



MIND MATTERS

Rotary
RID 3030 India

Action Group on
Mental Health
Initiatives

MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF THE DISTRICT ACTION GROUP ON MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

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EDITORIAL



Mental Health at Work

People spend one third of their life in work and hence work defines them in most basic ways. Psychologists are interested in how the work environment and culture impacts their mental health; as well as how people behave in the work place and keep themselves motivated and energised at all times to give optimum output. Organisational dynamics is ever changing and hence has implications for attitudinal and behavioural adaptations which strains the human capacities. **Studies say that the work place is the highest source of stress and disease, besides positive achievement, job satisfaction and success!**

Whatever the nature of work, whether it's the organised, unorganised sector, shops and establishments, services or the agricultural sector in rural areas, mental health concerns are specific to the work. Farmers suicides in India is a major concern. **The Central Government and State Government run companies in India, have comprehensive health schemes which covers all medical specialities, including Psychiatry (but not psychological counselling).** The private owned companies are not mandated by any government law. People are left to fend for themselves. It depends on the vision of the leader to introduce welfare measures. **Indian unorganised sector constitutes anywhere between 85% to 93% of the total workforce and contributes 50% of the GDP! Despite this, there are no concrete provisions for security and welfare.**

Organisations need to create psychologically healthy work-places to create win-win situations, and experience the tremendous benefits of a happy healthy and well taken care of human resource.

The subject is complex and we have tried to bring an overview, besides highlighting a few important aspects. Our contributors are experienced and eminent persons who volunteer to write with us.

Rita

-Rita Aggarwal.

RI PRESIDENT SHEKHAR MEHTA

VISITS RID 3030 IN AMRAVATI ON 19th DEC 2021



RI President Shekhar Mehta at the DAGMHI stall. He was welcomed by DAGMHI members. DG Ramesh Meher, DGN Asha Venugopal, Convenor Kishore Kedia, DGND RajendraKhurana and others look on. (Photo feature on last page)

District Action Group on Mental Health Initiatives (DAGMHI) put up a Stall at the Conference venue to showcase its work and its newsletter MIND MATTERS. New members were registered and a DAGMHI lapel pin was gifted to them. The stall was managed by DAGMHI Director IPP Pankaj Agrawal and members R. Ann Sugandha Deshmukh and Gunjan Hantondkar.

ROTARY CLUB OF ACHALPUR

PRESIDENT ELECT RTN. MANISH Khandelwal

It was indeed refreshing to interview the energetic and enthusiastic Rotarian Manish Khandelwal, President Elect, Rotary Club of Achalpur.

Rtn. Manish is a person who is committed to betterment of the society. He has been involved in the world of Finance since long. He is the Managing Director of three financial management companies. He is ably supported by his talented wife and three children in his business.

He starts his day on a positive note, playing badminton with his group of friends. Yoga and meditation are an integral part of his mornings. **He has been involved with The Art of Living since 2004. He says that he never misses out on weekly 'Sudarshankriya'. I am sure that this is the secret to his happy and cheerful attitude.**

When asked about his personal strategies for stress management, he said that he never gets stressed. His dream is to empower and work towards betterment of millions of Indians in every possible way. His passion for his work and Rotary not only keeps him busy but also leaves no time for stress and anxiety.

According to him DAGMHI is a much needed initiative, considering mental health issues in our society. He feels that there should be more projects focused towards Rotarians and their families. It is his belief that a strong and financially secure Rotarian can be better placed to help others as well. He believes that we Rotarians should help each other in achieving abundance in our profession and our life as well.

-Dr. Shantala Bhole,
Rotary Club of Nagpur Vision, Director, DAGMHI.



CO-EDITORS



Dr. Aabha Pimprikar,
Dentist & Entrepreneur,
President DAGMHI,
RC Nasik Grapecity.



Dr. Geetanjali Jha,
Homeopath, Counsellor,
Chairman-Reiki Council
of India. Bhopal.



MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

JOB BURNOUT

Psychological studies indicate that wherever one may work, demanding schedules result into job burnout even in young professionals. **Burnout is a state of emotional, physical, and mental exhaustion caused by excessive and prolonged stress.** It occurs when an employee feels overwhelmed, emotionally drained, and unable to meet constant demands. **The three key dimensions of Burnout are -an overwhelming exhaustion, feelings of cynicism and detachment from the job, and a sense of ineffectiveness and lack of accomplishment. It has been officially recognized by Psychiatry (ICD 10).**

Job burnout can result from various factors, including:

Unclear job expectations: If you're unclear about the degree of authority you have or what your supervisor or others expect from you, you're not likely to feel comfortable at work. Post covid many youngsters are experienced this due to online work.

Extremes of activity: When a job is monotonous or chaotic, you need constant energy to remain focused, which can lead to fatigue and job burnout.

Lack of social support: If you feel isolated at work and in your personal life, you might feel more stressed.

Work-life imbalance: If your work takes up so much of your time and effort that you don't have the energy to spend time with your family and friends, you might burn out quickly.

Try the following techniques to minimize the impact of job burnout:

Evaluate your options. Discuss specific concerns with your supervisor. Working together can change expectations or reach compromises or solutions.

Seek support. Whether you reach out to co-workers, friends or loved ones, support and collaboration might help you cope. Sharing helps to build the team spirit and morale.

Relaxation methods: Explore programs that can help with stress such as yoga, meditation, Art of living, Vipassana, or Mindfulness.

Exercise: Regular physical activity can help you to better deal with stress. Start jogging or brisk walks.

Dr. Yogesh Deshpande
Professor of Psychology
VNIT, Nagpur

WORK LIFE BALANCE: The elusive golden mean



Good life means a healthy balance between work, pleasure, moral living, contribution to society and spirituality. This healthy balance is the responsibility of each individual brought through proper thought and decision and choices of his own life.

Life is not only work and all work is not life. **According to ancient Indian wisdom, there are four goals of human life- Dharma (ethical living, service to society, doing good to others beyond self); Artha (economic activity, material acquisitions); Kama (sensory pleasure, enjoyment); and Moksha (spiritual enlightenment).** Each one has its own importance and value.

Rising stress and life style health disorders, such as high blood pressure, diabetes, heart ailments, burnouts, depression, anxiety, suicides, higher divorce rates, all indicate an imbalance in life. Once the balance is lost, peace and harmony is lost.

Psychologically, well-being would mean a sense of satisfaction and contentment at work front and at the personal front, at every stage of life. A sense of achievement and fulfilment in both areas would lead to good mental health. **Each one has to introspect deeply, regularly, life's goals, ambitions, needs, desires, and then prioritise and make choices. Life is dynamic and ever changing and one needs to shift gears to adapt to the situational challenges.**

As an example, my Father, a Gold medallist mining engineer from IIT (Indian School of Mines), Dhanbad, Jharkhand, gave priority to his family needs and responsibilities, denying his career promotions and prospects. Money was always a means and never an end for him. His values and philosophy was unwaveringly clear to him. Late Dr. A.P.J. Abdul Kalam, a scientist par excellence and Former President of India, made work his mission in life and hence sacrificed his personal life. His goals and passion was crystal clear.

There are no objective standards or rules to maintaining work life balance. Nor is it a 50/50 distribution of time spent on work and personal life. Each one has to subjectively define the balance and implement it. For many it is neither easy to define, nor to implement!

Rita Aggarwal,
Consultant Psychologist.

WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH - An Overview

Mental health ranges from wellbeing to minor and short duration symptoms to panic attacks to depression. **According to a survey led by WHO, depression and anxiety leads to decreased productivity and costs US\$1 Trillion in global economy.** For every US\$ 1 put into scaled up treatment for common mental disorders, there is a return of US\$ 4 in improved health and productivity.

RISK FACTORS AT WORK PLACE:

Organization culture: Negative environment at workplace leads to physical and mental health issues, substance abuse, absenteeism and these lead to lost productivity. Factors identified are - The Boss; inadequate health and safety policies, fixed / prolonged working hours; leadership style, such as lack of communication, poor management practices / decision making policies; coworkers -lack of cohesiveness and support; harassment and bullying; recognition and rewards.

