Work Wellbeing Playbook 2.0

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Improving work with the Work Wellbeing Playbook

Watch and read how we created the Playbook.

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Our Authors

We continue to work with our academic partners at the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford to draw on interdisciplinary expertise in developing our model of workplace wellbeing and the interventions that make up the Work Wellbeing Playbook.

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Making the most of this resource

1 Measure

Conduct an employee survey to assess four core dimensions of employee wellbeing: **job satisfaction, happiness, stress, and sense of purpose.** Collectively, these provide a scientifically validated, multidimensional view of how employees experience work.

Equally important, organisations should measure **the drivers of workplace wellbeing** - the underlying working conditions, relationships, and organisational factors that shape those experiences.

2 Understand

Once you've got the data, the next step is to **identify which drivers most strongly predict wellbeing outcomes within your organisation.**

Workplace wellbeing is multidimensional, shaped by a range of drivers, but not all drivers exert equal influence in every context.

By applying **data analysis at scale,** organisations can uncover which factors most powerfully explain wellbeing within their organisation.

3 Act

Once you have identified your priority drivers, the next task is to **select and implement interventions** that address them effectively.

The Playbook provides a curated selection of **evidence-based interventions** to help you act with confidence to choose interventions that are both empirically grounded and contextually feasible.

Don't forget to build **evaluation** plans into your intervention design.

Read our full guidance document before getting started, to ensure you get the most out of the resources.

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Sharing this resource

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D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety
Achievement	Appreciation	Flexibility	Energy	Compensation	Stress
Learning	Inclusion & Belonging	Employee Voice	Purpose		Workload Pressures
Job Security	Support	Operational Design			
	Trust	Autonomy			
	Management				
	Leadership				

By categorising workplace wellbeing drivers into the **DRIVER** acronym, we've made navigating the Playbook even easier.

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D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety

D

Development and security

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.

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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.[1,2]

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.[3]

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.[3]

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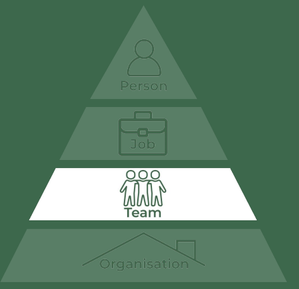
Achievement
Interventions



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.[4]

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.[5]

Specific and challenging goals yield higher group performance compared to nonspecific or easy goals.[4] 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.

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Achievement
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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.

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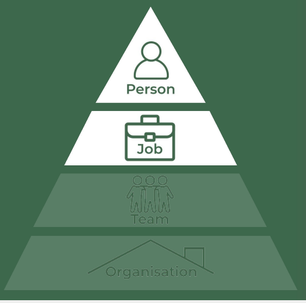
Learning Interventions



Give employees autonomy to accelerate their learning

Employees who possess autonomy overcome workplace challenges quickly through accelerated learning and adaptation.[1] Autonomy means employees having control of how they do their job. This sense of empowerment and achievement increases their confidence and wellbeing at work.[2] However, the benefits of autonomy are only revealed when employees feel trusted by their supervisors.[3]

One step that managers can take to build trust and increase employee autonomy is to avoid micromanaging. This is also known as job enrichment, and can involve introducing more challenging tasks that employees welcome to continue their development.

Refer also to:
- **Trust** driver

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.[4]
- Empowered manufacturing workers identified and fixed production faults more often than their less empowered peers, and effects were greater for novice workers.[2]

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.[5]

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.[5] Encourage your team to complete a training needs analysis to identify areas where they would benefit from enhanced learning support.

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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.[6]

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.'[7]

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Learning
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Job Security

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Job security refers to the stability and continuity of one's employment within an organisation. It encompasses both the objective likelihood of retaining one's job and employees' subjective perceptions of their risk of job loss, each of which plays a fundamental role in supporting workplace wellbeing.

Conversely, job insecurity, whether stemming from actual instability or perceived threat, has been linked to heightened stress, anxiety, burnout, and reduced job satisfaction.

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Job Security
Spotlight

Actual vs perceived job security

Objective job security refers to the objective stability of employment, such as the formal protections, contracts, or tenure that ensure continued and stable work. Examples include indefinite contracts, employment protections, union or collective agreements, statutory notice and severance requirements, and organisational policies that minimise involuntary turnover or guarantee redeployment during restructuring.[1,2]

Perceived job security refers to an employee's subjective sense of stability and confidence in their continued employment. It is shaped less by formal guarantees and more by organisational culture, leadership communication, and the broader economic climate.[21,22] Employees may feel secure when they trust leadership, see clear business direction, and believe their skills are valued and adaptable. Conversely, even in objectively stable roles, uncertainty about organisational change, automation, or market pressures can erode perceived security and lead to stress, disengagement, or reduced performance.[1,3] Research shows that perceived job insecurity can have similar negative effects on engagement, wellbeing, and performance as actual job loss.[1-3] In modern organisations, where restructuring and technological shifts are frequent, managing the psychological dimension of security is as vital as providing contractual protection.[4]

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Job Security
Interventions

Establish internal labour markets

Internal labour markets (ILMs) are organisational systems for pay and promotion decisions that prioritise providing opportunities to current employees over hiring externally, where possible. As a result, most job vacancies are filled from within, thereby creating upward job opportunities for employees and a sense of long-term job security.

A recent study of American employees working in an ILM revealed that ILMs were associated with **improved economic outcomes** for employees such as pensions, health care insurance, and job security.[5] This study also revealed several positive side effects that can improve business performance such as **greater employee satisfaction, commitment, and effort.**

ILMs predominantly offer permanent contracts rather than temporary ones, which is perhaps the most obvious way to improve **job security** and is associated with better health and wellbeing outcomes.[6]

Considerations for success: Organisations should consider specialised training and education to support internal recruitment. A systematic review of such interventions revealed strong associations with employee retention, delayed retirement, and faster return-to-work from sick-leave.[7]

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Job Security
Interventions

Reduce precarity by integrating contingent and outsourced workers

Contingent and precarious employment, such as temporary contracts, agency work, gig roles, and zero-hours arrangements, creates some of the lowest levels of job security across modern labour markets. Research consistently links these forms of work to poorer psychological wellbeing, heightened stress, and reduced organisational commitment.[8,9] Large employers often rely on contingent labour to demonstrate organisational "flexibility," yet this can unintentionally create chronic insecurity and weaken cohesion.[10,11]

Although broader policy change is needed, organisations still have meaningful levers to reduce precarity. A key approach is to integrate contingent and outsourced workers more fully into the workforce primarily through more secure positions.

Strategies for integration

- **Insourcing key roles** where feasible to provide greater employment stability and organisational oversight.
- **Creating pathways to permanent or longer-term contracts** for high-performing agency workers.
- **Extending access to training, communication channels, wellbeing initiatives, and social activities** to ensure contract workers feel included.
- **Aligning standards and protections** - such as fair wages and safety practices - across permanent and contract roles.

Integrating contract workers is both good business sense and good for wellbeing. It signals genuine organisational commitment, strengthens loyalty, and enhances engagement.

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Job Security
Interventions

Utilise thoughtful change management strategies

An extensive line of research starting from the 1980s demonstrates how restructuring, mergers, and layoffs can increase employees' **job insecurity** and threaten mental wellbeing. To mitigate the harmful effects of such organisational changes on employee wellbeing, whether large or small in scale, leaders should consider thoughtful and collaborative interventions that facilitate **employee participation**.

Evidence from multiple studies demonstrates the value of employee participation during organisational restructures:

- A participatory intervention which enabled teams to prioritise the problems they believed to be most pressing during a period of major restructure in two Danish postal regions helped postal workers feel less insecure about changes to their jobs. The intervention facilitated this prioritisation through the use of employee surveys, steering committees, and workshops.[12]

- A study comparing the effects of two different downsizing strategies implemented by Swedish hospitals found significant differences in employee reactions based on the downsizing strategy used.

  Reactive strategy: This hospital implemented downsizing in a more top-down manner, with fewer opportunities for employee participation.
  Proactive strategy: This hospital implemented downsizing with greater flexibility and more opportunities for employee participation.

  Nurses at the proactive hospital reported less job insecurity, role ambiguity, and role conflict than their colleagues at the reactive hospital, even though there were no differences in role overload. They also held more favourable perceptions of the change process, sense of organisational justice, and commitment to achieving the goals of restructuring.[13]

- A leadership training intervention designed to improve supervisors understanding of workplace stress and provide greater support to employees affected by organisational change showed reductions in job insecurity. The intervention comprised a mix of formal training sessions, seminars and peer-counselling.[14]

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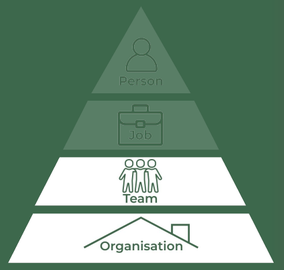
Job Security
Interventions



Practice financial transparency

Keeping employees informed about the financial health of their organisation can improve retention and alignment with performance objectives. Withholding such information, on the other hand, tends to foster a sense of job insecurity.

By disclosing financial information with employees, companies can enhance communication, build trust, and strengthen commitment. This heightened connection can foster a greater sense of belonging and community, which in turn, can help mitigate worker uncertainty and stress.[15]

- An analysis of survey data from British workplaces revealed a strong *negative* relationship between financial transparency and job-related distress. More specifically, a one unit increase in workplace financial transparency is associated with 3.2% reduction in job-related distress, with sense of job security explaining almost one tenth of this relationship.[16]

- Another study utilising the same survey showed that employees who reported that their managers were ‘very good’ at disclosing financial information had higher wages than those who reported ‘very bad’, suggesting that financial transparency helps employees to fairly negotiate their salary.[17]

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Job Security
Interventions

Incorporate job and task rotation schemes

Job and task rotation schemes are job design techniques that facilitates periodic shifts among employees between a range of jobs or tasks within an organisation. The timing and duration of these rotations are often pre-determined by management or decided in collaboration with employees.

Incorporating such techniques can improve sense of job security through several mechanisms:[5]

- Exposure to variety can develop employee skills
- Reducing monotony can improve employee satisfaction and motivation
- Stimulating work environments can enhance engagement
- Greater labour flexibility and utilisation of organisational learning can improve organisational performance
- Reduced physical incidence of injury, strain or fatigue

A meta-analysis of 56 studies showed that job rotation was significantly associated with job satisfaction, organisational commitment, career success, labour flexibility, general psychological health, individual performance, and productivity. For employees in high-intensity jobs, positive relationships between job rotation and physical health were also found.[18]

Many studies emphasise the importance of training employees in line with their competencies and clearly defining which job-rotation programmes are available to each worker, particularly in manufacturing settings.[19]

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Job Security
Interventions

Develop effective return-to-work plans for employees on sick-leave

Providing employees with effective return-to-work plans following sick-leave can speed up their rehabilitation process, increase their likelihood of sustaining long-term employment without future health-related interruptions, and enhance their overall wellbeing.

A high quality systematic review conducted by the Institute for Work and Health identified effective workplace interventions to support workers with musculoskeletal, pain-related and/or mental health conditions return to work.[20] Their review found three different types of common practices:

- **Health service delivery** (e.g., physiotherapy, cognitive behavioural therapy)
- **Service coordination** (e.g., case management, worker training)
- **Work modification** (e.g., modified duties or hours, ergonomic adjustments)

The review recommends implementing **work-focused cognitive behavioural therapy** to help reduce lost time and costs associated with mental health conditions, and **combining interventions** from at least two of the three practice areas to reduce lost time associated with musculoskeletal and pain-related conditions.

A separate systematic review exploring the factors that influence employee wellbeing during the return-to-work process found that autonomy, work-health balance, and professional support positively influenced wellbeing.[21]

Refer also to:
- **Autonomy** driver

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Job Security
Interventions

Give employees access to financial wellness programmes

Employee financial wellness programmes (EFWPs) can help reduce short-term financial stress through voluntary services such as financial education, budgeting support, and savings incentives. While they may improve financial confidence for some employees, these programmes must be carefully designed, optional, and transparent. EFWPs can complement broader wellbeing efforts, but they are not a primary job security intervention.

Employees under financial stress are more likely to be distracted at work or take time off of work.[22,23] These side effects not only present concerns for employees' health and safety, but also their job security. Some evidence suggests that personal financial issues can greatly impact individual performance.[24]

Research indicates that employees enrolled in a EFWP are more likely to hold positive perceptions about their employer and feel more engaged in their work. In addition, many experience improved psychological health arising from healthy financial behaviours including budgeting and saving.[25]

EFWPs should complement, never replace, fair wages, job stability, and broader organisational interventions. Programmes must prioritise employee protection, privacy, and strong ethical standards.

- Low employee uptake is common, with confidentiality concerns frequently cited as a key barrier.[26]
- Offer flexible programme designs that reflect differences in income levels, job types, and working conditions.
- Be cautious of commercial "financial wellbeing" apps that offer high-interest credit to low-wage workers, as these can increase financial precarity rather than reduce it.[27]

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Job Security
Interventions

Avoid layoffs – build organisational resilience to withstand crises

Refer also to:
- **Trust** driver

A comprehensive review of 127 studies in top management journals shows that organisational resilience is cultivated long before a crisis, through sustained investment in people, learning, and trust.[28] Proactive workforce planning and people-centred strategic management enhance both *objective and perceived job security*, strengthen adaptability, and protect wellbeing.[29]

Plan and prepare early

Organisations that invest early in workforce capability perform better under pressure. Training employees in adaptive thinking (i.e., the ability to respond flexibly, learn quickly, and apply creative solutions in changing situations) helps them navigate uncertainty with confidence.

Developing cross-functional roles, where employees work across different departments and understand how various functions connect, builds collaboration and organisational agility.

A global study of business clusters found that firms with strong learning and development systems showed greater adaptability, maintained productivity, and protected more jobs during the 2008–09 downturn than peers that cut back on human capital investment.[30]

Strengthen psychological safety and trust

Open communication, consistent leadership, and a culture of mutual respect reduces fear, sustains engagement, and maintains commitment during disruption.

Evidence shows that psychological safety lowers employee exhaustion and boosts performance during crises.[31]

HR systems grounded in trust and reciprocity strengthen organisational resilience, while firms with deeper social capital recover faster and maintain greater workforce stability after crises.[32,33]

Empower employees and democratise decision-making

Empowered teams and shared decision-making drive faster adaptation and innovation, strengthening both morale and employees' sense of job security.

Research from crisis-hit firms shows that autonomy and participatory HR practices enable frontline problem-solving and resourcefulness—key factors that distinguish resilient organisations.[28,34]

Maintain human-centric learning systems

Retaining multi-skilled employees and flexible talent pools allows organisations to absorb shocks without resorting to layoffs, helping preserve institutional knowledge and morale.[28]

Post-crisis reflection, retraining, and knowledge sharing enhance adaptability and long-term employability by embedding continuous learning and renewal into recovery processes.[34]

Empirical evidence shows that organisations combining learning-oriented cultures with resource flexibility recover faster and report higher employee wellbeing.[34]

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Job Security Interventions

Avoid layoffs – reinvest AI gains for workforce growth and resilience

Manage AI-driven restructuring responsibly

The adoption of Generative AI can increase productivity by 15–40% across knowledge and service roles.[35,36]

However, a narrow focus on short-term cost savings or headcount reduction risks eroding culture, trust, and talent retention through heightened perceptions of job insecurity.[2,37]

Recent evidence shows that organisations with stronger workforce capability and skills development are better positioned to capture the benefits of AI adoption, reinforcing the need to invest in people rather than cut jobs.[38]

Reinvest efficiency gains into the workforce

Leaders should treat AI-related cost savings as strategic fuel for long-term growth and innovation, not merely as an expense reduction lever.

