

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Manager as Mental Health First Responder

Training Guide for People Managers

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

UDYAM-MP-10-0120839



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Programme Overview

This programme equips managers with the essential skills to identify and respond effectively to mental well-being challenges within their teams. By understanding your role as a frontline support, you can foster a healthier and more productive work environment for everyone.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Participants will learn to recognise subtle signs of distress in team members, understanding why early detection is crucial for timely support and preventing escalation.
- ✓ Participants will gain confidence in initiating supportive conversations about mental well-being, learning practical communication strategies and common pitfalls to avoid.
- ✓ Participants will clarify the boundaries of their role in supporting team members, understanding what actions are helpful versus those that might be unhelpful or inappropriate.
- ✓ Participants will become familiar with available organisational and external resources, learning the appropriate steps for referring individuals to professional help.
- ✓ Participants will explore strategies for managing their own mental well-being while supporting others, recognising the importance of self-care in this demanding role.
- ✓ Participants will develop an action plan for integrating these newly acquired skills into their daily management practices, ensuring sustained positive impact.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for all people managers, team leads, and HR business partners who play a critical role in supporting the well-being of their teams.

Programme Content

1. Recognising Distress Signals in Your Team

Subtle shifts in behaviour can be early indicators of someone struggling with their mental well-being. This section focuses on developing your observational skills to notice changes in productivity, engagement, mood, and interpersonal interactions. Understanding these signals allows for proactive, compassionate support before challenges become more significant, fostering a supportive team atmosphere.

 **Activity: Group discussion: Sharing anonymised observations and common workplace stress indicators.**

2. How to Have a Mental Health Conversation

Initiating a conversation about mental well-being can feel daunting, but it is a vital skill. We will provide practical scripts and outline clear dos and don'ts to help you approach these sensitive discussions with empathy and confidence. Learning effective communication techniques ensures that your support is received positively and encourages open dialogue.

 **Activity: Role-playing exercises: Practicing opening and navigating mental well-being conversations.**

3. What Managers Can and Cannot Do

It is crucial to understand the scope of your role as a manager when supporting your team's mental health. This section clarifies the supportive actions you can take, such as listening and offering encouragement, while also defining the boundaries of your responsibilities. Knowing your limits helps you provide appropriate support without overstepping into professional care roles.

 **Activity: Case study analysis: Identifying appropriate manager responses in various scenarios.**

4. Referral Pathways – When and How to Escalate

When a team member's needs go beyond your capacity to support, knowing how and when to refer them to professional help is essential. This section outlines the organisational referral pathways and external resources available, providing clear guidance on the escalation process. Effective referrals ensure individuals receive the specialised assistance they require.

 **Activity: Interactive quiz: Matching scenarios with appropriate referral resources.**

5. Protecting Your Own Mental Health as a Manager

Supporting others can be emotionally demanding, making it vital for managers to prioritise their own mental well-being. This section explores practical self-care strategies and stress management techniques specifically for leaders. By maintaining your own resilience, you are better equipped to provide consistent and effective support to your team.

 **Activity: Mindfulness exercise: Practicing a short guided relaxation technique.**

6. Building a Mentally Healthy Workplace Culture

Creating an environment where mental well-being is openly discussed and supported requires a collective effort. This section focuses on how managers can champion initiatives that promote psychological safety and reduce stigma. By fostering such a culture, you contribute to a more resilient and engaged workforce.

 **Activity: Brainstorming session: Ideas for promoting mental wellness within teams.**

Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Communicate programme takeaways to all people managers.	HR/Manager	Week 1	Send a follow-up email summarising key learning points and resources.
Schedule follow-up 'check-in' sessions for managers.	HR	Month 1	Organise brief group sessions to discuss challenges and successes in applying new skills.
Integrate mental health conversation best practices into manager performance reviews.	Manager	Week 2	Include specific objectives related to supportive management and team well-being.
Update and widely disseminate the organisation's mental health resource directory.	HR	Month 1	Ensure easy access to contact information for Employee Assistance Programmes and external support services.
Encourage managers to share their self-care strategies within team meetings.	HR/Manager	Month 2	Promote a culture of open dialogue around well-being, starting from leadership.
Launch an organisational campaign on mental well-being awareness.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Develop a communication plan to destigmatise mental health and highlight available support.

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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Website

manas365.com



Corporate Enquiries

manu@manas365.com



WhatsApp

[+91 99818 13224](https://wa.me/919981813224)



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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