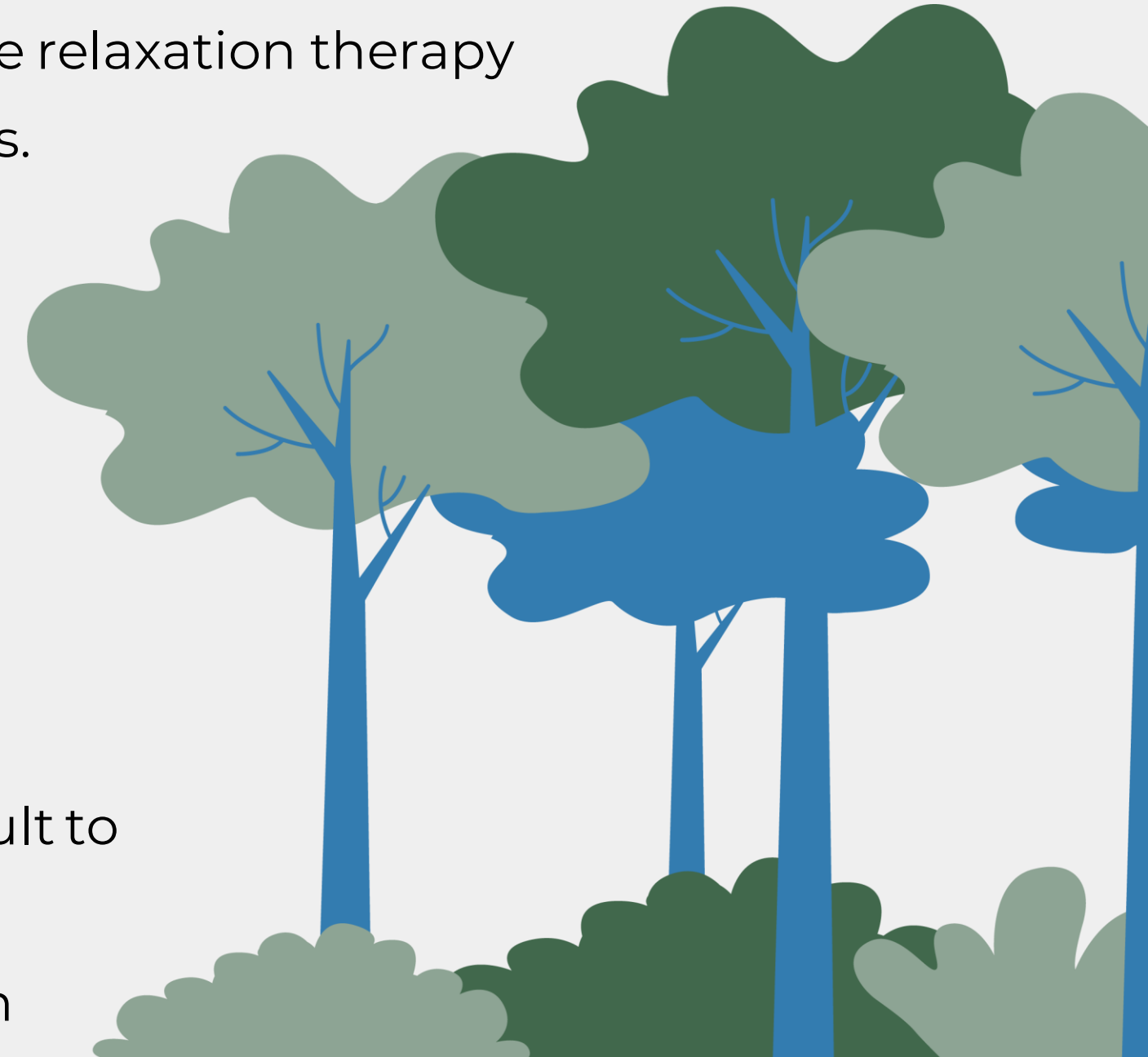
Relaxation techniques such as mindfulness, meditation, yoga, and muscle relaxation therapy can promote calmness and reduce work-related stress among employees.

