

MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE: A challenge for wellness

Mental Health Symposium

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Presenter:

Dr. E. Anthony Allen M.B, B.S, MDiv, MRC Psych, DM (Psych)

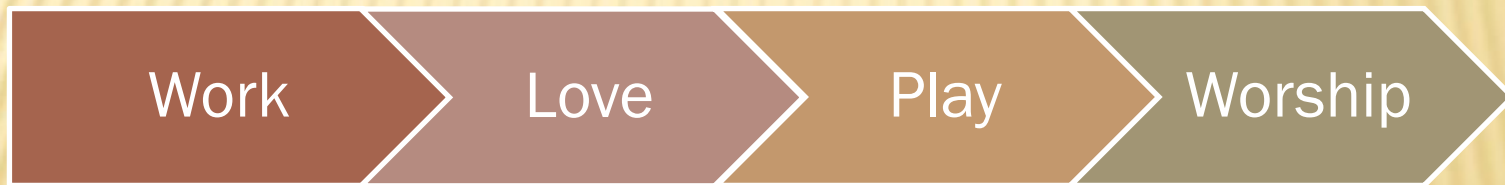
Consultant Psychiatrist. Consultant in Whole Person Health
and Church-based Health Ministries

www.growingbalanced.com

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- ✘ What is the purpose of the workplace? – Who benefits?
 - ✘ The workplace exists to add value to the lives of those it serves. It also adds value to its staff so that they can fulfil this mandate. Hence it involves ‘a balance of adding value’.

WHAT IS MENTAL HEALTH?

It is: Achieving **self-management** of one's: Thinking, Emotions and Relationships in order to adequately achieve one's Life Tasks in a balanced way :



throughout the Stages and Changes of Living



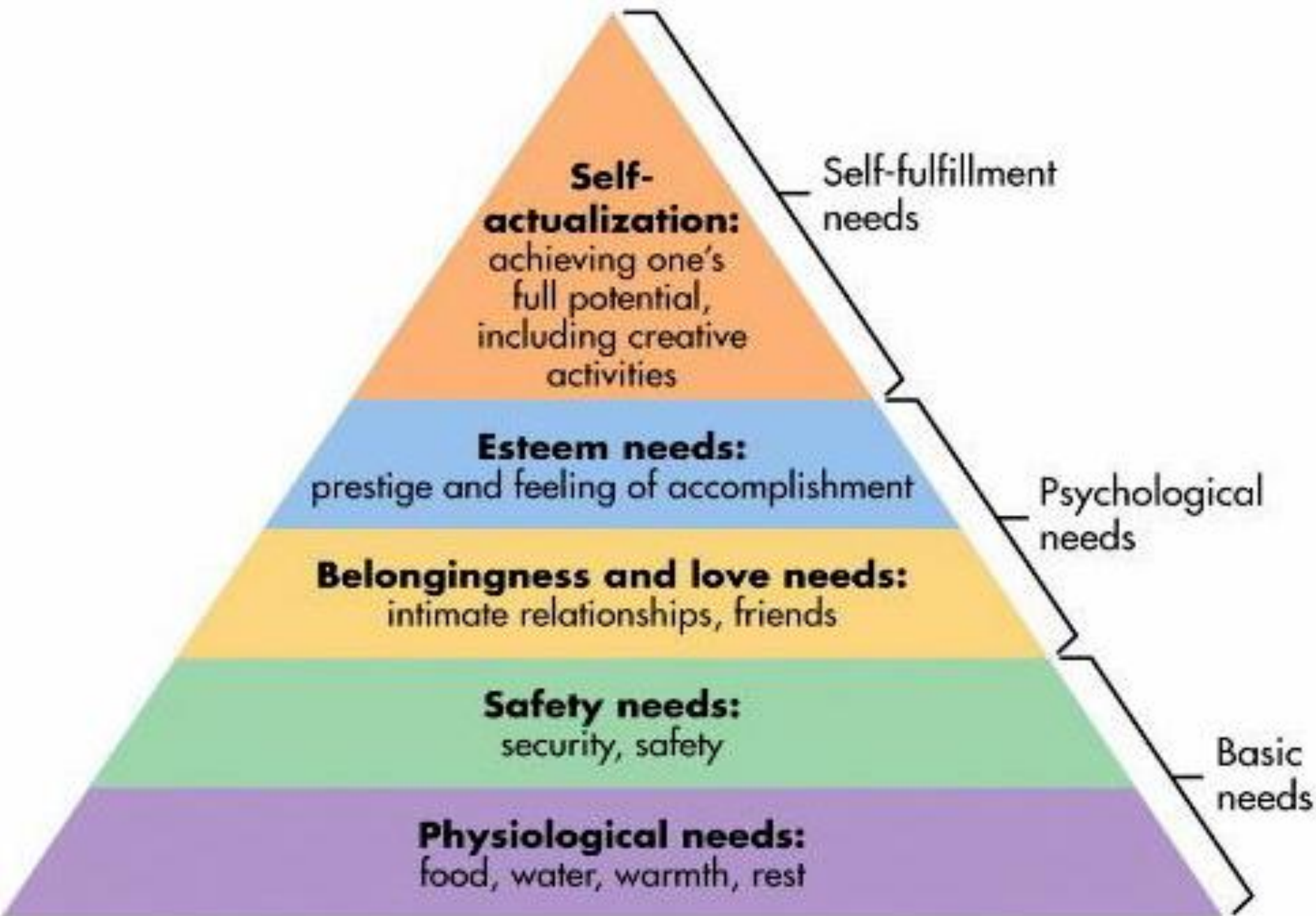
WHY CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE?

