

MENTAL HEALTH & WELLBEING AT WORK TOOLKIT

Elevating Organizational Wellbeing

A practical toolkit for organizations and leaders committed to elevating their workplace by putting people first and prioritizing mental health and wellbeing.

02

THE NEED FOR WORKPLACE WELLBEING

77%

of workers have
experienced burnout at
their current job

Gallup, 2024

\$1T+

lost in global
productivity annually
due to depression and
anxiety

WHO, 2024

52%

of employees feel their
employer does not care
about their wellbeing

Gallup, 2024

Why Workplace Wellbeing Matters

At Joelle Monaco Consulting, we believe mental health is essential for thriving workplaces. Today's workforce expects supportive, flexible, and mentally healthy environments, and in 2026, those expectations are at an all-time high.

New data shows that people who feel supported in their mental health are 3.5× more likely to be engaged at work and significantly less likely to leave their workplace.

Investing in wellbeing is no longer optional; it is a fundamental business strategy.

ABOUT JOELLE MONACO CONSULTING

Joelle Monaco Consulting (JMC) is a national leader in workplace mental health and wellbeing strategy. With over a decade of experience supporting thousands of professionals across sectors, JMC blends data, people-centered design, and systems thinking to help workplaces create environments where people thrive.

From mental health training to long-term culture change, JMC helps leaders, HR teams, and frontline professionals make mental health a core part of organizational success. We create practical, innovative solutions tailored to each workplace's unique needs.

Joelle Monaco, MBA, is an adjunct at SUNY Albany, serves on the board of the New York State Public Health Association, and has led mental health initiatives funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), and is celebrating being a Mental Health First Aid trainer for the National Council for Mental Wellbeing for ten years!

03

LANGUAGE MATTERS

A universal understanding of mental health terminology is essential for building an inclusive, respectful, and supportive workplace culture. When everyone, including leaders, uses the same language, it promotes clarity, reduces misunderstandings, and strengthens communication around wellbeing. Using consistent, current terminology also helps prevent using outdated or stigmatizing language that can unintentionally harm or isolate others. By aligning on shared definitions, workplaces take a meaningful step toward everyday conversations about mental health, ensuring all individuals feel seen, heard, and valued.

KEY DEFINITIONS

AI & Technology Wellbeing: The impact of an always-on digital environment on individuals' mental health, including AI-related job stress and digital fatigue.

Burnout: A state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress at work.

Compassion Fatigue: The emotional and physical exhaustion that can result from caring for others.

Employee Assistance Program (EAP): A benefit that provides confidential support for individuals experiencing personal or work-related challenges.

Life-Work Integration: A holistic approach to navigating personal and professional responsibilities, where both aspects are viewed as interconnected and equally important, rather than in constant competition.

Mental Health: A state of wellbeing wherein an individual navigates everyday stresses, works productively, and contributes to their community.

Neurodiversity: The concept that neurological differences (like autism, ADHD, dyslexia) are natural variations of the human brain and should be recognized and respected in workplace policies and culture.

Psychological Safety: An environment where people feel safe taking risks, sharing ideas, and expressing concerns without fear of negative consequences.

Stigma-Free Language: Language that avoids judgmental or negative connotations about mental health or substance use or misuse, supporting respectful and person-first communication.

Trauma-Informed Approach: A framework that recognizes the prevalence of trauma and emphasizes physical, psychological, and emotional safety.

Workplace Wellbeing: The overall mental, emotional, and physical health of individuals is influenced by workplace culture, leadership, and policies.

04

INNOVATIVE WORKPLACE WELLBEING IDEAS

Wellbeing Budgets: Allocate funds and time for investment in activities that support wellbeing, such as gym memberships, therapy sessions, or mindfulness apps. Consider expanding to cover AI literacy courses to reduce tech-related stress.

Mental Health Days: Offer designated mental health days to encourage proactive self-care.

Peer Support Networks: Establish employee-led groups that provide peer-to-peer mental health support and connection.

Flexible Work Arrangements: Implement hybrid models and asynchronous communication to support life-work integration and reduce the pressure to be constantly available.

Workplace Design for Wellbeing: Incorporate natural light, quiet spaces, and wellbeing spaces to create a more supportive work environment.