- A randomised control trial of an 8-week relaxation programme (diaphragmatic breathing and progressive muscle relaxation twice a day for 20 minutes) administered to office workers across different workplaces showed significant reductions in stress-related symptoms.<sup>1</sup>
- A meta-analysis of relaxation therapies implemented in workplaces demonstrated a beneficial effect to employee health and wellbeing, especially in regard to stress.<sup>2</sup>

Adherence is key to success with relaxation practices which can be difficult to maintain during periods of stress. Considering this, organisations should **not** rely on this approach alone and instead, implement it in combination with other interventions that improve working conditions.

### Sources

1. Alexopoulos et al. (2014)
2. Estevez et al. (2021)







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# Support

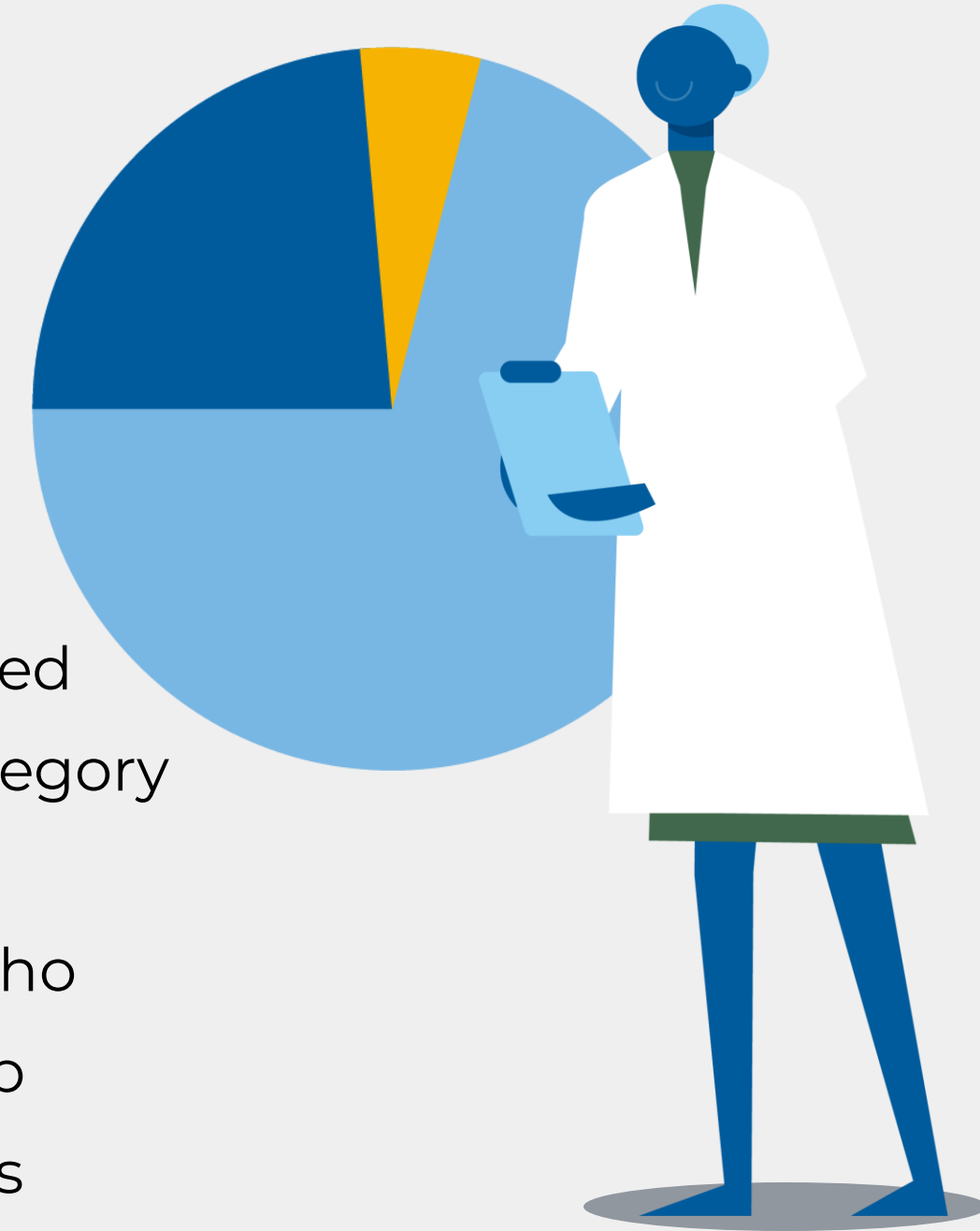
is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Employees who feel supported** by their organisation, manager, and peers are less stressed, more satisfied with their job and perform better than employees who feel neglected.