Redirect savings to fund reskilling, redeployment, and innovation pipelines, ensuring employees transition into emerging roles rather than displacement.[39,40]

Evidence from the OECD (2024) and the *Journal of Financial Economics* highlights that firms investing in digital skills and inclusive workforce development outperform peers on innovation, revenue growth, and employee retention.[41,42]

When AI adoption is accompanied by robust workforce development and governance, covering data security, transparency, and human–AI integration, it can enhance employee wellbeing and engagement.[43]

Sustainable workforce strategies balance technological efficiency with workforce continuity, ensuring adaptability, wellbeing, and a durable competitive advantage.

Organisations that adopt a reinvestment mindset consistently experience stronger trust, engagement, and resilience, as well as superior financial and innovation outcomes.[39,41,44]

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Job Security
Interventions

If layoffs are inevitable, manage with care (1/3)

Layoffs affect not only those who depart, but also the employees who remain.

Survivor syndrome describes the emotional and behavioral challenges experienced by these employees, often marked by guilt, anxiety about job security, and reduced trust in leadership. This can lower morale, engagement, and performance across the organisation.

A large-scale U.S. study of 2,297 workers found that exposure to downsizing was strongly linked to poorer mental health, lower morale, and diminished organisational commitment among those who kept their jobs.[45]

Importantly, research shows that these effects depend on *how* layoffs are handled. Transparent communication and perceptions of fairness significantly buffer negative outcomes, preserving trust and engagement among remaining employees. [46] Experimental and longitudinal studies further demonstrate that when employees perceive layoffs as procedurally fair and respectfully managed, they are more likely to remain committed and cooperative. [47-50]

Layoffs should be approached with **humanity and empathy**, recognising the real human impact rather than viewing them solely as financial or operational events. Providing adequate notice, fair severance packages, and career-transition or outplacement support demonstrates respect and compassion, while also signalling procedural and interpersonal justice, core elements shaping how employees perceive fairness.

Empirical evidence shows that respectful and transparent treatment during layoffs preserves trust and morale among both departing and remaining employees. A meta-analysis of 60 studies found that organisations demonstrating fairness and respect during downsizing saw lower voluntary turnover intentions and higher post-layoff morale.[50]

Similarly, a separate study showed that survivors who felt their organisation provided honest explanations and fair processes were significantly less likely to disengage or exhibit counterproductive behavior.[51]

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Job Security
Interventions

If layoffs are inevitable, manage with care (2/3)

Ethical and legally compliant workforce transitions protect both employees and organisational legitimacy. Compliance involves adhering to national labor standards on consultation, redundancy pay, notice periods, and retraining obligations, which differ across regions but share a focus on fairness and transparency. For example:

- **In Denmark**, employers must provide formal notice and fund generous unemployment benefits, while the government supports rapid reskilling and reemployment programs. This approach helps maintain workforce mobility and minimises the long-term impact of layoffs.[52]
- **Germany's Works Constitution Act (Betriebsverfassungsgesetz)** mandates works council consultation before any mass redundancy. Employees receive collectively negotiated severance and often benefit from *Transfergesellschaften*, temporary "transfer companies" that provide continued pay, training, and job-placement support during transition.[53\]
- **The Netherlands** requires employers to obtain approval for redundancies from the Employee Insurance Agency (UWV) and mandates minimum notice and redundancy pay, supplemented by publicly funded training vouchers to facilitate reemployment.[54]
- **France and Sweden** similarly enforce structured social plans (plans sociaux) requiring redeployment offers, retraining opportunities, and negotiations with worker representatives before layoffs are finalised.[55]

These frameworks ensure employees are treated fairly and given time to prepare, while helping organisations avoid litigation, reputational damage, and productivity loss.

Empirical evidence from OECD countries shows that firms operating within stronger employment-protection systems experience lower turnover volatility, faster workforce reabsorption, and higher post-crisis productivity compared to those in deregulated labor markets.[56,57]

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Job Security
Interventions

If layoffs are inevitable, manage with care (3/3)

Leading organisations **go beyond compliance** by implementing redeployment, reskilling, and outplacement strategies that minimise the long-term impact of layoffs on both people and performance.

Practical approaches include:

- **Internal mobility and redeployment programs**, where employees are retrained and reassigned to new business units or emerging roles rather than made redundant.
- **Reskilling pathways**, often developed in partnership with public employment services, vocational institutions, or universities to prepare workers for future-demand roles.
- **External career-transition partnerships**, offering professional coaching, job-placement support, and retraining vouchers to help employees re-enter the labour market.

Evidence shows that these interventions yield measurable business benefits.

A comparative review found that companies adopting structured redeployment and outplacement programs experienced faster reputational recovery, higher morale among remaining staff, and better retention of top talent than firms that relied on mass layoffs for short-term savings.[58] Similarly, OECD reports highlight that firms who integrate active transition measures, such as reskilling and redeployment, achieve stronger innovation performance and higher employee engagement within 12–18 months following a significant external shock or business transformation.[59,60]

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Job Security
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D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety

R

Relationships

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.

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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.[1]

- Encourage peer-recognition and self-recognition.[2,3]
- Seek feedback from clients, customers or patients and celebrate positive reviews.[3]
- 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.[4]

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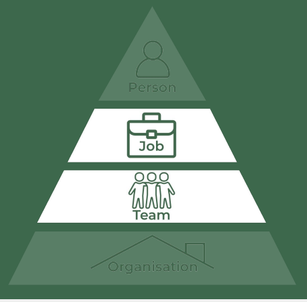
Appreciation
Interventions



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)

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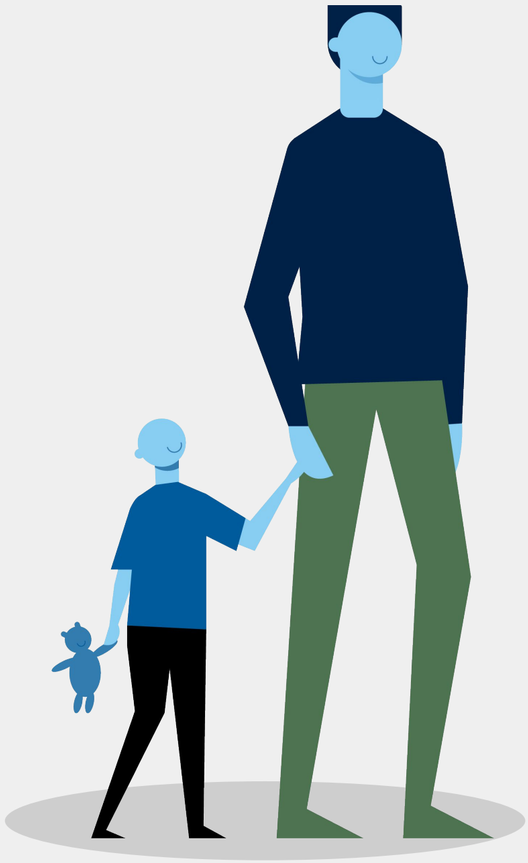
Appreciation
Interventions

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.[5,6,7] ***Non-monetary*** rewards and benefits such as flexible working options and paid volunteer days off can improve employee autonomy and work-life balance.[8,9]



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.

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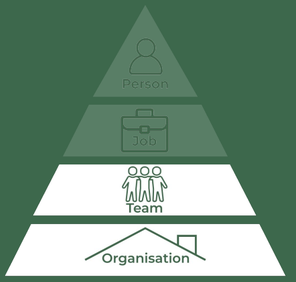
Appreciation
Interventions



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.” [10]

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.[11]

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Appreciation
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World Wellbeing Movement

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.

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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.[1]
- Companies in the top quartile for gender diversity are up to 25% more likely to achieve above-average profitability.[2]
- A field experiment on business students demonstrated stronger performance in terms of sales and profits among equal gendered teams compared to male-dominated teams.[3]
- Healthy attitudes arise among gender-mixed teams, even in the military.[4]

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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.[5]
- Anonymise applicants to overcome stereotyping.[6,7,8]
- Provide diversity training for hiring managers.[9]
- Test applicants (e.g. work samples or cognitive ability tests) in later stages of the hiring process.[10,11]

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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.[12,13,14]

Business leaders should put measures in place to ensure that employees who work remotely are considered for promotion,[15] receive sufficient feedback,[16] and work appropriate hours to prevent excessive overtime.[17]

Refer also to:
- **Stress** driver

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Inclusion & Belonging
Interventions

Engage employees in decision-making processes

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Support**
- **Employee Voice**

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.[18,19,20]

- 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.[21]
- Leaders who build team engagement in critical decision-making processes cultivate inclusive workplace climates that spark innovation and improve employee job satisfaction.[22]

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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.[23,24]

- 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%.[25]

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.[26]

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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.

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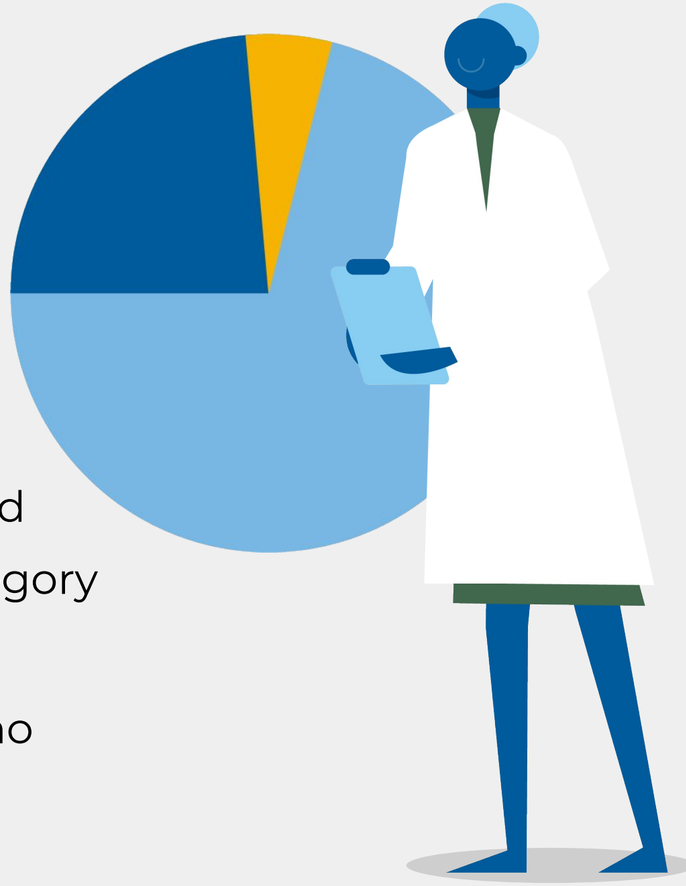
Support Interventions

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.[1]
- 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.[2]

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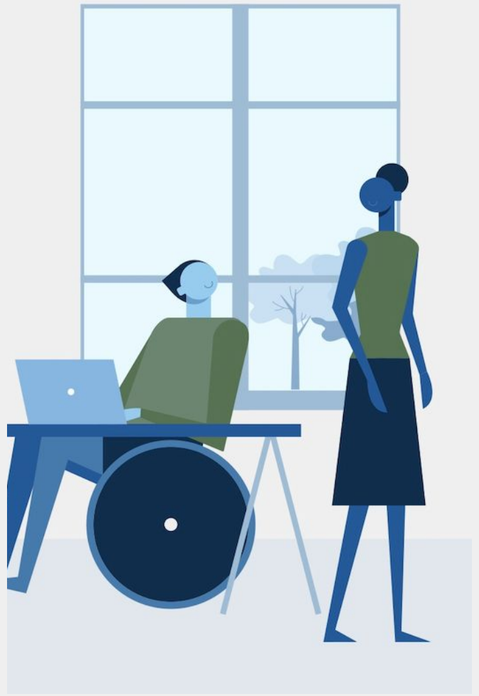
Support Interventions

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.[3]

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.[4]



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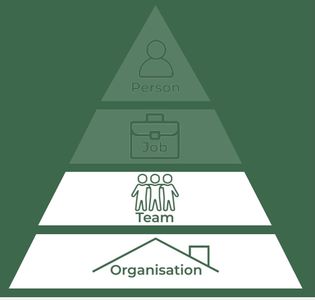
Support Interventions



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.[5]

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.[5]

The programme covered the following themes using creative techniques such as role-play and imagery:[5]

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

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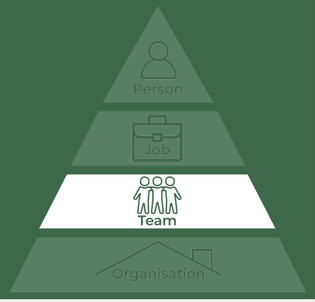
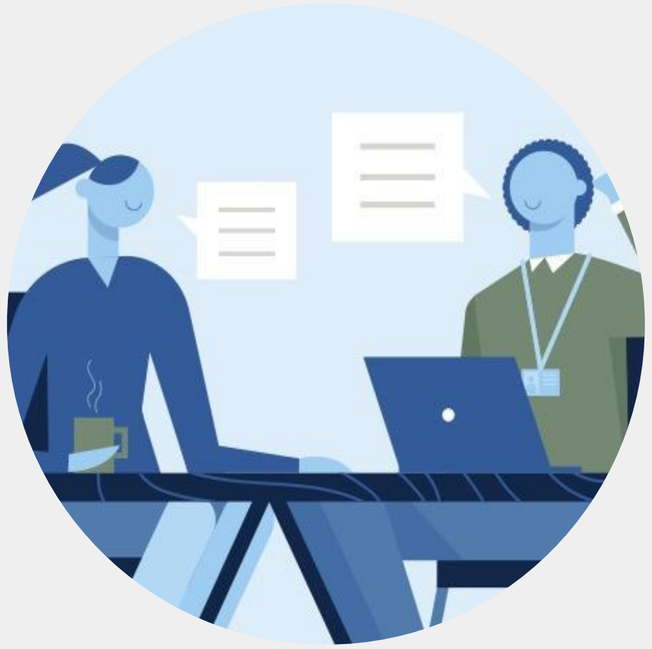
Support Interventions



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.[6,7] Peer support can foster collegiality, enhance recognition and appreciation, and support workplace learning and development, all of which can lead to stronger business performance.[6]



- A systematic review of 26 mentoring programme evaluations revealed positive impacts to both employee wellbeing and organisational performance.[6]

- 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.[8]

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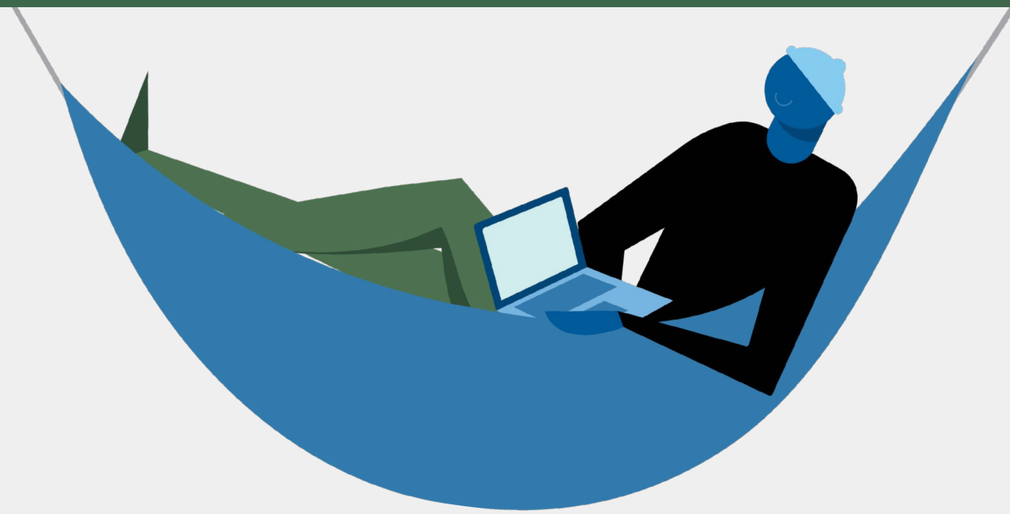
Support Interventions

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.[9,10,11]

Refer also to:
- **Flexibility** driver

- 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.[10]
- 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.[11]

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World Wellbeing Movement

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.