Personal competency and efficacy: A maximum number of hours is spent at the workplace. The person's job skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills, ability to maintain work-life balance all contribute to health. If a person is not fit mentally, he or she will un-inspire others and affect the productivity directly or indirectly.

Good practices to protect and promote mental health at workplace:

Restructuring organizations - change in workplace culture, flexible working hours, extra paid time off, rewards, participation in decision making.

Implementing and enforcing health and safety policies.

Mental health interventions and well-being strategies that covers prevention, early identification, support and rehabilitation.

'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 and not be discriminated against, and should be provided with support in the workplace.'

'WHO's Global Plan of Action on Worker's Health (2008-2017) and Mental Health Action Plan (2013-2030) outline relevant principles, objectives and implementation strategies to promote good mental health in the workplace.' WHO says "Workplaces that promote mental health and support people with mental disorders are more likely to reduce absenteeism, increase productivity and benefit from associated economic gains."

Dr. Aabha Pimprikar,
President, DAGMHI.





MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

HOUSE WORK – LABOUR OF LOVE?

When we talk about workplace mental health, we must discuss house work too, which majorly is entirely and single-handedly shouldered by women and strangely considered below dignity. Professional homemakers or stay at home moms, slog throughout the day, rarely get a holiday and her work mostly goes unrecognised and unrewarded.

Working women face the double burden of managing career and home and face stress multi-tasking without relief. During the pandemic under the work-from-home policy, most women with careers faced tremendous stress and fatigue. They were exhausted catering to the demands of the kids and the husband who worked from home too! Many women reported that they were taken for granted and it was difficult to explain to the family that 'they were not on holiday at home but working'!

All women face the work related issues like any other worker. They have their battles to fight and the pandemic has increased the intensity. Beside housework, they also manage finances, manage the kids as well as the temper tantrums of family members! *No wonder anxiety, depression and psycho-somatic disorders, like backaches and joint pains are more among women.* These need to be addressed by women and the family by spending quality time together and sharing work as well as feelings. Those who have watched 'The great Indian kitchen', will be able to understand the repercussions and empathize. *Let us nurture the nurturer.*

Dr. Aabha Pimprikar,
President DAGMHI.

POSH ACT AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

In December 2013 a landmark act came into force in India: *'Prevention of Sexual Harassment at Workplace act,' which is known as POSH act 2013.*

The act gives protection to women who go through the experience of sexual harassment at work. When the percentage of working women is increasing day by day in formal as well as informal work sector, the likelihood of women being harassed sexually is also increasing. POSH act covers the definition of Sexual Harassment in which the different angles of harassment are described in detail.

The patriarchal mindset of society which considers women/girls as second to men/boys is the root cause of sexual harassment. Further to the patriarchal mindset, the men at the position of power tend to manipulate, harass and abuse women. From childhood girls are taught to be docile and they are expected to 'listen to their fathers, brothers, or in later life to their husbands,' so the feeling of inferiority gets ingrained in the girls from the very beginning.

It is also observed that in case of sexual harassment, the society or the surrounding people by and large blame the woman instantly, 'Oh! She must have done something,' or 'Oh! She is always wearing short clothes which attract men's attention,' and so on. But the people fail to notice and understand the fact that the clothes etc. are just the superficial things, can we ever conclude that a woman wearing a saree or a Punjabi dress will never get harassed?

The POSH act gives importance to the impact of sexual harassment experience on woman rather than the intention of the person, 'Oh! It was just a joke,' or 'You look sexy,' such comments may seem harmless to a man but a woman finds them offending. Therefore, the act considers the impact more than the intention.



Ruta Pandit
Industrial Psychologist, Certified POSH Act trainer & Facilitator.

MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK (UK)

Since the Mental health act in the UK, workplace mental health is also seen as something very important. There are laws put in place to protect those who have mental health issues, such as the *'Equality Act 2010'* which states that a mental health issue can be considered a disability and the law protects these people by making sure employers do not discriminate against them and consider making reasonable adjustments. One example might include, allowing the employee more rest breaks during work. *In 2017, the government set out core standards for the workplaces* to follow such as putting into use a mental health at work plan that helps increase good mental health and offers support available and regularly supervises employee mental health and wellbeing by understanding available data and familiarising themselves with the risk factors.

