

EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS

1. INTRODUCTION

Starting on the positive note, NPA and DOJ employees are naturally responsive, committed and incredibly dedicated to their call to deliver the service to the victims of crime. But they need on-going support from the organisation to ensure that they continue to effect effective and efficient service to the nation.

However, the nature of work performed by NPA and DOJ&CD presents an unusual environment and needs the organisations to focus vigorously on its employees. The organisations need to ensure that employees are kept physically, emotionally, socially and spiritually healthy under extreme circumstances and that they are equipped with the skills to recognise how to maintain optimal self-health and self-growth.

2. BACKGROUND

Whereas, issues such as emotional difficulties, anxiety, and depression are commonly anticipated in most of the South African organisations, unique to the NPA and to DOJ&CD is the high incidence of trauma, relationship issues, substance abuse and emotional difficulties. Bereavement and physical and mental illnesses are also not uncommon in the organisations' Employee Health and Wellness reports, as is family issues and cases related to family violence and self-abusive behaviour.

The high incidences of trauma- related issues within the NPA and DOJ&CD are of concern. Research has shown that the consequences of such traumatic and stressful work circumstances in the workplace include mental and physical illnesses, ill health absenteeism, presenteeism and employee low morale.

Given the above background, the Employee Health and Wellness Programme is designed to create an enabling environment by providing health and wellness services that enhance mental health, support positive lifestyle change, coping skills, and healthy relationships, thereby resulting in improved employee well-being, productivity and morale.

This report intends to report on available and recommended wellness interventions that aim at keeping employees emotionally, mentally, socially and physically healthy.

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3. EMPLOYEE HEALTH AND WELLNESS INTERVENTION

3.1 Integrated Employee Health and Wellness Services

The Employee Health and Wellness Programme offers integrated wellness services which include:

- Employee Assistance Programme
- Health Promotion
- Physical wellness and
- HIV, TB and chronic disease management programmes

3.2 FOCUSED WELLNESS INTERVENTIONS

In addition to the above service offering, the following focused interventions are recommended for employees who are dealing with sexual offences, extreme violence crimes and other work induced stressors.

For the purpose of this presentation, employees are divided into the following two categories which determine the recommended intervention.

Category 1: Employees working in high risk areas

Category 2: Employees dealing with other work –induced stress.

3.2.1 FOCUSED INTERVENTION FOR EMPLOYEES WORKING IN HIGH_RISK AREAS

This intervention involves employees who are working in highly emotive environment and are frequently exposed to secondary and vicarious trauma due to the nature of their work. Prosecutors, TCC employees, Court preparatory Officers, intermediaries, and Domestic Violence Investigators are amongst the employees that are exposed to emotionally high risk matters such as child rape and sexual offences in general and other extreme violent cases.

a) **Stress trauma Management group Intervention sessions:**

Group intervention sessions are facilitated by professionals and are aimed at providing emotional support and coordinated awareness and training in recognising effects of trauma and in self-management and resilience techniques on a quarterly basis. The group sessions also intends to generate primary support systems within the workplace. The sessions focus on the following aspects:

- psycho-education and debriefing
- Emotional impact session
- Building resilience
- Identification of internal and environmental resources.

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- Follow up group sessions

An initial one day workshop is recommended to create awareness and educate employees on the nature, and effects of workplace trauma.

3.2.2 FOCUSED INTERVENTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES DEALING WITH WORK INDUCED STRESS

Employees in this category include the Maintenance Court Officers, Court Interpreters and family Counsellors and all other employees whose work performance may be impaired by work induce stressors and are at risk of experiencing burnout fatigue, low morale and relationship problems.

b) Training in self-management and resilience techniques

One Day workshop aimed at enhancing the psychological wellbeing of employees through coordinated training in self- management and resilience techniques. The workshop is designed to develop employees' insight around the following wellness issues:

- Building resilience
- Dealing with conflict
- Effective stress management techniques and
- Self-care

4. CONCLUSION

The success of the above intervention will largely depend on the management support. Proper incorporation of these services into the offices operational plans is of high importance.