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Trust
Interventions

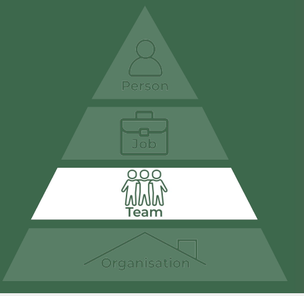
Practice Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR)

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.[1,2]

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,[3] and the extent to which employees have a voice in CSR decision-making.[4,5]

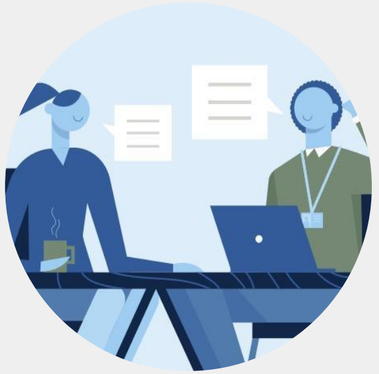
World Wellbeing Movement

Trust
Interventions



Create a climate of psychological safety

Psychological safety is a team climate where people feel respected, included, and empowered to speak up - to share ideas, ask questions, raise concerns, or admit mistakes - without fear of blame or negative consequences. It enables open communication, learning, and accountability, which drive innovation, agility, and high performance.[6]



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.[7] Studies show that trust is a critical component of PS and in turn, a strong catalyst for work engagement and mental wellbeing.[8]

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

- PS helps remote working teams navigate challenges associated with dispersion more efficiently.[9]
- PS helps diverse teams find common ground, build inclusion, and spark engagement, especially for minority workers.[10]
- Hosting 1:1 meetings to discuss how you can improve the way you work can improve a sense of PS.[11]

World Wellbeing Movement

Trust
Interventions

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.[12,13] 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.[14,15]

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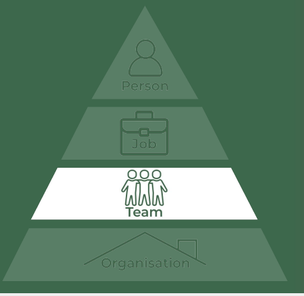
Trust
Interventions



Facilitate collaboration to build coworker trust

Refer also to:
- **Inclusion & Belonging** driver

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.[16] Formalising these groups into Employee Resource Groups with the mission of building inclusivity can improve mental health and wellbeing.[17]

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World Wellbeing Movement

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. Management focuses on the day-to-day responsibilities of planning, organising, supervising and supporting employees to achieve shared goals. Managers provide clarity, feedback and practical guidance, helping employees understand expectations and access the resources they need to perform effectively.

Unlike leadership (see Leadership driver) , which extends beyond formal roles to influence through vision and culture, management operates primarily through defined responsibilities and positional authority. Evidence shows that supportive, accessible and communicative managers help reduce stress, strengthen engagement and promote trust across teams.

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Management
Interventions

Equip managers to succeed in promoting employee wellbeing

Large-scale evidence from Indeed's global Work Wellbeing research, conducted in partnership with the Wellbeing Research Centre at the University of Oxford, shows that how work is managed and the quality of the manager–employee relationship are among the strongest predictors of workplace wellbeing.[1]

When managers are equipped with the right skills and resources, they can positively shape how people experience work, improving both employee wellbeing and performance. Conversely, poor management is a major source of workplace stress. A global McKinsey survey reported that 75% of employees identified their immediate manager as the most stressful aspect of their job.[2]

Despite this outsized influence of managers, many are promoted into people leadership roles primarily on the basis of technical or functional expertise, rather than demonstrated capability in managing people.

Research in occupational health psychology consistently shows that such skills **do not develop automatically with seniority or experience**, and are often underdeveloped at the point of promotion.[3,4]

Systematic reviews further indicate that many managers lack formal preparation in the behaviours most strongly associated with employee wellbeing such as providing support, managing demands, and fostering trust.[4,5]

This presents a major opportunity to organisations.

To improve employee wellbeing at scale, manager development should be prioritised and addressed with evidence-based interventions.

World Wellbeing Movement

Management
Interventions

Invest in manager training

Managers' commitment to workplace wellbeing increases the likelihood of wellbeing initiatives producing successful outcomes.[5] 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.[6]

- 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.[7]

- 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.[8]

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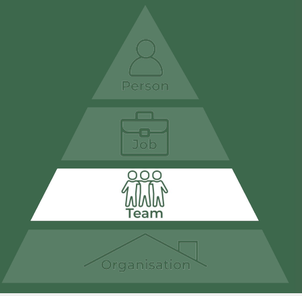
Management
Interventions



Encourage managers to use ‘lean’ management approaches

Lean management is a philosophy originating in the Japanese manufacturing sector that has since been adopted globally across industries.[9] It is a multifaceted approach focused on maximising value for the end customer, reducing unnecessary activities (waste), and driving continuous improvement in business operations.[10] When implemented well, certain lean practices have been shown to positively influence employee wellbeing. Crucially, these benefits depend on managers being properly trained in lean management approaches.

- One of the most widely used lean practices is **Kaizen**, which provides a structured, iterative, and participatory approach to improving workplace processes. Kaizen typically uses visual management tools, such as Kaizen boards, to make improvement ideas, actions, and progress visible to teams.[11] An evaluation of Kaizen interventions across two workplace settings found positive effects on employee mental health, with stronger outcomes when organisational goals and employee objectives were clearly aligned within the Kaizen system.[12]

- Further evidence highlights the importance of collective participation. A 12-month study of an employee steering committee intervention in the Danish Postal Service found that team-based participation in addressing working conditions was associated with higher work engagement, reduced burnout, and improved team functioning. Notably, perceptions of individual participation alone had no effect on these outcomes, underscoring the value of collective, manager-supported improvement processes.[13]

World Wellbeing Movement

Management
Interventions

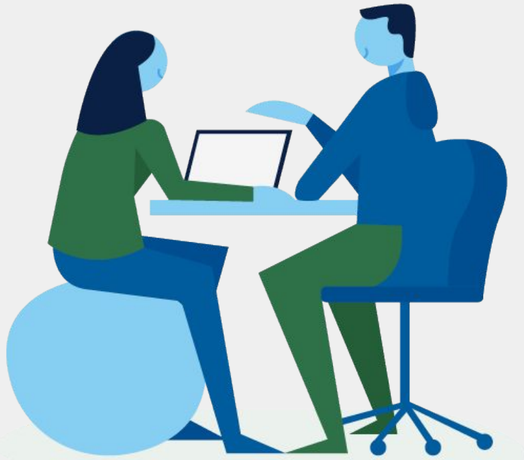
Empower managers to support job redesign initiatives

Job redesign is most effective when it is led and supported by managers who are properly trained and actively engaged in improving how work is structured and experienced. Managers play a pivotal role in ensuring that redesigned roles do more than change tasks — they enhance autonomy, reduce stress, and promote employee wellbeing.

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Job Security**
- **Autonomy**
- **Stress**

- Evidence shows that job redesign delivers the strongest wellbeing benefits when paired with supportive leadership. A job redesign initiative in the IT department of a large U.S. firm found that increasing supervisor support alongside structural changes significantly improved employees' emotional resilience to daily stressors and boosted overall wellbeing.[14] This highlights that job redesign is not simply a technical exercise, but a leadership practice requiring sustained relational support.

- Leadership involvement also shapes employee trust and uptake. When leaders actively shape and communicate redesign efforts, employees are more likely to engage with changes, resulting in stronger wellbeing and performance outcomes.[15] More broadly, successful redesign initiatives integrate changes to job structure with supportive management practices such as coaching, flexibility, and regular feedback.[5]



For organisations seeking to improve engagement and retention, building leadership capability to guide and sustain job redesign is a critical investment.

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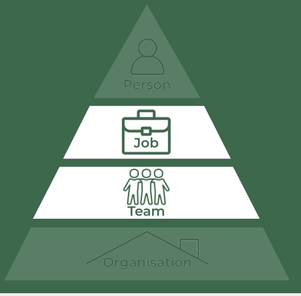
Management
Interventions



Enhance managerial support and accessibility

Supportive and accessible managers play a critical role in protecting employee wellbeing, particularly during periods of organisational change or disruption. Employees who experience frequent, high-quality communication with their manager are more resilient to work-related stressors and uncertainty.

Evidence from intervention and longitudinal studies shows that improving managerial support can significantly reduce employee stress during change. At a large U.S. technology firm, an intervention designed to strengthen managers' support for work–life balance led to lower stress and fewer negative emotions among employees during a merger.[14] Similarly, research with Canadian healthcare workers found that supportive, communicative management buffered the negative effects of organisational change on employee wellbeing.[16]

Effective managerial support looks like: :

- Regular, predictable communication
- Visible accessibility and responsiveness
- Practical support for work–life balance
- Active listening and follow-through
- Clear guidance during periods of uncertainty

World Wellbeing Movement

Management
Interventions

Develop your managers' emotional intelligence (EI)

Emotional Intelligence (EI) encompasses qualities that go beyond general intellectual intelligence and technical abilities to include self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social competency.[17]

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.[18] 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.[19] 20 minutes of post-work journaling at the end of a workday can also help.[20] Repeated training over time is encouraged to produce optimal results.

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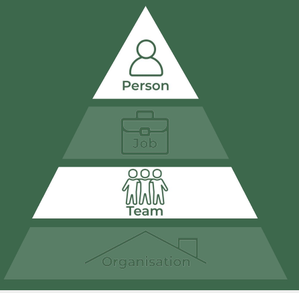
Management
Interventions



Support manager wellbeing to sustain leadership and team performance

Organisations increasingly expect managers to champion employee wellbeing, yet this expectation is difficult to sustain unless managers' *own* wellbeing is protected. When managers are supported, they are better able to lead effectively, foster team resilience, and create a positive work environment. Conversely, chronic managerial stress undermines leadership capacity and has downstream effects on team wellbeing and morale.[21,22]

- Evidence shows that supporting managers' mental health delivers benefits beyond the individual leader. A four-month intervention targeting leaders of small and medium-sized enterprises in Australia found that a combination of self-guided mental health training and telephone-based psychological support significantly reduced psychological distress among managers.[22] These findings are particularly relevant in small business contexts, where managerial roles are often isolated and carry high levels of responsibility.

- Similar effects have been observed in high-pressure environments. A study of middle-manager firefighters in Portugal found that a three-day stress management workshop led to higher levels of social support and vigour among employees whose managers had participated, compared to teams whose managers had not.[23] This suggests that strengthening leaders' emotional regulation and stress management capabilities can directly improve team dynamics and engagement, even in demanding, high-risk roles.

Protecting managers' wellbeing is therefore not a "nice to have" — it is a foundational investment that enables managers to support employee wellbeing effectively and sustain performance across teams.

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World Wellbeing Movement

Leadership

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Effective leadership in the workplace is a powerful driver of employee wellbeing and organisational performance. Unlike direct management (see Management driver), which focuses on organising, planning, and monitoring day-to-day work, leadership extends beyond role-based authority to shape vision, values, and organisational culture.

Effective leaders inspire a sense of purpose, build trust, and create the conditions in which both people and organisations can thrive. Decades of research demonstrate that leadership approaches emphasising vision, support, trust, and personal growth are consistently associated with higher levels of employee engagement, wellbeing, and motivation.[1-4]

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Leadership
Interventions

Prioritise leadership development as a primary organisational intervention (1/2)

Leaders who prioritise wellbeing by actively supporting employees, encouraging open communication, and promoting fairness play a critical role in building resilient teams, reducing sickness absence and turnover, and improving overall organisational performance.[5] Because leadership behaviours can either act as a root cause of workplace stress or a powerful protective factor, organisations must continuously invest in the development of their leaders to cultivate these essential capabilities.

Invest in strategic leadership development programmes:

- Leadership development should be treated as a **primary organisational intervention** for employee wellbeing, not a secondary or remedial approach. Evidence shows that well-designed leadership training causally improves leaders' supportive behaviours, which in turn enhance employee psychological health and reduce turnover.[5]
- Effective programmes focus on **observable, day-to-day behaviours** such as providing support, acting fairly, giving clear and respectful feedback, and consistently modelling priorities like wellbeing and safety, rather than abstract traits or one-off training events.[5]
- Investment should prioritise **frontline and people managers**, as leadership development at the direct supervisory level has the strongest and most immediate impact on employee wellbeing, engagement, and retention.[5]

Refer also to:
- **Management** driver

World Wellbeing Movement

Leadership
Interventions

Prioritise leadership development as a primary organisational intervention (2/2)

Well-designed leadership development programmes that integrate evidence-based wellbeing practices are not merely a “nice to have”; they represent a strategic investment in team performance, retention, and long-term organisational health.

- Research shows that **mental health awareness training** for leaders does more than increase individual knowledge - it reduces stigma across teams and fosters a more open, supportive workplace culture.[6] This is particularly critical in high-pressure or change-intensive environments, where unaddressed mental health challenges can quietly undermine team cohesion, engagement, and productivity.

- Similarly, training leaders in **sleep-supportive behaviours** such as modelling healthy work boundaries and actively encouraging restorative rest, has been shown to significantly improve employee job satisfaction, reduce turnover intentions, and enhance overall wellbeing.[7] These benefits are especially relevant in industries characterised by long or irregular working hours, including healthcare, technology, and shift-based operations, where fatigue and burnout pose ongoing risks.