Avendano et al found that a mother that gets quality paid maternity leave would have a reduced score of 0.38 points in the Euro-D depressive symptom scale in old age. In the UK, mothers have the right of up to 52 weeks of maternity leave and they have this right from the first day of starting a job. The statutory maternity-leave law states that the mothers must take a compulsory 2 weeks of this leave. They then might also be entitled to maternity pay whilst taking the leave. It is a massive weight lifted off the woman's shoulders knowing that her place at work is protected by the law, and there is no pressure for her to return before she is ready as it is illegal for an employer to dismiss their employee if the reason is linked to pregnancy and maternity. *With workplaces giving their employees these maternity leave benefits, it guarantees a mother a better sense of wellbeing not only for the weeks of having her baby -but to carry on for years to come.*

Thiyara Bhandara,
Psychology Student,
Queen Mary University of London (UK).



MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

360 DEGREE REVIEW

Working in a top management position for a Fortune 500 company based in Canada, leading a business vertical that was bringing in USD 2 Billion (approx. Rs 15000 Cr.) worth revenue every year, I felt that I was successful in every aspect of organisational management. I had a dedicated team, working at odd hours to cover the requirements of all time zones across the globe. Our results were superb and we were being rewarded with bonuses beyond expectations.

One day, our Head of Human Resources informed that the Top Management team would be subjected to a 360-degree Review. Well, what was that? ***She explained that it would be an appraisal of the Leadership team done by - some of the direct reporting staff, a couple of Peers, a couple of very junior team members, and the boss! Hence the term 360-degree review.***



The process entailed a detailed sets of questionnaires covering all possible aspects of a "Boss" – technical ability, leadership qualities, human relationships, decision making ability, risk management ability, coaching and mentoring skills, personal biases/ likes and dislikes, ethics, safety consciousness, willingness to lead from the front, supporting staff at tough times, blame culture etc.! ***They were advised to allocate at least 4 hours to fill the format! Assuming an average of 9 persons providing their inputs, each "boss" was receiving an equivalent of 36 hours of assessment!***

A week later came the feedback by the HR specialist. To my astonishment I had many areas of strengths but also many areas of weaknesses! My staff felt that I was opinionated at times and made my mind before receiving their inputs. They considered me to be fair, knowledgeable, and many other attributes but the key areas of improvement hit me hard!

Collecting my ego, I faced my staff members, went through their feedback with an open mind. It was a splendid experience! I requested them to mentor me with my undesired behavioural traits. ***The open process made each one feel empowered resulting in improved working relationships. A win-win result for the team and company!!***

Rajeev Aggarwal,
Management Consultant, Nagpur.

Arti-tude!

Manage your Attitude with Arty tools!

SELF REGULATION CARDS

Work scenario has changed drastically post pandemic. Some challenges like, long distance commuting and being on the toes had reduced, while some challenges of managing work from home and multitasking had increased.

For maintaining our mental health, the need for checking it on our own and time to time for our loved ones has become very important. We need to self regulate ourselves and be consistent; we need to follow discipline and structures in various areas of our life. There is need for work-life balance as our mind is prone to burnouts. There is a need to realign our priorities and shift them consciously. There is a need to take breaks in between the workflow and realign ourselves too. Artitude promotes developing healthy attitude by using arty tools! Artitude can be designed and used for various purposes. This time we bring self-regulation cards! These cards serve you like gentle reminders as a nudge or an alarm showing us the right direction and choice we need to make. As we all are caught up in the workflow, stress may subtly be triggered, and we may just passively slide into unhealthy habits and unconscious routine. These cards can help us be on track and follow a mind full way of managing our mental health.

You can take a printout of the cards or make it on your own and keep it on your work desk! They are sure to help!