## Seek feedback from your employees

Providing employees with an outlet to share their thoughts and concerns about different aspects of their job can positively influence working conditions, job satisfaction and retention. Examples include one-on-one or team meetings and employee surveys. Employees should be asked the best way to share feedback.

- A randomised control trial of a US manufacturing company aiming to improve workplace safety, productivity, and teamwork revealed that managers who received quality feedback from their teams achieved significant improvements in each category compared to managers who did not.<sup>1</sup>
- A randomised control trial in Indian garment factories revealed that employees who provided feedback on their job conditions, supervisor performance, and overall job satisfaction through an anonymous survey were 20% less likely to quit five months following a disappointing wage hike.<sup>2</sup>

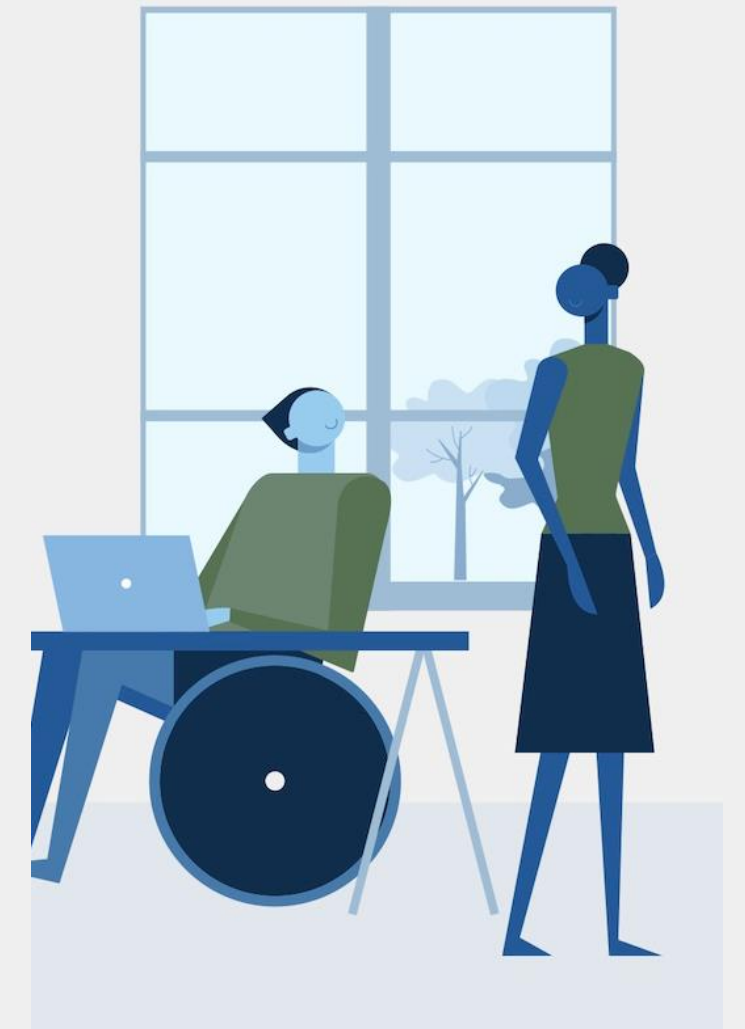


## Support employee autonomy

Organisations that support employee autonomy consider employees' perspectives, provide greater choice, and encourage self-initiation.