World Wellbeing Movement

Leadership
Interventions

Model vulnerability and authenticity at the top (1/2)

Authentic leadership is characterised by self-awareness, integrity, and openness in how leaders think, decide, and act. Authentic leaders consistently align their behaviour with their values, are willing to acknowledge mistakes, and are transparent about both their strengths and limitations.[8,9]

By modelling this form of integrity and openness, authentic leaders build trust and psychological safety, signalling that speaking up and showing vulnerability are acts of courage that support learning and wellbeing rather than signs of weakness.[10,11]

When senior leaders speak openly about their own challenges, mental health priorities, and wellbeing practices, they normalise honest dialogue and reduce stigma across the organisation.[12] This visible openness reinforces psychological safety by showing that vulnerability is compatible with effective leadership, supporting trust, inclusion, and sustainable performance.[11,13]

World Wellbeing Movement

Leadership
Interventions

Model vulnerability and authenticity at the top (2/2)

- A structured authentic and positive leadership development programme was delivered to supervisors and managers across public- and private-sector organisations in Canada. The intervention focused on self-awareness, values alignment, ethical decision-making, and supportive leadership behaviours through workshops and guided reflection. Employees reporting to trained leaders reported higher trust in leadership and significant improvements in psychological wellbeing.[14]

- An authentic leadership development programme was delivered to managers in knowledge- and service-based organisations to strengthen day-to-day leadership behaviours that support employee wellbeing. To do this, the programme focused on building self-awareness, relational transparency, and an internalised moral perspective through structured learning and reflective exercises. Employees reporting to trained leaders demonstrated higher psychological capital (i.e., hope, optimism, and resilience) alongside improved job satisfaction, happiness, engagement, and reduced strain.[15]

- An authentic leadership programme used short, focused training sessions to help leaders actively “walk the talk” by clarifying their core values and applying them consistently in everyday decisions and behaviours. Employees reporting to these leaders experienced greater trust, stronger perceptions of ethical leadership, and increased openness.[16]

World Wellbeing Movement

Leadership
Interventions

Employ transformational leadership to strengthen employee wellbeing

Transformational leadership is a well-established, evidence-based leadership approach in which leaders coach, inspire, and actively support employee development.[17] By fostering motivation, autonomy, and a shared sense of purpose, this leadership style consistently creates conditions that enhance employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and performance across a wide range of industries and organisational contexts.[18]

Organisations seeking to improve employee wellbeing should invest in leadership development that deliberately cultivates transformational behaviours.

- A leadership intervention within the Australian police force that trained supervisors in transformational leadership resulted in significant improvements in employee wellbeing, job satisfaction, and engagement.[19]
- Similarly, a study of 512 Canadian employees found that transformational leaders who supported employee autonomy contributed directly to enhanced wellbeing.[17]
- Evidence also suggests these benefits are sustained over time. In a longitudinal Swedish study involving employees across multiple industries, transformational leadership predicted improvements in employee health and work ability, reinforcing its long-term value in supporting workforce resilience and sustainable performance.[20]

"It will no longer be enough for a leader to be technically brilliant, they will also need to have the ability to facilitate the potential and performance of those around them"

- Sir John Whitmore

World Wellbeing Movement

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World Wellbeing Movement

D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety

I

Independence and flexibility

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.

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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.

Refer also to:
- **Inclusion & Belonging** driver

- According to findings from a choice experiment, the average job seeker is willing to take an 8% pay cut for a WFH option.[1]
- 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.[2]
- 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).[3]

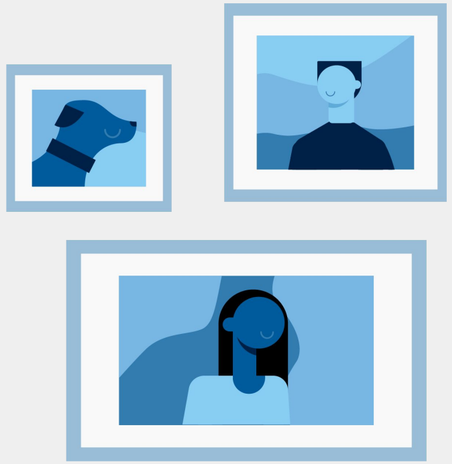
World Wellbeing Movement

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.[4] Simply offering screen monitors and headsets can go a long way.
- **Collaborative work**: Research suggests that collaborative work is compromised when attempted remotely.[5,6] 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.[7]



World Wellbeing Movement

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.[8] In contrast, employees with limited to no control over their schedule are less happy and at higher risk of poor health.[9]

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.[10]

Empowering employees to determine their schedules collaboratively can improve work-life balance and perceptions of social support.[11]

Kraft Foods created *Fast Adapts* for shift workers to make shift swaps and single-day vacation requests easier.[12]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[13,14]

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.

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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.[15] One study found that women who took paid leave were 53% less likely to seek mental health care compared to women who did not.[16] Research also suggests that there may be an extra wellbeing boost to families when both parents take parental leave.[17]

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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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World Wellbeing Movement

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World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Employee voice refers to the formal and informal channels through which employees share their views, ideas, suggestions, concerns, and dissatisfactions about work-related matters, with the aim of influencing workplace decisions.

When leadership listens, responds meaningfully, and demonstrates follow-through, employee voice can enhance wellbeing by fostering organisational trust and strengthening employees' sense of agency, fairness, and influence over their working conditions.

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Employee Voice
Interventions

Leverage multiple communication channels to amplify employee voice

Organisations that value their employees establish multiple voice channels, ensuring the right avenue exists for the right issue, ranging from formal, structured mechanisms for input and feedback to informal interactions that surface emerging concerns, tacit knowledge, and new ideas.

- **Formal channels** encompass structured mechanisms designed to capture employee input in a systematic and transparent manner. These include organisation-wide surveys, grievance and dispute resolution procedures, town hall meetings, formal consultations, and engagement with representative bodies.[1]
- **Informal channels** refer to unstructured or spontaneous forms of communication that occur outside established organisational processes. Examples include everyday workplace interactions, both in person and via internal communication platforms such as Slack, as well as discussions on social media platforms.[2, 3]
- **Confidential channels** are essential for enabling employees to share sensitive or high-stakes feedback without fear of negative repercussions.[4] These have been shown to foster organisational trust and strengthen perceptions of psychological safety.[5]

Refer also to:
- **Trust** driver

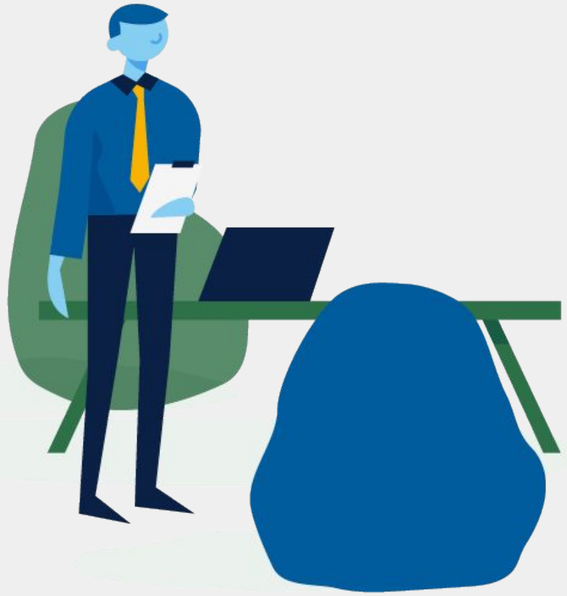
World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Use employee surveys to drive insightful, impactful wellbeing action

Employee surveys, when designed thoughtfully and followed by action, offer a scalable and cost-effective method for identifying both the challenges employees face and the conditions under which they thrive. They form a foundational element of any workplace wellbeing strategy by creating a structured way to surface insights, prioritise interventions, and track progress over time.

- A randomised controlled trial conducted among Indian factory workers illustrated the **powerful impact of simply asking employees about their wellbeing**. Workers were invited to rate their satisfaction with various aspects of their job and working environment. Remarkably, quit rates dropped by 20% in the group that received the survey, even though it came after a disappointing wage increase. This suggests that giving employees a voice can improve retention.[6]



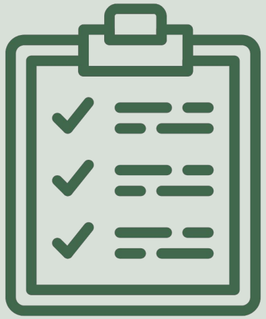
- However, when surveys are not met with tangible action, they risk eroding trust and even harming wellbeing in the long run. When organisations respond to survey findings with visible follow-through, **they can foster a culture of trust, participation, and psychological safety**. For example, a Swedish organisation that used the results of a detailed employee wellbeing survey to co-create an action plan to improve working conditions saw measurable gains in employee health, productivity, and attendance.[7]

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Spotlight

Measuring employee wellbeing

An effective employee survey should capture both how employees feel about their work and the factors that shape those feelings. This dual approach allows organisations to track wellbeing outcomes, understand their root causes, and target interventions where they will have the greatest impact.[8]



The **Work Wellbeing Score** is a composite measure based on four core dimensions designed to capture how employees feel about their work overall.[9] It includes the following four dimensions:

1. **Job Satisfaction:** “I feel completely satisfied with my work”.
2. **Purpose:** “My work has a clear sense of purpose”.
3. **Happiness:** “I feel happy at work, most of the time”.
4. **Stress:** “I feel stressed at work, most of the time”.

Measuring the **drivers of work wellbeing** (i.e., aspects of the work environment that influence wellbeing) makes it possible to identify which factors are most strongly correlated with work wellbeing, uncover the underlying reasons why employees feel the way they do, and identify areas for targeted interventions. These are insights that are critical for designing effective, evidence-based workplace strategies.

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Train people leaders to support work-life integration through meaningful conversations

People leaders play a pivotal role in fostering a supportive culture where employees feel safe to share personal challenges, whether related to family and caregiving responsibilities, health needs, or neurodivergence. Organisations that invest in training to equip leaders with the skills to engage in open dialogue often see stronger retention, higher morale, and improved wellbeing among their employees.

- Two studies evaluated a training program that equipped leaders with communication prompts and strategies to initiate conversations about employees' family responsibilities and identify potential schedule adjustments. The program encouraged supervisors to ask well-timed, supportive questions that enabled employees to share constraints and collaborate on workable solutions.[10,11]
- In a retail grocery setting, the intervention significantly improved physical health, sleep quality, and job satisfaction among employees experiencing high family-to-work conflict.[10] In a separate study with healthcare workers, the intervention increased job satisfaction and organisational commitment, while reducing turnover intentions.[11]

People leader training to support work–life integration can be broad or focused on specific issues. For example, the UK's Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service (Acas) recommends training leaders to hold open, supportive conversations about sensitive topics such as perimenopause and menopause.[38] A 2019 study found that even brief online training can improve managers' knowledge and significantly boost their confidence in handling such conversations.[39]

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Collaborate with employees throughout their return-to-work journey

Return-to-work (RTW) interventions aim to support a sustainable reintegration of employees following work-related absences due to physical or mental health conditions. Increasingly, research highlights the importance of employee participation in these plans.

- A field-based study across three large Dutch employers including a university, a medical centre, and a steel company, evaluated a structured, participatory return-to-work (RTW) intervention for employees on sick leave due to common mental health conditions. The intervention involved a **phased dialogue between the employee and their direct supervisor, facilitated by an RTW coordinator, to jointly identify and address work-related barriers**. This structured collaboration significantly reduced the average time to sustainable RTW from 120 to 55 days.[12]

- In a parallel study aimed at supporting temporary agency and unemployed workers sick-listed due to musculoskeletal disorders, a similar participatory approach focused on building consensus through structured meetings reduced the RTW period from 299 to 161 days.[13]

Shared factors for success:

- A structured, phased approach
- Open dialogue with supervisors or RTW coordinators
- Employees identified and prioritised barriers to returning
- Reintegration plans were jointly developed and tailored

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Empower employees to co-create wellbeing interventions (1/3)

Participatory interventions engage employees in identifying workplace problems and co-developing solutions to resolve them. The emphasis is not only on the outcomes of change, but also on the collaborative process of involving workers in the design and implementation of those changes.[14]

Research consistently shows that work wellbeing programs deliver greater improvements in motivation, satisfaction, and long-term impact when **employees are actively engaged in both shaping and implementing them**. Involving employees in this way ensures that initiatives are tailored to the workplace context and relevant to employees' needs.

Some of the most effective wellbeing interventions bring employees into the process from the very beginning, starting with problem identification and planning, and continuing through implementation and follow-up. Evidence suggests that this approach:

- Leads to higher psychological wellbeing, greater job satisfaction, and stronger alignment with organisational goals.[15]
- Enhances employees' sense of agency.[16]
- Drives deeper engagement with intervention and increases the likelihood of sustained, positive impact.[16]

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Empower employees to co-create wellbeing interventions (2/3)

A large Japanese manufacturing company implemented a **multi-faceted participatory program** designed to address mental health concerns among its white-collar workforce, particularly women.[17]

This initiative combined:

- **Work environment improvement teams** made up of employees and managers, tasked with identifying workplace stressors and prioritising issues for action.
- The **Mental Health Action Checklist**, a structured tool to help teams systematically assess risks, propose solutions, and track progress.
- **Employee-led planning workshops**, where workers designed and refined interventions to ensure they were both feasible and relevant.

This combination ensured that employees were involved in every stage including problem identification, solution design, and implementation. The results saw **significant improvements in self-reported mental health outcomes,** attributed to both practical changes in the work environment and the psychological benefits of having a voice in shaping those changes.

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Empower employees to co-create wellbeing interventions (3/3)

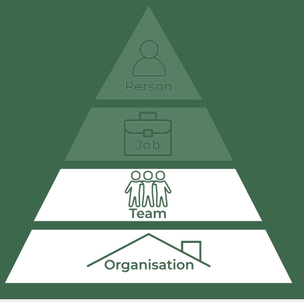
In an industrial workplace in Finland, an intensive participatory method known as a **“participative work conference”** was introduced to address organisational challenges.[18] Large groups of employees from across the organisation took part in multi-day seminars designed to:

- Facilitate open dialogue between workers, supervisors, and management.
- Identify and prioritise problems from multiple perspectives.
- Co-develop a wide range of solutions, from operational adjustments to cultural and communication improvements.

The approach deliberately flattened hierarchical structures during the sessions, creating a space where all voices could be heard equally. This process led to **multiple workplace changes**, including improvements to the physical and psychosocial work environment, stronger communication flows between departments, and the dismantling of hierarchical barriers that had previously impeded problem-solving. A qualitative review highlighted increased **shared ownership and commitment** to the agreed changes, which enhanced their sustainability over time.

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions



Enhance flexibility in shift-based work through participatory scheduling

Shift-based roles often operate within rigid structures that limit employees' access to flexible working arrangements. **Participatory scheduling practices** such as self-rostering and collaborative schedule design allow workers in these environments to co-create their work patterns within operational parameters. This approach benefits employees through improved health, safety, and wellbeing, while organisations see reductions in absenteeism, higher engagement, and stronger team culture.

Refer also to other drivers:

- **Flexibility**
- **Autonomy**

Evidence from multiple studies demonstrates the value of participatory scheduling:

- Hospital-based caregivers who could self-select shift start times and lengths reported better recovery, improved sleep quality, and enhanced overall health, highlighting how flexible scheduling can mitigate the physical toll of shift work.[19]

- In a Finnish hospital, a digital scheduling tool optimised shifts based on both operational needs and employee preferences, significantly reducing evening shift-related sleepiness and improving alertness and safety in a high-stakes environment.[20]

- A multi-site study across 28 healthcare organisations found that three different digital self-rostering systems improved employee wellbeing and increased perceived support from supervisors and peers one year after implementation.[21]

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Give employees a say in budgeting decisions

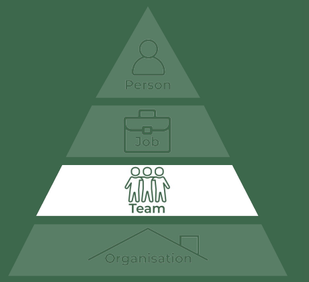
Budget participation refers to the practice of actively involving employees in the budgeting process of a company or department. This may include providing input on budget allocations, contributing to financial planning, and influencing how resources are distributed. By engaging employees in this process, organisations can improve decision quality, increase transparency, and strengthen commitment to financial goals.