Kavita Saraf,
Life coach, Soft skills trainer, Art Therapist



GOOGLE : INNOVATIVE WELL BEING PRACTICES



One of the most influential MNC, Google offers free nutritious food and beverages to all its employees and also conducts cooking classes for the workers to learn too! They offer gym facilities on the site and the services of massage therapists to the workers. ***On-site medical staff is available.*** There are "death-benefits", for the spouse of the deceased such as 50% of the salary for the next ten years. Google provides with an 18-22 week paid maternity leave to its female employees and 7 weeks paternity leave to the male staff too. ***The workers are also encouraged to pursue their hobbies while working, with an 80% work and 20% play ratio policy.*** A whopping discount awaits the Google employees for mega shows and events for their personal lives, in addition to which 20 hours of work time to volunteer every year are encouraged as well. They get opportunities to work hands-on with the future state-of-the-art technology. A free laundry service is straight at their disposal. They can also give themselves a free grooming haircut within the workplace itself and pets, such as dogs and cats aren't prohibited at all. ***Certain adventure activities, like swimming pool, rock climbing, roller hockey, etc. are available to de-stress and enjoy recreation, in order to recuperate from work.*** Free shuttle busses within and around the campus are also provided to the employees, for their comfort and ease.

Other global companies like ***Accenture, offer employee assistance programs where the stressors can be discussed in private and kept confidential.*** Microsoft holds Zumba classes for its employees to control weight management. A specific company they say, even goes on to pay its employees to sleep so that they may rest up and recharge themselves from work! There could be myriad ways by which MNCs can keep their employees at optimal levels of well-being and holistic health, for optimum productivity and success.

Pratham Golcha,
Author, UN Facilitator, Student (Mass media),
Nagpur.



MENTAL HEALTH AT WORK

WELLNESS INITIATIVES, ARE THEY KEEPING WELL?

What makes a good organization great? The answer is about many thoughts, feelings and actions that the organization is engaged on a regular basis with passion. **Wellness drives among other initiatives is a very comprehensive approach to organizational development. It has three major aspects. Health, happiness and productivity.** Health cover is a common practice at least in government and some good private organizations. Productivity is a beloved topic of many, so I will like to pick the second and not so popular aspect that is happiness. **'A happy employee is a productive employee'. A small country like Bhutan has been at the forefront of bringing the issue of happiness to the boardrooms.**

Let us see how it has helped some good organizations to become great. Some of their epic practices include:

Accenture: provides employee assistance programs like counselling for managing stress, substance abuse, anxiety and depression. Employees have an access to Teladoc services, where they can ask a physician 24/7. **Asana:** Provides employees a place for taking a nap while on work, so that they can rest, re-charge and de-stress.

Draper: This manufacturing company holds 10-week weight loss challenges that include cash prizes and weekly gift cards as well as regular walking contests to keep things fun and competitive. They also offers onsite Zumba and Weight Watchers classes and holds annual health fairs filled with fun activities.

Intuit: This software company's "Fit for Life" program is about meditation and mindfulness classes offered as reimbursable expenses as well as incentives for engaging in stress-reduction habits, like taking a walk, practicing breathing exercises, or listening to calming music. The company's website has mindfulness resources, and "mindful moment" tips on whiteboards in the conference rooms. **Google's** wellness practices are well-known.

My workplace **Institute of Management Technology (IMT) Nagpur** provided me with a free facility for accommodating my child while I was at work in my office, just adjacent to the building in the same premises. The kind of peace of mind with which I worked cannot be put in words.

Dr. Smita Singh (Dabholkar)

Associate Professor, IMT, Nagpur



MENTAL HARASSMENT



I was approached by one of the largest global mining companies, with operations in over 35 countries, to lead a major transformation program (>\$100 Mn). **I hesitated initially, as this organization held a poor reputation for diversity, social responsibility, and work-culture.** However, during the interview process, senior leaders convinced me that the organization is on a mission to improve these areas and I had been identified as a candidate who can be a harbinger of change.

Upon joining, I faced strong resistance, in the form of non-verbal aggression or mental harassment (form of bullying), when applying my values and challenging the existing culture. I was advised by team-mates and leaders to "put my head down and do what I am told." **Advice soon turned into hostile directives and collective condemnation.** I realized that while we stood for the same values, our definitions were quite different.