Employees who feel supported by their manager and broader organisation are more likely to benefit from autonomy through enhanced motivation and job satisfaction.<sup>1</sup>

A randomised control trial of managers from a Fortune 500 company who participated in a training programme designed to improve their autonomy-supportive capabilities led to higher levels of employee motivation and engagement among their teams five weeks post-training.<sup>2</sup>



### Sources

1. Gilet et al. (2013)
2. Hardre and Reeve (2009)



## Offer prosocial leadership training

A positive relational atmosphere in the workplace is an essential factor for long-term business success. Employees who have positive social interactions with their managers and peers cultivate healthier professional relationships and in turn, exhibit higher levels of wellbeing, engagement, motivation, and performance.<sup>1</sup>

Evidence demonstrates that managers play a key role in fostering healthy relational dynamics at work. A prosocial leadership training programme offered to white-collar professionals in large Turkish corporations improved workplace social networks, perceptions of support, and collegiality.<sup>1</sup> The programme covered the following themes using creative techniques such role-play, and imagery:

- Respectful and peaceful communication
- Understanding and tolerating other points of views
- Learning to rely on others by accepting vulnerability

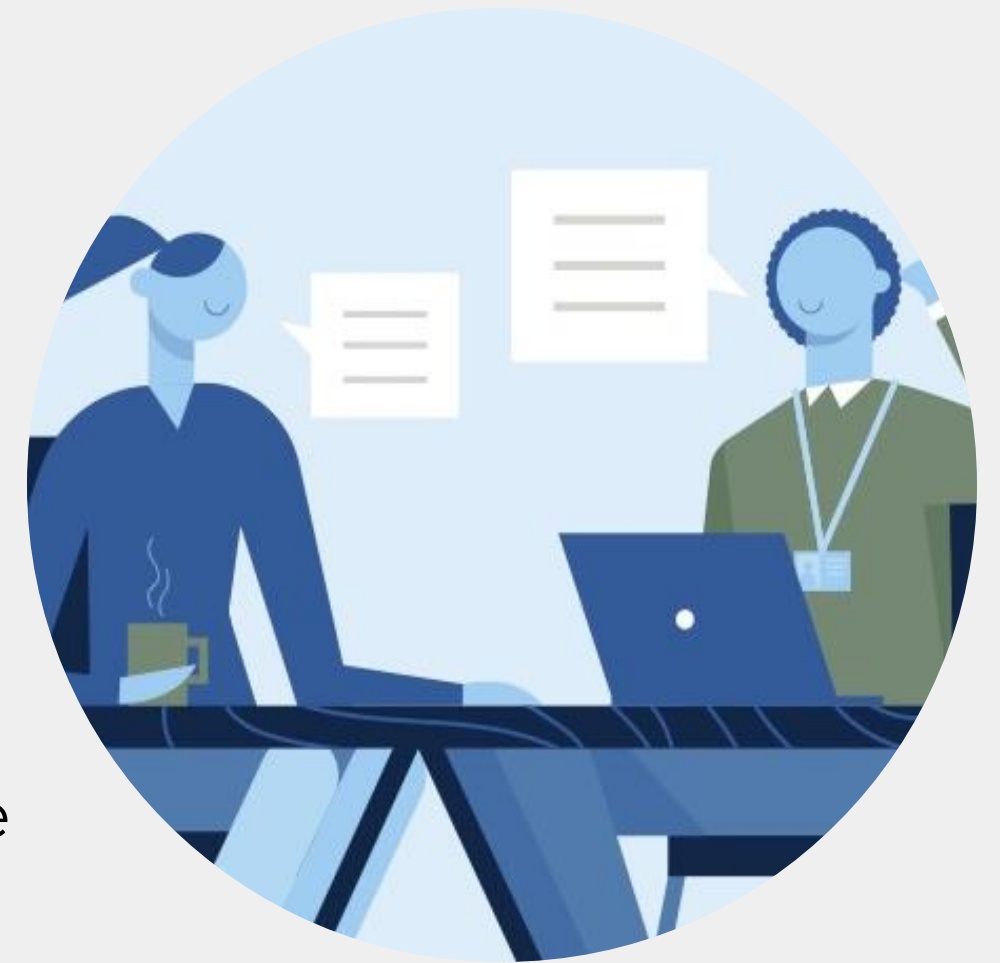


## Facilitate peer support

Employees who support others and feel supported by their peers can experience wellbeing benefits such as positive emotions and improved career satisfaction.<sup>1,2</sup>