- A study of Portuguese real estate firms found that involving employees in the budgeting process had a positive effect on employee performance. These effects were explained by an increased commitment to budget goals, greater trust in management, and higher job satisfaction.[22]
- In a randomised controlled trial, employees with mental illness enrolled in an Individual Placement and Support (IPS) program were randomly assigned to receive either standard IPS or IPS plus a 12-month flexible “career account” valued at US $950. Participants with a career account worked with a support worker to set employment goals and create a budget to achieve them. Compared to the IPS-only group, they had significantly longer job tenure, more days worked, higher total earnings, and better financial well-being. Notably, greater use of the budget was associated with stronger positive outcomes.[23]

Budget participation is particularly valuable for employees whose daily work is directly affected by budgeting decisions, or for those who manage funds to meet performance targets and organisational objectives.

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions



Facilitate team dialogue for workplace problem-solving (1/4)

Giving employees structured opportunities to share experiences, analyse challenges, and co-develop solutions can drive both performance and wellbeing. Quality circles, dialogue groups, and employee problem-solving teams each provide a distinct format for strengthening communication, collaboration, and trust. When leaders act on employee-generated ideas, these approaches can yield measurable gains in job satisfaction, engagement, and operational results.

Refer also to:
- **Operational Design** driver

- **Quality Circles** are small, voluntary groups of 4–15 employees from the same work area who meet regularly under a trained leader to identify and solve work-related problems. They focus on refining processes, improving efficiency, and enhancing the quality of working life.[24]

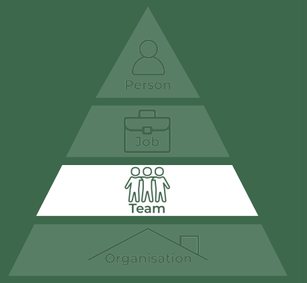
- **Dialogue Groups** are facilitated sessions for employees from the same professional group that prioritise open communication, reflection, and mutual support. Designed to build trust, psychological safety, and professional identity while jointly addressing workplace challenges.[25]

- **Employee Problem-Solving Teams** are structured, cross-functional groups of employees who apply systematic, often tool-based, methods to identify and resolve operational or organisational challenges. These teams work collaboratively to enhance processes, service quality, and workplace experience, while promoting employee engagement, empowerment, and ownership.[26,27]

The next three slides detail case studies for each of the above approaches.

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions



Facilitate team dialogue for workplace problem-solving (2/4)

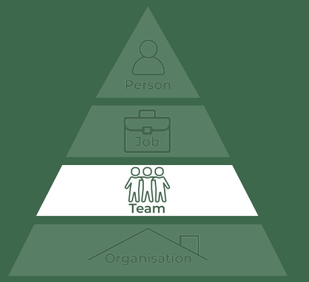
Quality Circles

- In a study of Iranian emergency nurses, small voluntary groups of 4–15 employees, led by a peer-elected leader, met regularly to identify, analyse, and solve work-related problems. After just three months, participants reported higher motivation, better health, greater job satisfaction, and increased perceived influence over their work environment. This structured yet employee-driven format makes quality circles a low-cost, scalable approach to addressing both operational and interpersonal challenges.[28]

- In a study of U.S. Federal Mint employees, small voluntary quality circles composed of 5–12 members met regularly under employee-elected leaders to identify, analyse, and solve workplace problems. Over the course of the program, teams addressed issues such as workflow inefficiencies, equipment maintenance, and safety hazards, developing actionable solutions with management support. Participants reported improved communication, problem-solving skills, and teamwork, along with greater job satisfaction and a stronger sense of influence over their work environment.[29]

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions



Facilitate team dialogue for workplace problem-solving (3/4)

Dialogue Groups

- In a 12-month programme in the healthcare industry, physicians met in facilitated small-group dialogues to share experiences, reflect on challenges, and co-develop solutions for improving the work environment. Sessions focused on building trust, mutual support, and constructive problem-solving. Female physicians, in particular, reported reduced emotional exhaustion and higher job satisfaction.[30]

- In a year-long programme with multidisciplinary primary care teams, participants took part in structured workshops to identify work stressors, prioritise issues, and design actionable improvements to workflow, communication, and role clarity. Facilitated by trained leaders, the process emphasised joint problem-solving, shared decision-making, and follow-up on changes. The intervention reduced emotional exhaustion and depersonalisation while improving teamwork, job satisfaction, and perceived quality of care.[31]

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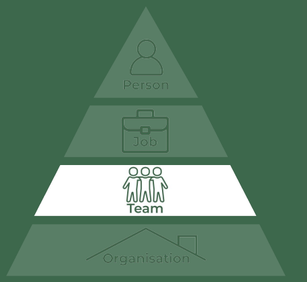
Employee Voice
Interventions



Facilitate team dialogue for workplace problem-solving (4/4)

Problem-Solving Teams

- Tested in two Danish manufacturing companies, a 12-month, structured, participatory problem-solving approach used cross-functional teams to identify workplace challenges, generate solutions, and implement continuous improvements with management support. The intervention increased influence over work, role clarity, and social capital, while reducing stress and exhaustion in one company and improving recovery opportunities in the other.[26]

Refer also to:
- **Autonomy** driver

- In the United States, an 18-month, team-based program equipped youth mental health service teams including clinicians, case managers, and support staff to identify and resolve organisational barriers to effective service delivery. By applying tools for teamwork, goal setting, and feedback, this intervention significantly improved morale, job satisfaction, commitment, and engagement, while reducing excessive bureaucracy and bottlenecked decision-making.[32]

- In the Netherlands, a highly structured six-month intervention engaged hospital workers in collaborative problem-solving teams to identify their most pressing work stressors and design action plans to address them. Participants reported significantly lower emotional exhaustion over time, attributing improvements to clearer communication, stronger task support, and better workload sharing.[27]

Employee Voice
Spotlight

Psychosocial hazards and participatory interventions

A **psychosocial hazard** is anything that could cause psychological harm (e.g., negatively impact someone's mental health). Examples include excessive work demands, low support, unclear roles, poor working relationships, or harassment. Left unaddressed, these hazards can cause chronic stress and may lead to more serious conditions such as anxiety, depression, or sleep disorders.[33,34]

Effective management requires more than routine risk assessments and control measures, it also depends on fostering **strong employee voice channels**. When employees feel safe to raise concerns, report hazards, and suggest improvements without fear of retaliation, organisations can detect issues earlier and implement solutions that are both practical and relevant.[1,3]

Actively involving employees in hazard identification, decision-making, and evaluation ensures interventions address real challenges on the ground and fosters a shared responsibility for psychosocial safety. This is the principle behind **participatory organisational interventions**, which engage workers in identifying problems and developing solutions to improve working conditions. The emphasis is not only on the outcomes of change, but also on the collaborative process of designing and implementing those changes.[14]

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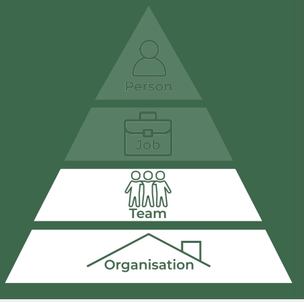
Employee Voice
Interventions



Start a health and wellbeing employee committee

A **Health and Wellbeing Employee Committee** (HaWC) is a small group of employees who meet regularly with management to raise concerns, suggest improvements, and implement practical workplace changes.

Access the step-by-step start-up guide for Managers

A rigorous evaluation of HaWCs in U.S. e-commerce fulfilment centres saw improvements in employees' mental health within the first six months and a 20% reduction in turnover compared with control sites. The researchers estimated that achieving a similar retention effect through wage increases alone would have required a 1.5% rise in hourly pay.[35]

Additional insights:

- **Visible action matters:** Sites completing more HaWC projects experienced greater retention, suggesting employees stay at an organisation longer when they see tangible change.
- **Participation beats suggestion boxes:** HaWCs outperformed "suggestion kiosks" that only collected feedback, underscoring the power of peer-led, participatory dialogue.

Two mechanisms drive success:

- ***Instrumental*** — concrete workplace improvements.
- ***Symbolic*** — employees feel heard, respected, and valued.

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Employee Voice
Interventions

Facilitate safe and informed employee disclosure

Employee disclosure is the voluntary sharing of sensitive or critical information such as a mental health condition with an employer or colleagues. Effective disclosure practices are supported by processes that foster **psychological safety** and uphold a **high degree of privacy and confidentiality**, ensuring that shared information is accessible only to those who need it. Such protections enable individuals to speak openly without fear of stigma, discrimination, or negative repercussions, while building trust in the organisation's commitment to employee wellbeing.

A randomised controlled trial evaluated the **READY?** decision aid, a web-based tool designed to support employees in deciding whether to disclose a mental health condition at work. The tool guides users through weighing potential benefits and risks, identifying personal priorities, and exploring disclosure options.[36] The tool:

- Reduced uncertainty and decisional conflict about whether to disclose.
- Advanced participants' readiness to make an informed decision.
- Alleviated depressive symptoms.
- Supported improvements in mental health outcomes for those who chose to disclose.

DCIDE is a free, web-based decision-support tool designed to assist workers with chronic, often invisible and episodic health conditions in making thoughtful, informed decisions about disclosing personal health information in the workplace.

Access here:
https://aced.iwh.on.ca/dcide

World Wellbeing Movement

Employee Voice
Interventions

Collaborate with unions to strengthen workplace wellbeing

Worker organisations, including trade unions, can serve as powerful protective factors for employee wellbeing by enhancing voice, security, inclusion and fairness. When management and unions collaborate constructively, they foster mutual trust and create the conditions for sustainable engagement.

A large-scale study of nearly two million workers across the United States and Europe explored how trade union membership relates to job satisfaction and broader wellbeing.[37]

- Across Europe and the UK, union members have reported higher job satisfaction, life satisfaction, and happiness than non-members since the 2000s onwards. .

- Union members are less likely to feel stressed, worried, depressed, or lonely, and show greater trust in people and institutions. Positive associations also extend to perceptions of democracy, education, and the economy.

Re-examining the role of unions in today's workplaces offers a practical opportunity to strengthen employee satisfaction, fairness, and collective resilience—benefits that extend to both workers and the organisation as a whole.

How to **effectively work with unions.**

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Employee Voice

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World Wellbeing Movement

Operational Design

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Operational design plays a foundational role in shaping employee wellbeing by influencing how easily and effectively individuals can carry out their work. It encompasses the structures, processes, workflows, and administrative mechanisms that underpin day-to-day operations.

Well-designed and streamlined systems enable employees to focus on meaningful tasks rather than expending effort on avoidable procedural hurdles.[1,2] In contrast, poor operational design, including excessive bureaucracy, unclear procedures, redundant approvals, and technological inefficiencies, can drain time and energy, heighten frustration, and undermine motivation.[3,4]

Over time, such conditions contribute to burnout and disengagement.[5,6]

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Operational Design
Interventions

Simplify administrative processes to reduce job demands (1/2)

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is one of the most widely used and respected frameworks for understanding how the work environment affects employee wellbeing and performance. At its simplest level, it tells us that when demands are high and resources are low (e.g. support, time, training), employees experience strain that reduces wellbeing.[7]

Refer also to:
- **Workload Pressures** driver

Excessive bureaucracy, redundant approvals, and unclear procedures create unnecessary job demands that drain cognitive resources and undermine employee wellbeing.

- Organisational interventions that simplify procedures and clarify roles are associated with lower stress, reduced burnout, and higher engagement.[4]
- Similarly, reducing organisational “red tape” and adopting more proactive and flexible processes has been shown to enhance motivation, performance, and job satisfaction.[1]
- Streamlining approval chains, consolidating reporting systems, and clarifying workflows can therefore reduce administrative burden, improve efficiency, and support employee wellbeing.

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Operational Design
Interventions

Simplify administrative processes to reduce job demands (2/2)

- A field study across 34 U.S. primary care clinics used a cluster-randomised design in which intervention clinics received structured feedback on work conditions and implemented locally tailored organisational changes focused on workflow redesign, role clarity, and improved communication among clinicians and staff. Clinics implementing these participatory interventions reported **significant reductions in burnout and emotional exhaustion, as well as improvements in job satisfaction, teamwork, and perceived work conditions**, with workflow-focused changes showing the strongest association with burnout reduction.[8]

- A large-scale organisational intervention in Australian hospitals redesigned workload allocation, clarified recruitment and staffing systems, and improved access to training and professional development for nurses. The intervention was associated with **reductions in psychological distress and intentions to leave, alongside significant improvements in job satisfaction and staff retention**, highlighting the importance of system-level job redesign and workforce support in improving employee wellbeing.[9]

Key considerations:

- Simplification efforts are most effective when paired with employee involvement, ensuring reforms address real operational bottlenecks.
- Leadership support is critical to sustain streamlined processes and avoid reforms being perceived as cost-cutting measures.

World Wellbeing Movement

Operational Design
Interventions

Use lean management to streamline work and support wellbeing

Lean management is widely recognised for improving operational efficiency through waste elimination, workflow standardisation, and quality improvement. Increasingly, research indicates that well-designed lean interventions can also enhance employee wellbeing when they explicitly attend to job quality, employee voice, and managerial support.

Studies consistently show that employee involvement is central to lean's ability to improve workplace wellbeing:

- A longitudinal study of 11 Danish public and private organisations found that lean implementation productivity, but gains in employee wellbeing such as reduced stress and higher job satisfaction, emerged only when workers were meaningfully involved in redesigning their work processes. In contrast, top-down implementation approaches were associated with increased strain and diminished job control.[10]
- A study of UK hospitals found that lean-based workflow improvements such as clearer patient handoff protocols and reduced documentation burdens, improved staff morale, reduced frustration, and supported better patient outcomes, particularly when frontline clinical staff were involved in identifying and resolving workflow bottlenecks.[11]
- A study of Australian manufacturing firms found that lean interventions combining process redesign with workforce training and participatory practices improved job satisfaction and perceptions of organisational support. In contrast, lean initiatives narrowly focused on cost reduction or output targets without meaningful work redesign or employee involvement had neutral or negative effects on employee wellbeing.[12]

Refer also to other drivers:

- **Workload Pressures**
- **Employee Voice**
- **Management**

World Wellbeing Movement

Operational Design
Interventions

Use job redesign to improve operational systems and employee wellbeing

Job redesign is a powerful strategy for improving how work is organised and performed. It involves working collaboratively with employees to deconstruct existing roles, identify key challenges, and co-develop practical solutions. By modifying roles, workflows, operational systems, and support structures, job redesign can reduce inefficiencies, eliminate job demands, and increase role clarity. A growing body of evidence shows that such changes are consistently associated with improvements in employee wellbeing.