Respect for them was gained by the tenure in the company rather than through care for the team. Integrity was attained by complying to archaic systems, processes instead of speaking up. Diversity was defined by achieving gender-equality stats without paying any heed to the implied diversity in ethnicity, culture, or age.

Instead of resenting this leadership style and attempting to change either myself or them, I collaborated with champions in the company who had the same value definitions. This effort paid dividends as we delivered positive outcomes and changed conventional thinking along the way.

Albert Einstein once said "Great spirits have always encountered violent opposition from mediocre minds. The mediocre mind is incapable of understanding the man who refuses to bow blindly to conventional prejudices and chooses instead to express his opinions courageously and honestly."

Divya Bhardwaj,

Project Manager, Australia

STRESSES OF A LEADER - My story as a CEO

While at the helm of corporate affairs over a span of two decades, life was very challenging and also rewarding. Externally it may be perceived as a job with high wages, great perks, hobnobbing with the Who is Who, fancy hotels, first-class travel, while staff members slog. Let me clear the myths and share the stresses of being a CEO.

Expectations of a CEO are to make the company grow in size and profits, have a happy team with low staff attrition, have ethical work culture and good company reputation. And, the proverbial buck stops at the CEO's table.

As the world dynamics evolve continuously, we see major revolutions in communication, market reach, travel, connectivity, and the speed of response. I understood that my organisation can succeed if it adapts to change, to suit the present, and is prepared for the future. **The CEO has to drive the vision and the change.**

It's very lonely at the top. I would meet with my top team members regularly, to discuss problems needing attention. After hearing them out, the onus of approving the right solution was at my risk. There were times when some managers deliberately misguided me for their selfish reasons, and I had to strain hard to identify such persons. **If the results were good, the credit was given to the team, while any failure would be squarely mine.**

Internally to our organisation, we had to change our work methods, adjust organisational structure to suit new business requirements, hire new talent and weed out non-performing staff, identify unethical practices adopted by unscrupulous employees, and internal politics.

Externally, our client base had to kept positively engaged to keep pace with their needs. Settling contractual claims was amongst the most difficult issues. Then came our competitors. **Hostile corporate wars are well known, and when attacks happened, responses had to be quick and accurate.**

I missed family time, social and cultural events, and of course, a lot of sleep. I never had time off due to reasons stated above. I had to be available across global time zones. In summary, one can see, that being **a leader has to be on his toes 24 X 7, 365 days a year. I had my ways of dealing with stresses, to avoid adverse impact on my health and well-being.**

Rajeev Aggarwal

Management Consultant, Nagpur.





R I PRESIDENT'S VISIT AT AMRAVATI DIST 3030



DAGMHI Director IPP Pankaj Agarwal handing MIND MATTERS to Shekharji. DG Ramesh Meher, DGN Asha Venugopal, DGND Rajendra Khurana, R. Ann Sugandha look on.



DAGMHI members Gunjan Hantondkar and Pankaj Agarwal in conversation with dignitaries.



DGN Asha Venugopal pins Shekharji with DAGMHI lapel pin.



DG Ramesh Meher at the DAGMHI stall with members.

HUMOUR



"Mary, I've got meetings all day so I'm going to be unable to have my scheduled happiness moment at 3:01. You have it for me, OK?"



"Aside from the people, the hours, the work, the pay, the stress and the migraines, this is the best job I ever had."

DAGMHI STALL AT DIST. AWARDS 4TH DEC 2021



IPDG ShabbirShakir appreciating MIND MATTERS at DAGMHI stall with the Board members.



Rita Aggarwal pins DG Meher with DAGMHI lapel pin. Directors Kalpana Date, Pratiksha Mayee and Dr. Jerestin Watchmaker President, RC Nagpur look on.



DAGMHI lapel pin

(Those interested in becoming members of DAGMHI can contact us)
Dr. Aabha Pimprikar
President DAGMHI
9922825999
Devang Shah
Treasurer DAGMHI
7020081613