

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Gender and Mental Health in Indian Workplaces

Creating Equitable Wellbeing for Women, Men, and Non-Binary Employees

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839



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Programme Overview

Mental health experiences and expressions can differ significantly based on gender, and Indian workplaces often overlook these nuances, leading to varied consequences for employees. This programme aims to equip organisations with the understanding and tools to create a more supportive and equitable environment for everyone's mental wellbeing.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Participants will learn to identify how societal gender norms influence mental health experiences and expressions, enabling them to foster more empathetic workplace interactions.
- ✓ Attendees will gain insight into the unique mental health challenges faced by women in Indian workplaces and discover practical strategies to enhance their support systems.
- ✓ Participants will understand the barriers preventing men from seeking mental health support in India and learn actionable organisational approaches to encourage help-seeking behaviours.
- ✓ The programme will provide guidance on creating inclusive mental health support for gender minority employees within the context of conservative Indian work environments.
- ✓ Attendees will acquire knowledge on designing and implementing gender-responsive wellbeing programmes that cater to diverse employee needs and experiences.
- ✓ Participants will be able to develop strategies for embedding gender sensitivity into broader organisational policies and practices to promote holistic mental wellness.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for HR professionals, Diversity & Inclusion (DEI) leaders, all levels of management, and senior leadership teams seeking to build a more mentally healthy and inclusive workplace.

Programme Content

1. How Gender Shapes Mental Health Experience and Expression

Societal expectations and gender roles profoundly influence how individuals perceive, experience, and express their mental wellbeing. In Indian contexts, these influences can manifest in distinct ways, often leading to different patterns of distress and help-seeking behaviours. Understanding these nuances is crucial for creating an environment where all employees feel safe to acknowledge their struggles and seek support without fear of judgment. This session explores these gendered dimensions, equipping leaders with the awareness to foster more empathetic and responsive workplace cultures.

 **Activity:** Small group discussion on observed gendered communication styles related to stress.

2. Women's Mental Health at Work in India – Specific Pressures and Supports

Women in Indian workplaces often navigate a complex interplay of professional demands, societal expectations, and unique personal responsibilities, which can significantly impact their mental health. These pressures can range from work-life balance challenges to experiences of bias and discrimination, often leading to heightened stress and anxiety. This section will delve into these specific challenges and explore evidence-based strategies that organisations can implement to provide effective support, fostering a more equitable and nurturing environment for women employees.

 **Activity:** Case study analysis of common workplace stressors for women.

3. Men's Mental Health at Work – Why Indian Men Do Not Seek Help and What Organisations Can Do

Traditional notions of masculinity in India often discourage men from expressing vulnerability or seeking help for mental health concerns, creating significant barriers to support. This reluctance can lead to unaddressed stress, anxiety, and other emotional difficulties, impacting both personal lives and professional performance. This session will examine the underlying reasons for this reticence and provide practical, actionable strategies for organisations to cultivate a culture where men feel empowered and safe to prioritise their mental wellbeing and access necessary resources.

 **Activity:** Brainstorming session on destigmatizing mental health conversations for men.

4. Supporting Gender Minority Employees in Conservative Indian Workplaces

Gender minority employees, including transgender and non-binary individuals, often face unique challenges and potential discrimination in conservative Indian workplace settings. These can include lack of understanding, social exclusion, and limited access to appropriate support systems, all of which can negatively affect their mental health. This session will focus on building awareness, fostering allyship, and implementing inclusive practices that ensure psychological safety and belonging for all gender identities within the organisation.

 **Activity: Role-playing exercise on inclusive language and supportive interactions.**

5. Gender-Responsive Wellbeing Programme Design

Designing effective employee wellbeing programmes requires a conscious effort to address the diverse mental health needs influenced by gender. A one-size-fits-all approach can inadvertently overlook or exacerbate existing inequalities. This session will guide participants through the principles of gender-responsive programme design, ensuring that initiatives are inclusive, culturally sensitive, and address the specific stressors and support requirements of all employees across different gender identities.

 **Activity: Group activity to outline key components of a gender-sensitive wellbeing initiative.**

6. Integrating Gender Sensitivity into Workplace Policies and Practices

Moving beyond individual programmes, this section focuses on embedding gender sensitivity into the fabric of the organisation. This involves reviewing and revising policies related to recruitment, promotion, leave, and flexible working to ensure they are equitable and supportive of diverse gender experiences. Furthermore, it explores how to foster a leadership culture that champions inclusivity and actively addresses gender-based mental health disparities, creating sustainable change.

 **Activity: Developing a checklist for gender-inclusive policy review.**



Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Conduct an internal assessment of current gender-related mental health support gaps.	HR/DEI Team	Week 1	Utilise anonymous surveys and focus groups to gather employee feedback on gendered experiences of stress and support.
Develop and disseminate inclusive communication guidelines regarding mental health conversations.	HR	Month 1	Focus on language that is gender-neutral and encourages open dialogue, providing examples for managers.
Review existing HR policies (e.g., leave, flexible work) through a gender-lens.	HR	Week 2	Identify and address any policies that may disproportionately impact employees of specific genders or gender identities.
Pilot a gender-responsive mental wellbeing workshop for managers.	HR/External Facilitator	Month 1	Focus on equipping managers with skills to identify signs of distress and offer appropriate support sensitively.
Establish employee resource groups (ERGs) or safe spaces for dialogue on gender and mental health.	HR/Employee Volunteers	Month 2	Ensure these groups are inclusive and provide a platform for sharing experiences and seeking peer support.
Integrate gender sensitivity training into the onboarding process for all new hires.	HR/Learning & Development	Quarter 1	Ensure foundational understanding of inclusivity and mental health support from day one.

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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