In the **healthcare sector**, where job demands are high and operational complexity is substantial, several job redesign interventions have demonstrated meaningful benefits for employee wellbeing:

- An Australian job redesign intervention targeting operational strain among nursing staff addressed bottlenecks, unclear workload allocation, and staffing challenges through the introduction of a workload assessment tool, enhanced access to professional development, and improvements to recruitment and staffing processes. This intervention led to significant reductions in psychological distress and emotional exhaustion, alongside increases in job satisfaction and staff retention.[9]

- Similarly, an intervention focused on reducing non-core tasks, redistributing responsibilities, and clarifying work boundaries for medical specialists and nurses resulted in improvements in work engagement, self-rated health, and performance, as well as reduced emotional exhaustion.[13]

- In primary care, a cluster-randomised intervention that improved practice workflows, strengthened communication processes, and enhanced role clarity led to significant reductions in clinician burnout and improved perceptions of team effectiveness and operational efficiency.[8]

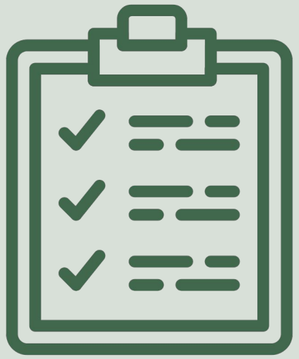
Refer also to other drivers:
- **Stress**
- **Autonomy**
- **Workload Pressures**

World Wellbeing Movement

Operational Design
Spotlight

Understanding technostress: what the evidence shows

Technology can either exacerbate employee overload or free workers to focus on meaningful tasks. Poorly designed digital workflows are associated with technostress and reduced employee satisfaction, whereas well-designed systems and tools, supported by effective training, can enhance engagement, role clarity, and overall work wellbeing.[14]



Effective interventions combine two core elements:

1. Reduce digital job demands while building employee capability by simplifying digital workflows, minimising unnecessary system complexity, and providing effective training and support to help employees use technology confidently and efficiently.[15]

2. Redesign work to remove repetitive administrative tasks and protect job security, freeing employees to focus on meaningful, value-adding activities while clearly communicating how changes will support roles and employment stability, thereby reducing work–life conflict and improving job satisfaction.[16]

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Job Security**

World Wellbeing Movement

Operational Design
Interventions

Reduce technostress

- **Prepare the organisation before implementation** by ensuring leadership commitment, a culture that supports change, and sufficient employee capability to adapt to new tools and ways of working.[17]
- **Design digital tools for simplicity and ease of use** by making interfaces intuitive, minimising unnecessary steps, and reducing cognitive load in everyday workflows.[14]
- **Embed in-system support features** such as clear prompts, guides, and accessible help menus to support learning and reduce user frustration during task execution.
- **Build digital capability through targeted training** that increases user competence and confidence, thereby reducing technostress and supporting psychological wellbeing.[18,19]
- **Connect learning directly to real work contexts** by supporting employees to apply new digital skills within their actual roles, rather than relying solely on generic training environments.[20]
- **Sustain engagement through managerial support and employee control** by encouraging supportive leadership behaviors and allowing flexibility in how individuals use digital tools, as consistent and self-directed use is key to building resilience and engagement.[17]

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Operational Design
Interventions

Provide effective training on the processes that underpin people's work

Operational systems function effectively only when employees and managers can navigate them with confidence. Providing high-quality, role-relevant training on organisational processes, particularly when new technologies or procedures are introduced, supports clarity, competence, and autonomous functioning at work.[21] In the absence of adequate onboarding or ongoing learning opportunities, even well-designed systems can generate user frustration, errors, and disengagement, undermining employee wellbeing by increasing inefficiency, role strain, and stress, especially in complex or rapidly evolving environments.

- Evidence from a six-month blended learning program on electronic health record (EHR) systems for wellness staff in Qatar illustrates these effects. By investing in structured, role-specific training, the intervention eased system transitions, enhanced user confidence, and improved daily workflows, leading to measurable gains in job performance and significantly higher satisfaction with the EHR system itself.[22]

- More broadly, research indicates that training interventions aligned with organisational change, including digital transformation, workflow redesign, and compliance initiatives, can reduce role ambiguity and perceived job demands. Such interventions support both operational efficiency and positive psychological outcomes when learning is closely connected to employees' actual work contexts.[23,24]

Training on operational processes is most effective when it includes opportunities for feedback, reinforcement and hands-on practice, all of which strengthen knowledge retention and transfer.[20]

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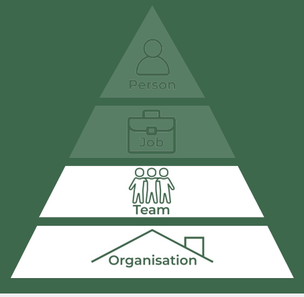
Operational Design
Interventions



Streamline communication and protect time

Inefficient communication practices, including excessive meetings, frequent interruptions, and digital spillover, contribute to cognitive overload and undermine employee wellbeing. Evidence suggests that simplifying communication norms and deliberately protecting uninterrupted work time can improve both productivity and health outcomes.

- **Reduce unnecessary meetings and improve meeting quality** by critically reviewing meeting purpose, frequency, and participation, as employees' perceptions of meeting effectiveness are strongly associated with overall job satisfaction, even after accounting for pay, supervision, and job design.[25]
- **Protect focus time through uninterrupted work blocks** by establishing norms that minimise interruptions, as field studies show that protected focus time increases engagement, enhances performance, and reduces strain, particularly in knowledge-intensive roles.[26, 27]
- **Implement boundary-control policies** such as right-to-disconnect guidelines or no-email windows to safeguard recovery time, reduce work–life conflict, and support employee wellbeing in increasingly digital work environments. [28, 29]

- These strategies are most effective when embedded in organisational culture and reinforced by leadership modelling, not left to individuals to self-manage.
- Regular employee feedback and pulse surveys help identify pain points, track progress, and sustain improvements over time.

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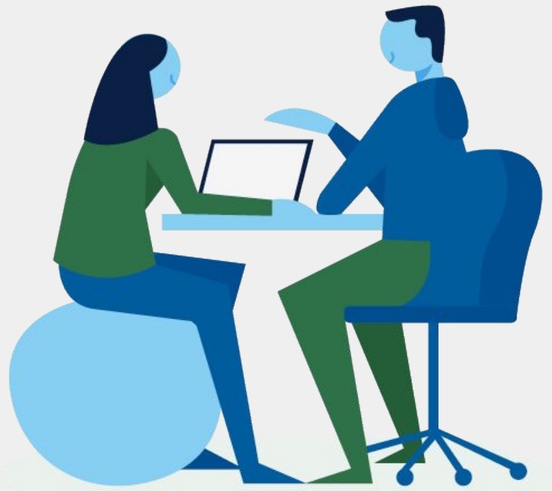
Operational Design
Interventions

Promote healthy and productive email use to streamline communication

Email is a core operational system. When poorly designed, it increases cognitive load, creates constant interruptions, and extends work into non-work time. A long-term systematic review shows that clear email norms and structured practices reduce digital strain, improve task efficiency, and support sustainable work patterns by lowering mental load and protecting employee boundaries.[30]

- **Establish clear email norms and standards:** Define expectations for tone, response times, subject lines, CC use, and appropriate channels to reduce ambiguity and unnecessary volume.
- **Implement structured email triage frameworks:** Provide shared conventions for urgency, escalation, and response expectations to reduce decision fatigue and reactive work.
- **Set organisational guidance on CC and distribution list use:** Clarify when copying others is necessary to prevent information overload and role diffusion.
- **Enable boundary- and focus-protective email system defaults** by promoting scheduled or delayed sending, making working hours visible, reducing default notifications, and configuring systems to minimise interruptions during core work periods.



Refer also to:
- **Workload Pressures** driver

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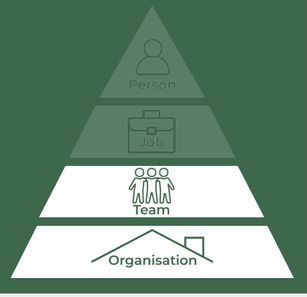
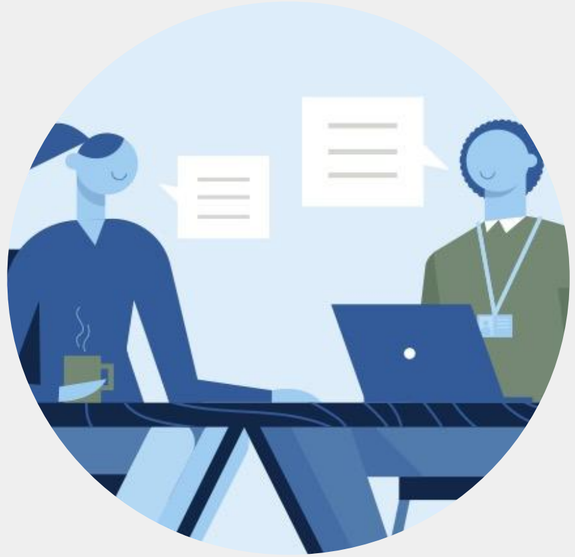
Operational Design
Interventions



Reduce meeting load (1/2)

Another way to streamline communication is to reduce meeting load.

Meetings are a core element of daily operations that shape how employee time, attention, and energy are allocated at work. When meeting systems are poorly designed, characterised by excessive frequency, unclear purpose, and weak facilitation, they increase cognitive load, fragment attention, and undermine employee wellbeing.



Research indicates that excessive meeting load undermines daily wellbeing, dissatisfaction with meetings contributes to broader job dissatisfaction, and poorly structured virtual meetings exacerbate fatigue and psychological strain.[31–33]

Evidence from meeting science indicates that organisations can improve employee wellbeing by treating meetings as a system to be intentionally designed rather than an ad hoc activity.[34]

See next slide for best practice recommendations.

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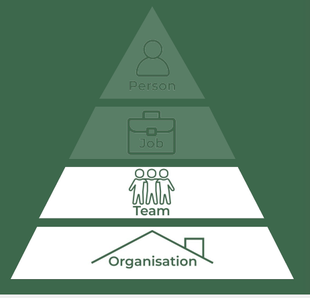
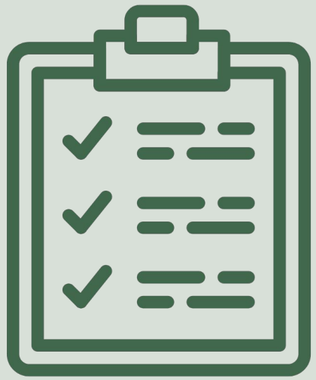
Operational Design
Interventions



Reduce meeting load (2/2)



- **Govern meeting load at the system level** by auditing meeting volume, limiting unnecessary recurrence, and protecting focus time to prevent attention fragmentation.[31]
- **Standardise meeting purpose and structure** through organisational norms requiring clear objectives, agendas, time limits, and ownership, improving efficiency and reducing wasted effort.[32,34]
- **Design shorter, time-bound meetings by default** to counter the tendency for meetings to expand to fill available time, improving pace and effectiveness.[35,36]
- **Intentionally design virtual meetings** by limiting back-to-back video calls, clarifying when synchronous interaction is necessary, and structuring interaction to reduce video conference fatigue.[33, 37]
- **Build meeting capability as an organisational skill** by training leaders and facilitators and reinforcing expectations through performance and operating standards.[34]

  Measure and continuously improve meeting quality by tracking employee satisfaction with meetings as a component of job quality and operational effectiveness.[32]

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World Wellbeing Movement

Autonomy

is a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Autonomy refers to the level of control, independence, and decision-making power employees have over their work — not just **what** they do in their role, but **how**, **when**, and **where** they do it, within professional boundaries.

When employees feel a sense of autonomy, they feel trusted and empowered, boosting motivation, innovation and engagement, increasing job satisfaction, and reducing stress.

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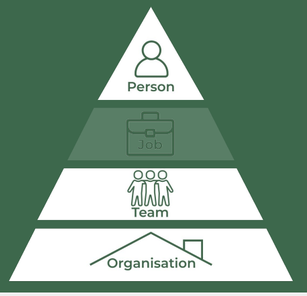
Autonomy
Interventions



Inspire autonomy through leadership

Leadership, and leadership training, plays a powerful role in enhancing employee autonomy, a key driver of work wellbeing.

Leaders who support autonomy boost employee wellbeing, engagement, and retention

- A study of 512 Canadian employees found that leaders who coach, inspire, and foster employee development improve wellbeing by supporting greater autonomy at work.[1] These autonomy-supportive leaders emphasise trust, and empower employees to make decisions, take initiative, and contribute meaningfully, which in turn drives job satisfaction and emotional resilience.
- A study of 735 French employees across various organisations and industries found that employees whose supervisors supported their autonomy were more motivated at work, reported higher levels of job satisfaction, and were significantly less likely to consider leaving their jobs.[2]

Refer also to:
- **Leadership** driver

Autonomy-supportive leadership starts with effective training

- An evaluation of a five-week leadership development program at a Fortune 500 company demonstrated that autonomy-supportive management can be taught and scaled. People Leaders who were trained to acknowledge employee perspectives, offer choice, and reduce controlling behaviours saw a marked improvement in their teams' motivation and engagement.[3]

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Shift to a results-oriented work culture

Organisations that pivot from tracking hours to measuring outcomes often see gains across multiple domains. In U.S. healthcare and IT firms, adopting a results-only work environment—where employees control their own time—led to lower turnover intentions, reduced work-family conflict, and healthier behaviours like getting more sleep and exercise.[4,5]

However, measuring outcomes must not become a vehicle for unrealistic workload pressures. Management should consider the following **best practices for shifting to a results-oriented culture:**

- Co-design outcome targets with employees to ensure they are realistic and achievable
- Ensure support and resources are in place to meet expectations
- Monitor to ensure workloads remain manageable and deadlines achievable

Refer also to:
- **Workload Pressures** driver

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) theory is one of the most widely used and respected frameworks for understanding how the work environment affects employee wellbeing and performance. At its simplest level, it tells us that when demands are high, and resources (e.g. support, time, training, etc.) are low, employees experience strain that reduces wellbeing.[6]

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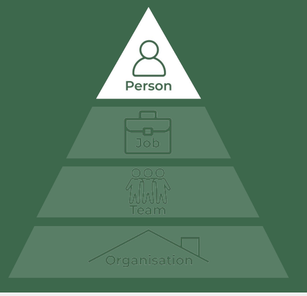

Provide employees with more autonomy over their schedule

Flexible working is most effective when employees have discretion over how it is implemented. Evidence from multiple industries and countries shows that providing employees with more autonomy over their schedules:

- **Builds emotional resilience to work stressors:** A U.S. study of IT professionals with caregiving responsibilities found that increasing supervisor support for personal and family life, combined with greater schedule control, significantly reduced employees' negative emotional reactions to daily work stressors. These improvements were sustained over 12 months.[7] This is also a beneficial intervention for employees in high pressure roles.[8]
- **Mitigates work–life conflict:** A field experiment in a Fortune 500 firm found that employees with greater scheduling autonomy reported lower stress and less work–life interference; a critical benefit for parents, caregivers, and employees balancing multiple life roles.[9]
- **Drives engagement:** A large-scale study of over 1,300 U.S. retail employees in low-wage shift-based roles, found that greater schedule control improved work engagement, particularly when implemented with high supervisor support.[10]

Refer also to:
- **Flexibility** driver

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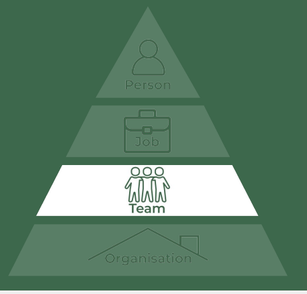

Empower employees to collaboratively resolve workplace challenges

Employee problem-solving teams identify, analyse, and resolve workplace challenges through structured and collaborative decision-making. These teams typically focus on process improvements, operational efficiency, quality control, and workplace wellbeing. They are often cross-functional and may be temporary (formed to tackle a specific issue) or permanent (such as continuous improvement teams) in nature.