Peer support can foster collegiality, enhance recognition and appreciation, and support workplace learning and development, all of which can lead to stronger business performance.<sup>1</sup>

- A systematic review of 26 mentoring programme evaluations revealed positive impacts to both employee wellbeing and organisational performance.<sup>1</sup>
- A 6-month peer support intervention designed to improve coping and resilience among junior doctors to prevent burnout resulted in wellbeing improvements and enhanced confidence.<sup>3</sup>



### Sources

1. Giacumo et al. (2020)

2. Angelopoulou and Panagopoulou (2020)

3. Elamin and Cussons (2020)

## Nurture work-life balance

Managers who proactively implement strategies to support work-life balance within their team can reduce employee stress arising from work-life conflict and in turn, improve job satisfaction and physical health.<sup>1,2,3</sup> See the flexibility tab.

- Two one-hour training sessions designed to help managers exhibit family supportive behaviours in a grocery chain led to improvements in employee wellbeing 9-months post-training.<sup>2</sup>
- A randomised control trial of a programme implemented in a Fortune 500 tech company designed to enhance employee control and manager support showed improvements in stress, perceived work-life balance, job satisfaction and retention.<sup>3</sup>



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2. Kelly et al. (2014)
3. Moen et al. (2016)



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# Trust

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

**Trust** fosters a safe work environment where employees feel supported and valued. Employees who trust their organisation, managers, and co-workers are more likely to express their ideas, feel encouraged to innovate and collaborate, exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment and job satisfaction, and manage stress more effectively.

## Practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

Studies show that employees of companies that practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR), such as donating to charities or investing in social programmes, exhibit higher levels of organisational trust and job satisfaction, which are known drivers of retention.<sup>1,2</sup>

CSR activities can demonstrate to employees that their organisation cares about more than just profits, which can improve employee-management relations. The potential impact of CSR on employee's organisational trust and wellbeing will depend on the type of CSR initiative pursued in relation to the company's core business activities,<sup>3</sup> and the extent to which employees have a voice in CSR decision-making.<sup>4,5</sup>