Most of one's adult life is spent in the workplace.
Thus work experiences is a main factor
determining overall well-being.

The workplace can aid mental health

It helps to provide for Maslow's Hierarchy of
Human Needs – both for staff and those served.

MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



WHY CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE?

It can also support mental health by providing for:

- ✘ Purpose,
- ✘ Connection,
- ✘ Validation.

Unemployment itself is a major contributor to mental ill health

WHY CONSIDER MENTAL HEALTH IN THE WORKPLACE?

Mental ill health affects productivity.

1 in every 4 persons globally have experienced mental health problems at some time.

Depression and anxiety cost the global economy US\$1 trillion each year in lost productivity.

A WHO study indicates that for every US\$1 trillion put into scaled up treatment for common mental disorders , there is a return of USD \$4 in improved health and productivity

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- ✘ The workplace makes or breaks mental health.
 - ✘ Yet mental health makes or breaks the workplace.
 - ✘ When both break each other we have a vicious cycle.
 - ✘ Is this especially the case in middle and lower income post colonial and post slavery countries with authoritarian cultures and challenged national governance?

ACHIEVING GOOD MENTAL HEALTH IN THE
WORKPLACE:
is a challenge for wellness that faces all of us.

For this to happen every workplace needs to be:

- ✘ A WORKPLACE OF EXCELLENCE:
Building the healthiest workplace
- ✘ A SENSITIVE WORKPLACE:
Identifying red flags of a toxic culture
- ✘ BE A CARING WORKPLACE:
Taking direct action for mental health

I

**BE A WORKPLACE OF EXCELLENCE:
Build the healthiest workplace**

How to build the healthiest workplace

1. Develop emotionally intelligent (EI) persons

This involves:

A. PERSONAL COMPETENCE

1. Use Self-Awareness
2. Exercise Self Regulation
3. Develop Motivation for positive goals

B. SOCIAL COMPETENCE

4. Feel and show Empathy
5. Develop and use Social Relationship Skills

How to build the healthiest workplace

1. Develop EMOTIONALLY INTELLIGENT (EI) PERSONS

Without having staff with:

PERSONAL COMPETENCE

and

SOCIAL COMPETENCE

there can be no effective management of our emotions, thinking or relationships during our life stages and performance of life tasks to produce emotional health – no mental health!