- An evaluation of employee representative problem-solving teams implemented across 11 American retail chain stores led to improvements in work climate and employee health and wellbeing.[11] The teams were tasked with developing, implementing, and evaluating action plans tailored to the needs of their specific store using a 5-step problem-solving process: familiarisation, skill building, prioritisation, action, and reaction.
- Research into the impact of collaborative problem solving in a large Danish government organisation found that the resulting improvement in working conditions led to increased employee wellbeing. **Manager support was identified as a key factor in its success**.[12]

Workplace research and participatory intervention literature indicates that gendered dynamics can dampen women's contributions in group processes.[13–17] To address this, interventions should be intentionally designed with gender-sensitive strategies to support and encourage equitable participation. Refer also to the **Inclusion & Belonging** driver.

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Autonomy
Interventions

Build more autonomy into new and existing roles

Job redesign involves working collaboratively with employees to deconstruct their roles and develop solutions to key challenges. One of the most powerful ways job redesign enhances employee wellbeing is by increasing **autonomy**. A 2010 study found that giving employees more control and input in their work is a key reason these efforts lead to better wellbeing and stronger performance.[18]

- In the construction sector, a Hong Kong–based study found that high workloads and limited decision-making power were major contributors to burnout. By redesigning jobs to promote greater autonomy and clarify role expectations, the organisation significantly reduced employee burnout over the course of a year.[19] For industries prone to overwork and mental fatigue, these findings highlight the value of empowering employees at the **task level**.

- Similarly, a **participatory job redesign** study in a call centre showed that when employees were given more control over how they structured and completed their tasks alongside constructive feedback, they reported higher wellbeing and were rated as more effective by their supervisors.[20] Notably, the intervention did not rely on perks or incentives; it worked by fundamentally **reorganising how work was done**, reinforcing autonomy as a critical driver of both wellbeing and performance.

Refer also to:
- **Stress** driver

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Autonomy
Interventions

Empower employees to craft roles that fit them best

Job crafting is a bottom-up, employee-led approach to job redesign that empowers individuals to shape their work in ways that better support their wellbeing—whether by modifying tasks (*task crafting*), adjusting workplace interactions (*relationship crafting*), or reframing how they view their role (*perspective crafting*). By aligning job demands and resources with their strengths, interests, and values, employees can reduce workplace stressors, increase access to supportive resources, and experience fewer negative emotions, along with higher motivation, job satisfaction, and overall wellbeing.[21-23]

A 2017 systematic review found that employee-led job crafting interventions, **particularly when supported by coaching**, were more consistently associated with improvements in wellbeing and work motivation than traditional top-down redesign efforts.[24] This may be because coaching facilitates a more immediate and personalised alignment between job characteristics and employee needs.[25]

In a university-based intervention, employees who received **job crafting** training were more likely to seek out job resources, contributing to greater task performance, work engagement, and career satisfaction.[26] Similarly, employees in a Dutch police district who engaged in job crafting reported fewer negative emotions, stronger self-efficacy, and a greater tendency to pursue development opportunities.[27]

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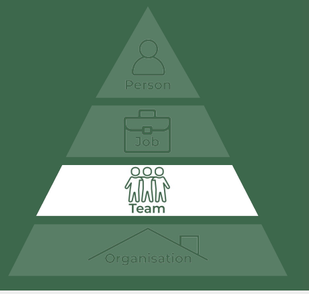
Interventions



Foster cultures of mutual support

Supporting employees' core psychological needs for **autonomy** (choice and flexibility), **competence** (effectiveness and mastery), and **relatedness** (connection and inclusion) can strengthen satisfaction and engagement at work.

When organisations foster peer support and inclusive practices, employees are more likely to experience a sense of control, ownership, and motivation in how they work.

- A field experiment with 26 workplace teams found that when employees were trained to support one another's needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness, they reported higher need satisfaction and greater autonomous motivation than control groups. The intervention emphasised perspective-taking, communication, and collaboration, suggesting that autonomy can be reinforced through everyday peer interactions.[28]

- The ADVANCE Project TRACS, a university-wide initiative to improve gender equity in STEM, introduced mentoring, work–life integration support, and inclusive decision-making training to create a more supportive academic environment. Faculty who engaged with the programme, regardless of gender, experienced greater satisfaction of their autonomy, competence, and relatedness needs, which was associated with higher job satisfaction over time.[29]

Together, these findings suggest that nurturing autonomy collectively through inclusion, collaboration, and supportive systems can help build a more motivated, capable, and resilient workforce.

World Wellbeing Movement

Autonomy
Interventions

Invite office-workers to participate in ergonomic decisions

Participatory ergonomics (PE) is an approach to workplace and job design that actively involves workers in identifying and addressing ergonomic issues. It recognises that workers have valuable firsthand knowledge about their tasks, tools, and work environments that should be considered in the design of safer, healthier, and more productive workplaces.[30–31]

A systematic review found **evidence that PE interventions positively impact a variety of health outcomes** and reduce musculoskeletal symptoms, injuries (and in turn workers' compensation claims), and sick days. The review noted a number of **key facilitators and barriers to the PE process**, including:[31]

- **Facilitators:** active buy-in from workers, management, and unions (where relevant); involvement of an ergonomics expert; and access to resources such as training.
- **Barriers:** lack of acceptance and resources; workplace instability, or wider economic pressures (e.g. recession).

A PE intervention among workers with musculoskeletal disorders in an Italian manufacturing facility revealed that enabling employees to modify and choose their workstation setup such as using height-adjustable desks, lift-assist devices, sit-stand chairs, led to enhanced feelings of usefulness and job satisfaction.[32]

The foundational principles of participatory ergonomics are just as relevant for remote employees. For practical support, consider the **Ergonomics e-Learning for Office Workers** program created by the Institute for Work & Health.

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World Wellbeing Movement

V

Variety and fulfilment

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.

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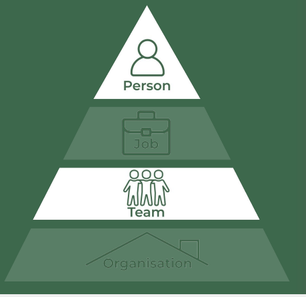
Energy
Interventions



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.[1]

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.[1,2,3] For example, a workplace policy outlining digital communication etiquette outside of working hours can prevent over-connectivity and excessive overtime.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[4]

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

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Stress**
- **Operational Design**
- **Purpose**

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.[5,6,7]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[8,9]

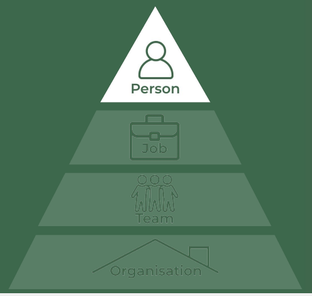
How employees spend their break and when they choose to take their break can influence wellbeing outcomes. The optimal approach will depend on the nature of their work, socioeconomic background, and cultural norms.

- Research suggests that engaging in movement over breaks such as stretching or a short walk can be beneficial.[10] A randomised control trial of a group-based exercise programme administered across 31 Japanese workplaces increased vigor, social support and job satisfaction among participants.[11]

- 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.[12, 13]

World Wellbeing Movement

Energy
Interventions



Educate employees on sleep hygiene

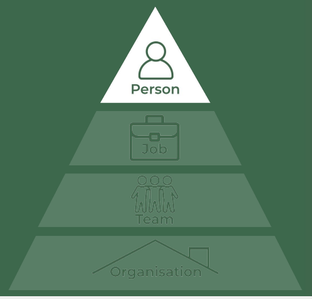
Educating employees about the importance of restful sleep in their overall wellbeing is a simple intervention that can yield several benefits including reduced incidences of sleep deprivation, presenteeism, and workplace injury.[14,15,16]

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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[17]

- A randomised 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.[18]

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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[19] 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.[20]

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.

World Wellbeing Movement

Energy
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World Wellbeing Movement

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.

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World Wellbeing Movement

UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Wellbeing Research Centre

Purpose
Interventions

Highlight the prosocial elements of work

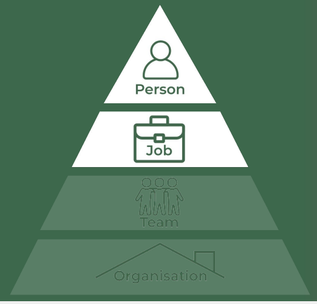
Employees experience greater meaningfulness in their work when they believe that they are helping others.[1] Emphasising to employees how their work benefits the wellbeing of others (i.e. prosocial task framing) can ignite motivation, encourage teamwork, and improve performance.[2]

Three field experiments examining the impact of prosocial task framing on employee performance revealed positive effects:[2]

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

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[3] Applying one's strengths can lower stress, improve self-esteem, and sustain positive emotions over time.[4] 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.[5]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[6,7]

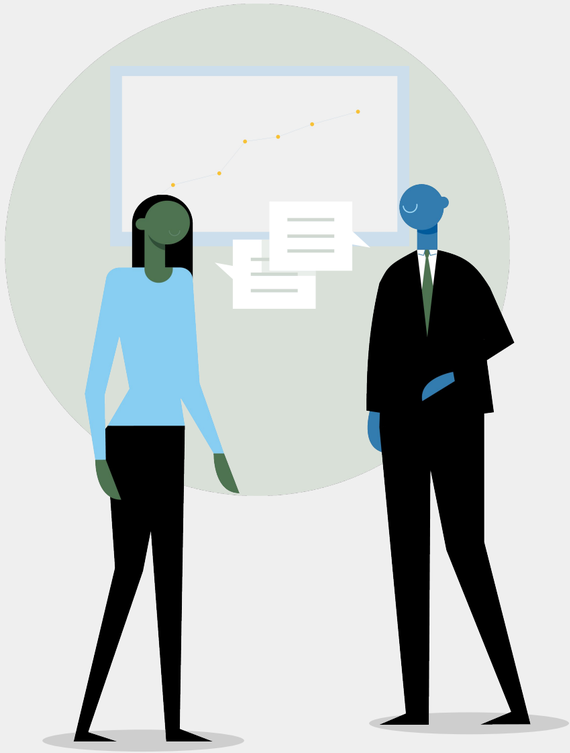
There are three main forms of job crafting:

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.[8] 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.

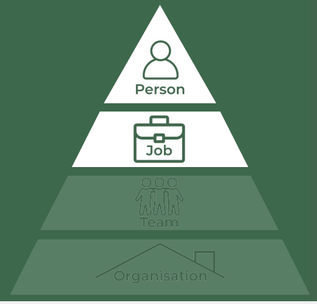


Refer also to other drivers:

- **Stress**
- **Operational Design**
- **Energy**

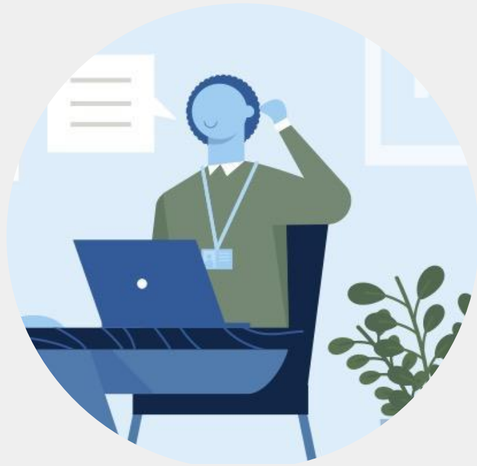
World Wellbeing Movement

Purpose
Interventions



Build reflection into your workflow

Encourage your employees to reflect on their purpose by empowering them through conversations, coaching, and workshops.[9] Keeping purpose top of mind helps employees set goals, generates energy in the workplace, and reduces stress.[9,10]



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.[11]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[1]

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:[1,2]

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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Purpose
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Purpose
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World Wellbeing Movement

D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety

E

Earnings and benefits

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.

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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.[1,2]

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.[3] 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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[4] 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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[5,6] 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.

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[7] 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.[8]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[9]

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.

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Compensation
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World Wellbeing Movement

D	R	I	V	E	R
Development and security	Relationships	Independence and flexibility	Variety and fulfilment	Earnings and benefits	Risk, health, and safety

R

Risk, health, and safety

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.

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Stress
Interventions

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.[1] 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.[2]

- A 14-month participatory intervention rolled out across 6 Danish workplaces improved working conditions and psychological wellbeing among knowledge workers.[3]

World Wellbeing Movement

Stress
Interventions

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.

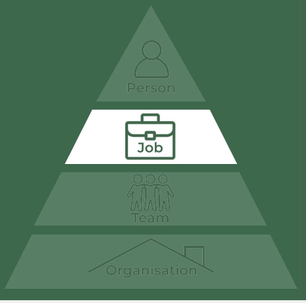
Treating stress as an individual problem and not getting to the root cause is doomed to fail. Collecting data on your workplace will ensure you can target your interventions.

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**

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[4]

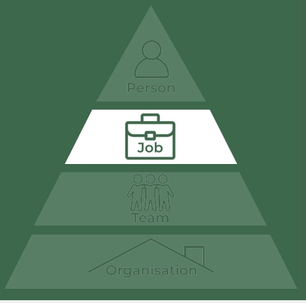
An analysis of 826 social service employees revealed that job crafting predicted work-life balance, work engagement, and burnout above and beyond age, gender, or seniority.[5]

Refer also to other drivers:

- **Purpose**
- **Operational Design**

World Wellbeing Movement

Stress
Interventions



Redesign jobs

How job tasks and duties are structured and scheduled can strongly influence job quality.[1] 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.[6]

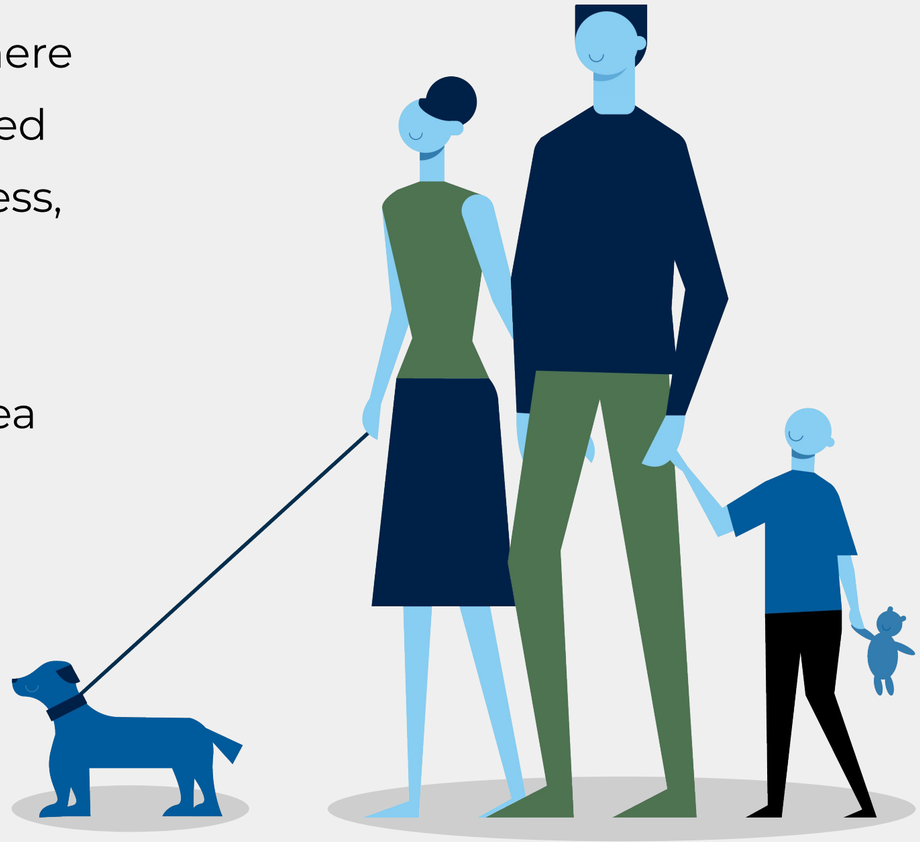
World Wellbeing Movement

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.[7]

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.[8]



World Wellbeing Movement

Stress
Interventions

Take care of your leaders

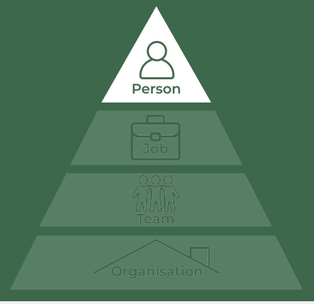
Employee wellbeing is dynamically influenced by leadership. The wellbeing and behaviours of leaders are linked to employee stress levels, absenteeism, and job satisfaction. Thus, interventions that reduce leaders' stress levels and encourage positive leadership behaviours can improve overall workplace 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.[9]

- 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.[10] Fortunately, the opposite is also true, suggesting that targeting leaders wellbeing has positive wellbeing spillover effects.[10]

World Wellbeing Movement

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.[11]
- A meta-analysis of relaxation therapies implemented in workplaces demonstrated a beneficial effect to employee health and wellbeing, especially in regard to stress.[12]

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.