Anonymous Feedback Channels: Provide a safe way for individuals to share their mental health concerns and workplace improvement suggestions.

Regular Check-Ins & Listening Sessions: Foster open communication through structured, recurring conversations about workplace wellbeing.

Disconnect Policy: Set enforceable expectations for after-hours communication, aligned with growing state and federal right-to-disconnect legislation in 2025–2026.

Leadership Training on Mental Health Topics: Educating leaders enhances empathy, reduces stigma, and improves their ability to support individuals' wellbeing.

Burnout Assessments: Proactively identifying risks allows workplaces to address systemic issues and protect wellbeing.

Onsite Counseling Services: Bringing mental health professionals directly into the workplace increases access and helps normalize help-seeking behavior.

Healthy Meal Delivery Options: Providing nutritious meals at work supports wellbeing and reduces decision fatigue.

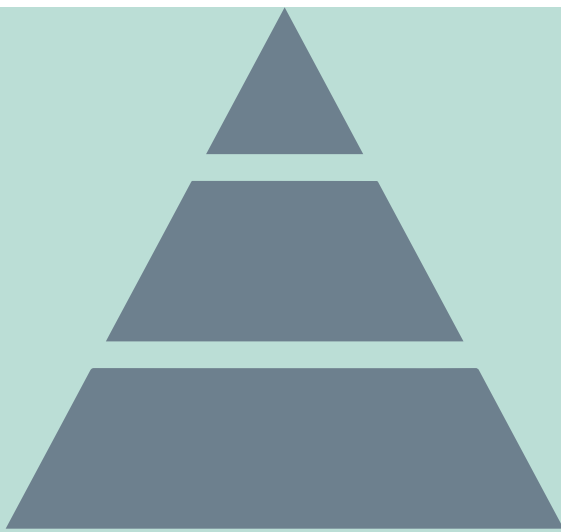
AI Transition Support: Resources and open forums for navigating stressors around AI, automation, and change.

Caregiver Support: Expand benefits to elder care, childcare resources, and family therapy; wellbeing extends beyond the individual.

05

THE ROLE OF ORGANIZATIONS & LEADERS

BUILDING A MENTALLY HEALTHY CULTURE



Culture – Create an environment where mental health conversations are typical, stigma is reduced, and wellbeing is treated as a shared workplace value.

Leadership – Empower leaders to lead by example, receive mental health training, and support people with empathy, compassion, and clarity.

Infrastructure – Create a foundation with clear policies, equitable benefits, and structured systems that sustain wellbeing over time.

STRATEGIES FOR LEADERS



Make Mental Health Part of Conversations

Create safe spaces where individuals feel comfortable discussing mental health without fear of stigma or judgment.



Provide Resources

Ensure everyone knows how to access support tools such as EAPs, wellness apps, counseling, and mental health training. Provide monthly, quarterly reminders, and annual information sessions.



Foster Life-Work Integration

Encourage healthy boundaries by promoting time off, flexible schedules, and respecting non-work hours.



Encourage Engagement

Give individuals a voice in decisions that affect them and offer opportunities for growth, autonomy, and connection.



Monitor and Adapt Initiatives

Use feedback and data to evaluate your wellbeing strategies and make adjustments to stay responsive and relevant.



Address AI-Related Stressors

Be transparent about how AI is being used. Acknowledge uncertainty, create forums for questions, and invest in upskilling.

06

RIGHTS & LEGAL CONSIDERATIONS



Mental health and substance use disorders are protected under the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Federal law prohibits discrimination against individuals with disabilities, including mental health conditions. This requires workplaces to provide reasonable accommodations that enable individuals to perform their roles effectively. Furthermore, engaging in an interactive process with individuals who request accommodations is legally required.

Additionally, several states, including New York, California, and Illinois, have strengthened or are advancing workplace mental health mandates, right-to-disconnect protections, and caregiver leave expansions.

COMMUNICATING ADA SUPPORT TO YOUR TEAM

It's not enough to comply with the law; workplaces need to proactively communicate individuals' rights and available supports consistently:

- ✓ Include ADA language in onboarding materials, handbooks, and policy documents.
- ✓ Feature accommodation guidance in your internal wellbeing newsletters or internal communications.
- ✓ Create a centralized and confidential way for individuals to initiate accommodation requests.
- ✓ Ensure leaders speak openly about the importance of accessibility and mental health equity.
- ✓ Host leadership training on navigating accommodation requests.