How to build the healthiest workplace

2. Seek HEALTHY TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

- ✘ Have two-way communication between supervisors and team members and between team members, also within the team as a whole
- ✘ Allow for participation in decision-making and monitoring
- ✘ Practice accountability and fairness at all levels

How to build the healthiest workplace

2. Seek HEALTHY TEAM RELATIONSHIPS

- ✘ Focus on affirmation and a positive atmosphere even when errors have to be corrected – i.e. use constructive criticism
- ✘ Encourage recognition of each other's strengths
- ✘ Practice mutual respect and avoidance of abuse
- ✘ Each person must be willing to admit error, apologize and make positive changes

How to build the healthiest workplace

3. Maintain HEALTHY ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

- i. A clearly expressed and understood vision and mission owned by all staff involving all members in regular strategic planning.
- ii. Aim for best practices.
- iii. Utilize a charter of rights and quality service for all stakeholders, including staff.
- iv. Regularly utilize shared policies and procedures for efficient and effective management

How to build the healthiest workplace

3. Maintain healthy organizational practices

- v. Facilitate an open and empowering style of leadership at all levels
- vi. Ensure accountability at all levels and a fair and just balance of interest between all in the workplace
- vii. Allow for the respectful expression and due processing of grievances without sanctions

No workplace will be perfectly healthy. Thus we will need to:

II.

BE A SENSITIVE WORKPLACE:

**Identify the red flags of a
toxic culture**

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

1. Stress promoting behaviours

- ✘ Stress is the second most reported work-related health problem, that affects 22% of workers from EU 27 (in 2005).
- ✘ And the number of people suffering from stress-related conditions caused or made worse by work is likely to increase.

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

1. Stress promoting behaviours

- ✘ Stress occurs when persons perceive that there is an **imbalance** between the demands made of them and the resources they have available to cope with those demands.
- ✘ Though the experience of stress is psychological, stress also affects people's physical health.

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

1. Stress promoting behaviours

Common factors in work-related stress include:

- × lack of control over work
- × unsuitable demands being made of workers
- × lack of support from colleagues and management
- × poor match between us and our work,
- × poor relationships and presence of psychological or physical violence at a workplace, and
- × conflicts between our roles at work and outside it

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

1. Stress promoting behaviours

✘ ***Disrespect, verbal and emotional abusive behaviours*** in the workplace:

- + gossiping
- + teasing
- + sexually inappropriate behaviour
- + intruding on interpersonal space
- + swearing
- + racist comments
- + sexist comments
- + violence

*Reactions to the same circumstances vary between individuals.

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

1. Stress promoting behaviours

- ✘ ***Mobbing*** includes the harmful treatment or putting of harmful pressure on employee, often with intention and an effect of inducing him/her to leave.
- ✘ It has characteristics which commonly lead to claims of dismissal, for example, lack of support of an employee by the employer.

Examples of Mobbing

- + Being disturbing in speech
- + Loud reprimand
- + Shouting
- + Limiting ability of others' self-expression
- + Repeated Criticism of somebody's work
- + Putting gossip around
- + Scoffing at political and religious views
- + Giving performance targets which aren't appropriate for somebody's qualification
- + Forced to work over hours

**Mobbing in the Workplace:
Has This Happened to You?**

What are common symptoms of work-related stress?

SYMPTOMS OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

At the **organization level**:

- × absenteeism
- × high staff turnover,
- × disciplinary problems,
- × Harassment of others in turn,
- × reduced productivity,
- × accidents,
- × errors, and
- × increased costs from compensation or health care.

SYMPTOMS OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

At the individual level:

- × **emotional reactions** (irritability, anxiety, sleep problems, depression, alienation, burnout, family relationship problems);
- × **cognitive reactions** (difficulty in concentrating, remembering, learning new things, making decisions);
- × **behavioural reactions** (abuse of drugs, alcohol, and tobacco; other-destructive or suicidal behaviours);
- × **physiological reactions** (back problems, weak immunity and heart problems).

SYMPTOMS OF WORK-RELATED STRESS

Mobbing can lead to...