World Wellbeing Movement

Stress
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World Wellbeing Movement

Workload Pressures

are a key driver of workplace wellbeing

Workload pressures refer to the impact that job demands, task intensity, and time constraints have on employees' wellbeing.

A manageable workload with clear expectations can enhance engagement and motivation, while excessive pressure, unrealistic deadlines and role overload can lead to stress, burnout, and reduced wellbeing. Striking the right balance in workload distribution is crucial for sustaining employee wellbeing while maintaining productivity.

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Workload Pressures
Interventions

Prioritise burnout prevention as a core wellbeing strategy

Burnout poses a serious threat to both employee wellbeing and organisational performance, making proactive, targeted strategies essential. Evidence indicates that interventions focused specifically on burnout are often more readily accepted in the workplace than those addressing broader mental health concerns. As a result, they may be more effective in fostering meaningful engagement and delivering tangible results.[1]

Effective Burnout Prevention Strategies:

- **Integrate approaches** by combining individual-level support (e.g., training, coaching) with organisational changes (e.g., job redesign, workload management).[2]
- **Include self-care planning** in stress management education; personalised plans reduce emotional exhaustion among nurses.[3,4]
- **Sustain impact** through refresher sessions, which can extend benefits for up to two years.[5]
- **Foster organisational responsibility**, as shown in a U.S. fire department program combining CBT, leadership development, and peer support.[6]
- **Embed prevention in organisational culture** with strong leadership support and ongoing reinforcement.

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Workload Pressures
Spotlight

Burnout

The World Health Organisation defines burnout as an “occupational phenomenon” caused by chronic workplace stress that has not been successfully managed.[7] It is characterised by:

- **Exhaustion**
- **Work-related cynicism**
- **Reduced professional efficacy**

Burnout is the result of excessive job demands without adequate resources that can harm both physical and mental health. **41%** of employees worldwide experience work-related stress daily,[8] and mental-health-related absences cost UK employers **~ £51 billion/year**.[9] Burnout also contributes to higher turnover, reduced engagement, lower customer satisfaction, and increased safety incidents.[10-12]

Evidence suggests that organisational-level interventions that effectively mitigate workload demands, enhance autonomy, and foster supportive leadership produce **larger and more sustained reductions** in burnout compared to individual-level approaches (e.g., resilience training, mindfulness).[13,14]

Burnout prevention is a system-level challenge. Address the working conditions that cause burnout—rather than just treating its symptoms—by monitoring employee stress, spotting early warning signs (e.g., declining work quality, withdrawal, increased sick leave), and acting early. Prevention should be embedded into organisational culture, with workload management prioritised and employee wellbeing established as a core KPI.

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Workload Pressures
Interventions

Reduce total working hours

Reducing total working hours, whether through a compressed schedule, flexible arrangements, or a four-day workweek without loss of pay, is emerging as a powerful structural intervention to alleviate chronic workload pressure, burnout, and work–life conflict. Whilst the four-day week has captured public attention, well-designed schedules with reduced and flexible hours can deliver similar benefits. A growing body of academic research shows that shorter workweeks can improve employee wellbeing and, in many cases, sustain or even boost productivity.

- A 2024 systematic review of 31 peer-reviewed studies spanning five decades (1970s–2020s) found that shorter workweeks were generally associated with **improved morale, job satisfaction and health lifestyles, along with lower absenteeism and turnover**.[15] Benefits were most evident in administrative and knowledge-based roles.
- Evidence from trials of the four-day week across 153 companies and nearly 3,181 workers showed considerable improvements for wellbeing**. The study reported substantial reductions in burnout (39%) and fatigue (71%)**, alongside improvements in mental health, sleep, and life satisfaction. Most firms maintained or increased productivity, and the majority continued the schedule after the trial.[16]

- Avoid increasing monitoring and performance pressures.[17]
- Provide ongoing organisational support to protect wellbeing long-term, including for people managers.[18]
- Other flexible work arrangements can accentuate more traditional gender roles and childcare responsibilities.[19]

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Workload Pressures
Spotlight

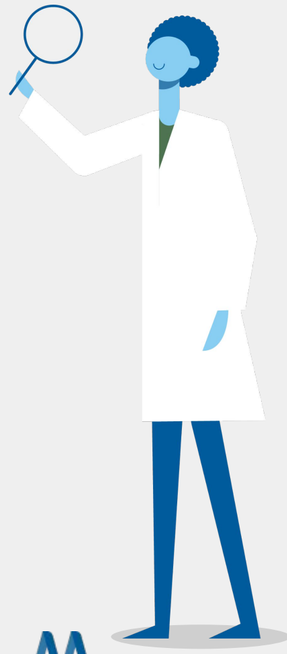
Evidence from large-scale 4-day work week trials

A major cross-national study of 4-day workweek interventions shows that reducing working hours with no loss of pay produces significant, measurable improvements in employee wellbeing.[16]

Across 153 organisations and 3,181 employees, reductions in working time were linked to lower burnout, higher job satisfaction, and better mental and physical health—patterns not observed in control companies. These benefits are mediated by better sleep and fatigue, as well as improved sense of ability.

Additional organisational case studies also demonstrate an ability to improve or maintain key performance indicators, and increased appeal in recruitment.[20]

- **Average weekly hours decreased by 5 hours**.
- **Wellbeing improved across multiple measures**, including burnout, fatigue, job satisfaction, and mental and physical health.
- **Larger individual reductions produced greater gains**, demonstrating a clear dose–response.
- **Work reorganisation was crucial**, with companies removing low-value work, reducing unnecessary meetings, streamlining processes, introducing new technology, and improving collaboration to enable reduced hours.[21]
- **Teams benefit most when they review and streamline their workflows**.[22]



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Workload Pressures
Interventions

Improve meeting design to protect focus and wellbeing

Poorly structured and frequent meetings heighten workload pressure by interrupting concentration and reducing opportunities for deep, focused work.[23] Evidence shows that shorter, more purposeful meetings can reduce cognitive load, preserve focus time, and improve workflow predictability.[24]

Top three evidence-informed meeting practices:

1. **Adopt shorter default meeting lengths:** Use 25-minute meetings instead of one-hour blocks to counter time inflation, sharpen discussion, and reduce meeting fatigue.[25] The logic aligns with Parkinson's Law, which shows that work expands to fill the time available for its completion.[26]
2. **Plan meetings with clear purpose and structure:** Provide agendas in advance and summarise decisions and action points at the end. Structured meeting leadership improves clarity, alignment, and follow-through, while reducing frustration.[27, 28]
3. **Strengthen virtual meeting design:** Qualitative and experimental studies highlight that intentional structure, shared norms, and active facilitation reduce virtual fatigue and maintain engagement.[24,29]

Findings from the UK Four-Day Week Pilot show that small, cumulative efficiencies such as shorter meetings, clearer workflows, and reduced digital friction, played a key role in enabling organisations to maintain performance while reducing working hours.[16]

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Workload Pressures
Interventions

Implement company-wide digital disconnection policies

In today's always-on digital work environment, the Right to Disconnect (R2D) has emerged as a viable policy response to growing concerns around digital overconnectivity and work–life conflict. While R2D is formalised through legislation in many countries, organisations are also voluntarily adopting disconnection policies as part of broader efforts to promote sustainable, healthy work cultures.

R2D policies are most effective when they are supported by **clear expectations, leadership role-modelling**, and **employee input**. The following case studies illustrate how organisations across sectors are embedding R2D into their workplace practices:[30,31]

- **AXA (France)** implemented a group-wide disconnection charter, supported by mandatory manager training and an internal system that disables email alerts during evenings and weekends. Managers are held accountable for respecting these boundaries. Internal surveys report improved perceptions of work–life balance and greater support for psychological detachment.
- **Siemens (Germany)** adopted email-free evenings and weekends as a cultural norm without national legislation. Teams co-create digital charters that define expectations around availability and communication. Senior leaders explicitly role-model disconnection and employees have reported reductions in perceived pressure to stay online, especially among knowledge workers.

Without realistic workloads and shifts in performance culture, R2D terms risk becoming symbolic or inconsistently applied, particularly in high-pressure or client-facing roles. Blanket rules can also have unintended effects and produce unequal outcomes.

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Workload Pressures
Interventions

Promote healthy and productive email use

A 25-year systematic review identifies practical, high-impact email practices that reduce workload pressure, limit digital strain, and strengthen sustainable work practices.[32] Organisations can reinforce these behaviours by setting clear expectations for tone, format, CC use, response times, and appropriate communication channels, supported by evidence-based email training.

Evidence-based practices to reduce email-driven workload pressure

- **Adopt structured email triaging system**
- **Use scheduled sending to support healthy boundaries**
- **Communicate working hours clearly** in email signatures and automatic replies
- **Strengthen clarity through purposeful email construction** with effective subject lines
- **Apply disciplined CC practices**
- **Manage notifications intentionally**

By reducing mental load, protecting boundaries, and improving clarity, these practices collectively reduce digital overload, strengthen work–life boundaries, and foster a more respectful, predictable communication culture, all of which enhance employee wellbeing and improving task efficiency.

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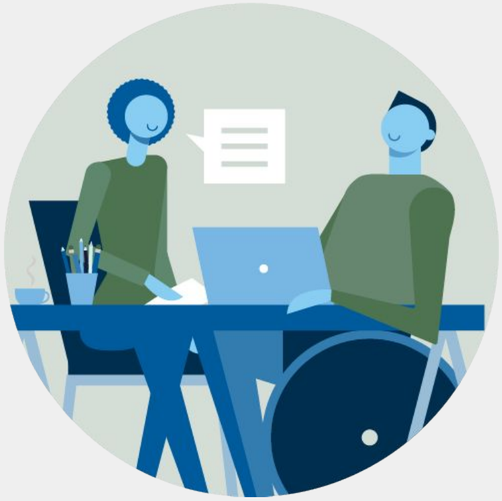
Workload Pressures
Interventions

Redesign work to boost organisational resilience

Redesigning work with wellbeing in mind does more than boost morale - it strengthens the overall functioning and resilience of an organisation. This intervention is particularly effective in high-stress environments, where rethinking how work is organised can significantly reduce stress, lower burnout, and enhance employee engagement, health, and performance.

Effective work redesign requires addressing core workflow inefficiencies such as offloading nonessential tasks, reducing time pressure, eliminating bottlenecks, and ensuring that job demands are aligned with available resources.[33]



To be effective, these changes must be tailored to the specific demands of the industry and role. Evidence from the healthcare sector clearly illustrates the power of this approach, for example:

- In two Australian hospitals, an intervention that introduced a workload assessment tool, enhanced support and development access, and improved staffing practices, leading to significant **reductions in psychological distress and emotional exhaustion**, along with **increased job satisfaction and reduced turnover**.[34]
- A work redesign effort targeting medical specialists and nurses, and focused on reducing job demands, resulted in higher levels of work engagement and wellbeing, better health outcomes, and improved job performance.[35]
- In broader clinical settings, improving work conditions has been directly linked to **lower stress and burnout**.[36]

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Stress**
- **Operational Design**

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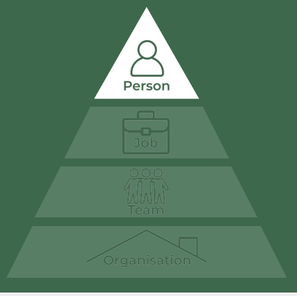
Workload Pressures
Interventions



Use schedule control as a buffer against workload pressures

Providing employees with real autonomy over *when* and *how* they work is a powerful strategy for managing workload and protecting wellbeing. A growing number of intervention studies show that giving workers greater control over their schedules can reduce stress, mitigate burnout, and support performance.

Refer also to other drivers:
- **Flexibility**
- **Autonomy**

The most effective implementations combine employee involvement, leadership commitment, and structured, team-based flexibility.

- A Fortune 500 firm introduced a workplace flexibility initiative that allowed employees to adjust their schedules and work remotely based on their needs, and also provided manager training to support flexible arrangements. Employees reported **significantly lower stress** and reduced work–family conflict, with the strongest effects observed among parents and caregivers.[37]

- A study in Finland showed that co-designed changes to increase job control, such as greater say over task planning and deadlines, led to significant reductions in exhaustion and cynicism, even without reducing workload.[38]

Employees can end up working longer and feeling more pressure to be constantly available, blurring the lines between work and personal life. Without intentional efforts to manage workload expectations and protect non-work time, schedule control risks shifting responsibility for work–life balance from the employer to the individual - exacerbating rather than relieving stress.[39]

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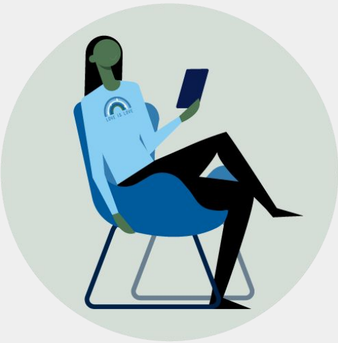
Workload Pressures
Interventions

Use mindfulness training to buffer workload pressures and protect wellbeing

Research shows that **in the right conditions**, mindfulness training helps employees regulate stress, stay present, and respond more constructively to work-related challenges. Incorporating mindfulness into workplace wellbeing strategies can be a useful tool to help employees manage stress, improve focus, and protect mental health, particularly in high-demand roles where reducing workload is not always immediately feasible.

- A comprehensive review of mindfulness programs in the education sector found that the most effective interventions combined structured training, personal practice, and take-home assignments.[40] In contrast, self-guided digital programs delivered more limited benefits, while very lengthy interventions (exceeding 24 total hours) were linked to diminishing returns.
- **Such programs are particularly relevant for individuals in psychologically demanding roles**. For example, a six-session mindfulness-based program delivered to police officers in the Netherlands during a period of sustained workload pressure led to significant improvements in stress reduction, happiness, work ability, and overall emotional wellbeing.[41]

- Benefits may be overstated due to selection bias. Uptake and engagement are uneven, with those most in need often not participating; organisations should consider alternative ways to reach them.
- Well-designed training that enables employees to integrate new practices into daily work delivers the greatest long-term benefits, provided it is backed by ongoing organisational support.
- Lasting impact requires addressing workload demands through broader structural changes.



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