When individuals understand their rights and feel safe requesting accommodations, your workplace becomes more inclusive, legally sound, and supportive for all.

07

NATIONAL RESOURCES FOR THE WORKPLACE

Relying on credible and evidence-based resources is essential when launching mental health and wellbeing initiatives. Using information from trusted resources ensures that your strategies are grounded in research, aligned with legal guidelines, and truly supportive of individuals' needs.

This toolkit offers a strong starting point for those beginning their journey toward a mentally healthy workplace. While there are endless possibilities for creative and impactful programming, the key is to start small, stay consistent, and build over time. A thoughtful, step-by-step approach leads to sustainable change and lasting impact.

1. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Workplace Health Program** - Offers data-driven insights and initiatives for workplace mental health. www.cdc.gov/workplacehealthpromotion
2. **Mental Health America (MHA) Workplace Program** - Supports employers in building mentally healthy workplaces through research and training. www.mhanational.org/workplace
3. **National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI)** - Offers workplace mental health guides and employer toolkits. www.nami.org
4. **Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA)** - Provides resources, training, and grants for workplace mental health and substance use support. www.samhsa.gov
5. **The Trevor Project** - Provides crisis intervention and mental health support specifically for LGBTQ+ young people, including workplace inclusion resources. www.thetrevorproject.org
6. **U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC)** - Provides guidelines on employer responsibilities under the ADA regarding mental health and substance use. www.eeoc.gov
7. **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** - A free, 24/7 confidential support line for people in emotional distress or experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis. www.988lifeline.org or dial 988

08

WORKPLACE WELLBEING ASSESSMENT

Use this Workplace Wellbeing Assessment to gauge your workplace's current mental health support practices and identify areas for growth:

1. Does your workplace have a written mental health policy?
(Yes/No/Partially)
2. Are leaders trained to recognize and support mental health concerns?
(Yes/No/Partially)
3. Do individuals have access to an EAP or mental health resources?
(Yes/No/Partially)
4. How often does your workplace engage in mental health awareness initiatives? (Yes/No/Partially)
5. Is psychological safety prioritized in your workplace culture?
(Yes/No/Partially)
6. Has your workplace addressed how AI and technology may be impacting wellbeing? (Yes/No/Partially)
7. Do you collect and act on wellbeing data (surveys, pulse checks, utilization rates)? (Yes/No/Partially)

NEXT STEPS

- ✓ If you answered "No" or "Partially" to any questions, consider implementing relevant strategies from this toolkit.
- ✓ Use these responses to create an action plan for workplace mental health improvements.
- ✓ Schedule a consultation with Joelle Monaco Consulting to develop a tailored wellbeing strategy for your workplace.

Prioritizing mental health and wellbeing in the workplace is not just a nice thing to do; it's a strategic advantage. Workplaces that cultivate a supportive, open, and flexible environment empower individuals to thrive, resulting in increased productivity, workplace satisfaction, and sustainable success.

PEOPLE → PROCESSES → PERFORMANCE

09

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Thank you for exploring this toolkit and your commitment to supporting mental health and wellbeing in the workplace. By engaging with these resources, you are already taking the most important step, the first one.

In 2026, the workplace looks different from what it did just a year ago. Artificial intelligence, hybrid and remote work, generational shifts, and evolving stressors have changed what individuals need and what they expect from the places they work. The workplaces that will thrive are those that recognize that wellbeing is not a perk, but rather a foundation.

Creating a workplace where mental health is prioritized, conversations are part of the workplace, and support is available and accessible doesn't happen overnight. Your action moves your workplace closer to a culture where individuals can thrive.

I encourage you to start where you are, take small but meaningful steps, and continue to grow your efforts with intention. Your leadership can create a lasting impact, not just in performance metrics but in individuals' lives.

Let's build workplaces that support wellbeing and elevate it as a shared value and collective strength.

“*When we create a culture that prioritizes mental health and wellbeing, we don't just change workplaces, we change lives.*”

Joelle Monaco
President, Joelle Monaco Consulting