- physical health damage
- willingness to leave job
- problems at home
- suicide
- having a breakdown

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

2. Workplace BURNOUT

- ✘ Burnout is a state of emotional, mental, and physical **exhaustion** caused by excessive and prolonged stress
- ✘ Burnout happens when people who have previously been highly committed to a job **lose all interest and motivation.**
- ✘ Sadly, this can spell the end of a successful career.

How to identify red flags of a toxic culture:

2. Workplace BURNOUT

You may be on the road to burnout if:

- Every day is a bad day.
- Caring about your work or home life seems like a total waste of energy.
- You're exhausted all the time.
- The majority of your day is spent on tasks you find either mind-numbingly dull or overwhelming.
- You feel like nothing you do makes a difference or is appreciated.

III.

BE A CARING WORKPLACE:

**Take direct action for
mental health**

Direct action for mental health:

This will involve

1. Protection

Don't shoot your wounded!

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

FACTORS TO CONSIDER when *protecting yourself* against work-related stress

- ✘ the atmosphere (or 'culture') in your workplace,
- ✘ how stress is viewed;
- ✘ the demands that are placed on you,
- ✘ and the hazards you are exposed to;

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

FACTORS TO CONSIDER when *protecting yourself* against work-related stress

- ✘ how much control you have in how you do your job,
- ✘ how clear you are on what your job is,
- ✘ what support you receive from colleagues and managers and
- ✘ what training you are given to do your job.

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER TAKING to protect yourself against work-related stress

- ✘ **asking for more responsibility** in planning your own work;
 - ✘ **asking to be involved in decision-making** about your area of work;
- supp

- ✘ **talking to your manager, employee representative, or other supportive colleague** if you think you are being harassed, and intimidated

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

ACTIONS TO CONSIDER TAKING to protect yourself against work-related stress

- ✘ **talking to your manager** or employee representative if you begin to feel that you can't cope;
- ✘ talking to your manager if your job responsibilities are not clear;
- ✘ **asking for training** if you feel you need it;
- ✘ **keeping a record** of all interactions and unfair practices as necessary.

IF ALL FAILS GET COUNSELLING AND PEER
SUPPORT FOR DECISION MAKING ABOUT
LEAVING TO PROTECT YOUR MENTAL HEALTH

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYEES

Actions to take to protect yourself against work-related stress

✘ Avoid being a workaholic.

Workaholics will spend most of their lives at work or taking work home with them. They will often have little time for personal lives - family, hobbies, or relaxation.

We can say a person is a workaholic when:

- ✘ Playtime is a big waste.
- ✘ Their family or friends have given up expecting them on time.
- ✘ Many workaholics at work are seen as an energetic and competitive person, while at home they are lethargic and depressed.
- ✘ They believe that it is okay to work long hours
- ✘ . Many workaholics are afraid that if they don't work hard and long hours they will lose their job or be a failure

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- ✘ Several Japanese workers today experience *karōshi* or “*overwork death*”. This seems to be related to the history of the demands to rebuilding the country after World War II.
THIS IS A DANGER FOR ALL
 - ✘ Seek professional help and a recovery support group

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS:

Have an **APPROPRIATE APPROACH** to mental health

- ✘ Foster the recognition that all persons have mental health needs
- ✘ Raise the awareness of what people can do to look after their own and others' mental well-being
- ✘ Identify and address the factors that affect mental health in the workplace: **emotional intelligence, healthy team relationships and organizational practices**

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Have an **APPROPRIATE APPROACH** to mental health

- ✘ Build a work culture in which mental health issues are not taboo
- ✘ Provide support options which are confidential and non stigmatizing
- ✘ Employment practices should be reviewed to ensure that staff with a history of mental health problems are not excluded. They can be *an asset*. They often have a better understanding of their own strengths and weaknesses, and can help members of staff with similar problems'

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUGGESTIONS FOR EMPLOYERS

Provide relevant INSTITUTIONAL MECHANISMS

- ✘ Ensure appropriate **occupational health practices** including risk assessment, hazard prevention and due compensation.
- ✘ **Adequate personnel management** to guarantee fairness in :working conditions remuneration, performance evaluations, staff development and promotion. Also in grievance procedures.
- ✘ Obligation to **have policies in place to deal bullying and sexual harassment** and train managers, supervisors and employees accordingly

Direct action for mental health:

1. Protection

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISORDERS at work

- ✘ **Enable early detection** through healthy staff community bonding and staff awareness of healthy minds and warning signs .
- ✘ **Enable access to evidence-based treatments** through encouraging referral. Foster Employee Assistance Programmes with chosen service providers.
- ✘ Have a **helping team relationship** with the family and the mental health professional as necessary and with permission. This can help the person's *acceptance of disability* and best *compliance with care*.

