

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Employee Chronic Illness Support Framework

A Policy and Practice Guide for People Managers

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

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Programme Overview

This programme addresses the critical gap between formal disability policies and the day-to-day realities of supporting employees managing chronic health conditions. Participants will gain practical tools and a compassionate framework to foster an inclusive environment where employees feel understood and can thrive professionally.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Understand the distinct needs of employees with chronic illnesses compared to general disability frameworks, recognizing why tailored support is essential for retention and well-being.
- ✓ Identify and effectively evaluate common workplace adjustments, learning to balance employee needs with organizational feasibility and fairness.
- ✓ Develop a structured yet flexible approach for regular, supportive check-ins with employees managing chronic conditions to foster open communication and proactive problem-solving.
- ✓ Navigate performance management conversations with sensitivity and fairness when chronic illness is a contributing factor, ensuring both employee support and business objectives are met.
- ✓ Grasp the nuances of maintaining confidentiality and ensuring fairness within the team when accommodating employees with chronic illnesses, thereby building trust and preventing resentment.
- ✓ Apply evidence-based strategies to address the Indian context's specific challenges, such as stigma and disclosure fears, creating a more supportive and understanding workplace culture.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for all Human Resources professionals and People Managers who are responsible for employee well-being and performance within their organisations.

Programme Content

1. Understanding Chronic Illness Support vs. Disability Policy

Many organisations possess comprehensive disability policies, yet these often fall short of addressing the unique, fluctuating nature of chronic illnesses. This session will delineate the differences, highlighting how chronic conditions require ongoing, adaptable support rather than a one-time accommodation. We will explore why a proactive, empathetic approach is vital for retaining valuable talent and fostering a sense of belonging. Understanding these distinctions empowers managers to move beyond compliance towards genuine support.

 **Activity: Group discussion: Sharing experiences of policy application for chronic conditions.**

2. Evaluating Common Adjustment Requests

Employees with chronic illnesses may require various adjustments, from flexible hours to modified workloads or workspace changes. This section will provide a practical framework for evaluating these requests, considering both the employee's needs and the operational requirements of the business. We will discuss how to assess feasibility, explore alternatives, and make informed decisions that support the employee without compromising team productivity. Learning to manage these requests effectively ensures fairness and promotes a supportive work environment.

 **Activity: Case study analysis: Evaluating different adjustment scenarios.**

3. Framework for Regular Employee Check-Ins

Consistent, compassionate communication is key when supporting employees with chronic conditions. This session introduces a structured yet adaptable framework for regular check-ins, moving beyond formal performance reviews to foster open dialogue about well-being and work. We will explore how to initiate these conversations, listen actively, and collaboratively identify potential challenges or needs before they escalate. Establishing this routine builds trust and demonstrates genuine care, crucial for employee morale and sustained productivity.

 **Activity: Role-playing: Practicing empathetic check-in conversations.**

4. Performance Management with Compassion

Addressing performance concerns when an employee's chronic illness may be a factor requires a delicate balance of empathy and accountability. This module provides strategies for navigating these sensitive conversations, focusing on understanding the impact of the condition while setting clear expectations. We will discuss how to differentiate between performance dips due to illness and other factors, and how to implement supportive performance improvement plans. The goal is to ensure fairness for all employees while providing the necessary support for those managing health challenges.

 **Activity: Small group exercise: Developing compassionate performance feedback.**

5. Confidentiality and Team Fairness

Managing an employee's chronic illness involves safeguarding their privacy while ensuring fairness and transparency with the rest of the team. This section delves into the critical aspects of confidentiality, exploring what information can be shared, with whom, and when. We will discuss strategies for addressing potential team concerns or perceptions of inequity, fostering an environment of understanding and mutual respect. Balancing individual needs with team cohesion is essential for a harmonious and productive workplace.

 **Activity: Q&A session: Addressing specific confidentiality and fairness dilemmas.**

6. Navigating Indian Workplace Realities: Stigma and Disclosure

In the Indian context, societal stigma surrounding chronic illnesses and fears about disclosure can significantly impact employees' willingness to seek support. This module equips managers with culturally sensitive approaches to encourage open communication and reduce disclosure fears. We will explore how to create a safe space for employees, challenge underlying biases, and promote an inclusive culture where health is viewed holistically. Understanding these nuances is pivotal in building a truly supportive and psychologically safe work environment for everyone.

 **Activity: Facilitated discussion: Strategies for mitigating stigma in the workplace.**

Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Develop and communicate a clear internal guide for managers on supporting employees with chronic illnesses.	HR	Week 1	Ensure the guide includes practical examples and addresses common scenarios.
Incorporate modules on chronic illness support into existing manager training programs.	Learning & Development	Month 1	Focus on practical skills for check-ins and adjustment evaluations.
Launch an awareness campaign within the organisation about managing chronic health conditions at work.	Internal Communications	Week 2	Emphasize empathy, confidentiality, and available support resources.
Establish a confidential point of contact within HR for employees to discuss health-related concerns.	HR	Month 1	Ensure this person is trained in empathetic listening and privacy protocols.
Review and update existing accommodation request procedures to explicitly include chronic illness considerations.	HR	Month 2	Streamline the process to be both efficient and supportive for employees.
Encourage senior leadership to visibly champion an inclusive culture that supports employees with chronic health needs.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Visible support from the top can significantly reduce stigma and encourage disclosure.

About Manas



Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Founder & Consulting Psychologist | Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist | PhD | 18+ Years

Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma brings 18+ years of applied psychology to corporate wellness. She has worked with SBI, educational institutions, and corporate teams across India. Her evidence-based approach combines CBT, mindfulness, and culturally contextualised psychology for measurable outcomes. She is the creator of the Performance FOMO Index™ and the High-Functioning Distress Framework™.

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A MSME-registered organisation dedicated to evidence-based mental wellness.

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Disclaimer: This document has been prepared by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma – Founder & Consulting Psychologist (Applied, Organizational & Behavioural Psychologist, PhD, 18+ years), Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling (UDYAM-MP-10-0120839). Content is for programme overview and educational purposes only. Nothing herein constitutes legal advice regarding POSH Act compliance – organisations should consult qualified legal counsel for specific legal guidance. For clinical or psychological support, please reach out to the Manas Team for personalised guidance, or consult a qualified Psychiatrist or licensed mental health professional. © 2026 Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling. All rights reserved. Confidential – prepared specifically for the named organisation. For queries: manu@manas365.com | +91 99818 13224