### Sources:

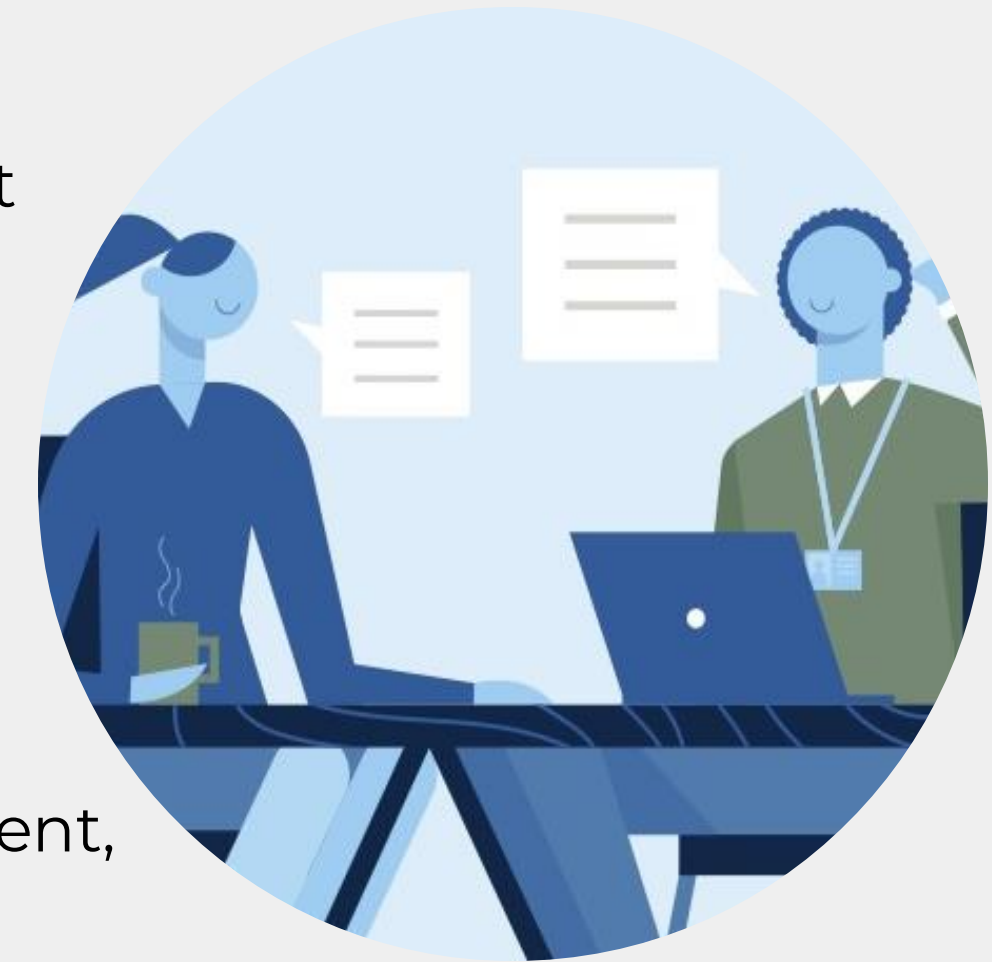
1. Dhanesh (2014)
2. Lee et al. (2013)
3. Lee et al. (2012)
4. Breeze and Wiepking (2020)
5. Hejjas et al. (2019)

## Create a climate of psychological safety

Employees who feel a high sense of psychological safety (PS) in their work environment are more likely to share ideas, ask questions, and voice concerns.<sup>1</sup> Studies show that trust is a critical component of PS and in turn, a strong catalyst for work engagement and mental wellbeing.<sup>2</sup>

PS is especially important for driving wellbeing and productivity among **teams**:

- PS helps remote working teams navigate challenges associated with dispersion more efficiently.<sup>3</sup>
- PS helps diverse teams find common ground, build inclusion, and spark engagement, especially for minority workers.<sup>4</sup>
- Hosting 1:1 meetings to discuss how you can improve the way you work can improve a sense of psychological safety.<sup>5</sup>



Sources:

1. Edmondson (2019)
2. May et al. (2004)

3. Gibson and Gibbs (2006)
4. Bradley et al. (2014)
5. Castro et al. (2022)

## Establish multiple communication channels

Effective communication is the cornerstone of trust. Organisations should aim to establish multiple open lines of communication across and within teams to ensure that employees will receive timely and relevant information and in return, can raise their own questions or concerns.

Regular, transparent, and forthcoming communication is an effective way for managers to establish trust, especially among employees who perceive there to be high power imbalance and for those who work remotely.<sup>1,2</sup> Furthermore, reliable information-sharing strongly influences employees' perception of workplace fairness. Failure to share critical information can result in negative attitudes, low job satisfaction, and employee turnover.<sup>3,4</sup>



Sources:

1. Young and Daniel (2003)
2. Willemyns et al. (2003)

3. Albrecht and Travaglione (2003)
4. Herr et al. (2020)



## Facilitate collaboration to build coworker trust

Employees often build informal social groups based on shared background characteristics such as race, ethnicity, or native language. Thus, facilitating collaboration across teams can improve coworker communication, trust, and business performance.

Offering vocational training courses, team-building workshops, regular meetings, and social events are effective interventions for facilitating a more collaborative and inclusive work environment where employees feel a sense of belonging.<sup>1</sup> Formalising these groups into Employee Resource Groups with the mission of building inclusivity can improve mental health and wellbeing.<sup>2</sup> (See section on [Inclusion and Belonging](#)).



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