Direct action for mental health: 1. Protection

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISORDERS at work

- ✘ Support individuals with mental disorders in either continuing or returning to work . Set up in particular **special accommodations** including: flexible hours and job-redesign and other resources once the work gets done.
- ✘ **A supportive and confidential communication** with management, family and helping professionals can help people with mental disorders continue to or return to work.

Direct action for mental health: 1. Protection

SUPPORTING PEOPLE WITH MENTAL DISORDERS at work is a human right

- ✘ Article 27 of The UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD) provides a legally-binding global framework for promoting the rights of people with disabilities (including psychosocial disabilities).
- ✘ It recognizes that every person with a disability has the right to work, should be treated equally

Direct action for mental health:

2. Promoting mental wellness

Mental wellness and Whole Person wellness are one and the same.

THE WHOLE PERSON WELLNESS MODEL

- ❑ Utilises a **Whole Person** understanding of wellness and disease

- ❑ This is an **integrative or dynamic** model based on **“harmony”** or balance

- ❑ Two basic tenets:
 1. Wellness is Whole Person Harmony
 2. Harmony comes from Healthy Lifestyles

1. WELLNESS IS “WHOLE PERSON” HARMONY



HEALTH OR WELLNESS IS
WHOLENESS
OR **HARMONY** BETWEEN:

1. aspects of the self
- (mind, body and spirit)
2. self and others
3. self and the natural environment
4. self and God or a “Higher Power”

All these aspects of self and life *interact*.
If one is affected, all are affected

Direct action for mental health:

2. Promoting mental wellness

WHOLE PERSON WELLNESS COMES FROM HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

- × **H** ealthy
E ating.
- × **A** ctive
L iving.
- × **T** ogetherness.
- × **H** anging loose.

Direct action for mental health:

2. Promoting mental wellness

WHOLE PERSON WELLNESS COMES FROM HEALTHY LIFESTYLES

× **H ealthy**

E ating. - Rainbow colours and unprocessed

× **A ctive**

L iving. - Exercise, Hobbies, Recreation, Financies

× **T ogetherness.** -With others and our Higher Power

× **H anging loose.** -Rest, Relaxation and Meditation

Direct action for mental health:

2. Promoting wellness

WE CAN PROMOTE HEALTHY LIFESTYLES THROUGH such as:

- ✘ Staff Education and literature
- ✘ Having a staff gym, yoga and serving healthy lunches
- ✘ Special outings
- ✘ Supporting walking, recreation and hobby clubs
- ✘ Enabling volunteering
- ✘ Developing experiential group sessions for developing positive leadership and a staff community of mutual caring!

SUMMARY

- ✘ The workplace makes or breaks mental health.
- ✘ Yet Mental health makes or breaks the workplace.
- ✘ When both break each other we have a vicious cycle and downward spiral.
- ✘ Can this be the case in middle and lower income post colonial and post slavery countries with authoritarian cultures and challenged national governance?

SUMMARY

Yet we can develop a positive synergy (or virtuous cycle) between both.

This will guarantee productivity, sound personal and national finances and high Gross National Happiness!

This is everybody's business, from communities to cities to nation!

Can we do it?

CONCLUSION

For this to happen every workplace needs to be:

- ✘ **A WORKPLACE OF EXCELLENCE:**
Building the healthiest workplace
- ✘ **A SENSITIVE WORKPLACE:**
Identifying red flags of a toxic culture
- ✘ **BE A CARING WORKPLACE:**
Taking direct action for mental health

THANKS

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