

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

Mental Health for Gig and Contract Workers

Wellbeing in the Age of Flexible Work

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

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Programme Overview

The gig economy in India is rapidly expanding, yet its workforce faces distinct mental health challenges stemming from instability and a lack of structured support. This programme aims to equip platform companies and workers with the knowledge and strategies to foster a healthier, more sustainable gig work environment.

Learning Objectives

- ✓ Participants will understand the specific mental health pressures unique to gig and contract work, such as financial volatility and social isolation, and recognise why addressing these is crucial for sustained productivity and personal well-being.
- ✓ Participants will learn to identify and manage the impact of social comparison and status anxiety, common in the gig landscape, and develop tools to cultivate a healthier self-perception and professional outlook.
- ✓ Organisational leaders and HR professionals will discover actionable strategies for creating supportive frameworks within their companies that cater to the mental well-being needs of their gig and contract workforce.
- ✓ Gig and freelance workers will gain practical self-care techniques and resources to proactively manage their mental wellness amidst the inherent uncertainties of independent work.
- ✓ Participants will appreciate the importance of collective action and policy advocacy in championing better mental health protections and support systems for the broader gig economy.
- ✓ The programme will provide insights into building resilient mindsets and fostering a sense of community, even in dispersed and independent work arrangements, thereby enhancing overall job satisfaction and mental equilibrium.

WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for platform companies, organisations employing a significant contract workforce, HR professionals, and individuals working as gig, freelance, or contract professionals in India.

Programme Content

1. The Unique Mental Health Landscape of Gig Work

Gig and contract workers often grapple with heightened financial insecurity due to variable income streams, which can significantly impact their peace of mind and long-term planning. The absence of a traditional workplace can lead to profound feelings of isolation and a lack of professional identity, making it difficult to build a stable sense of self. The 'always-on' culture prevalent in many gig roles blurs work-life boundaries, contributing to burnout and reduced mental resilience. This session will explore these stressors, drawing parallels with the experiences of Swiggy delivery partners, Urban Company service providers, and freelance professionals across various domains, and introduce evidence-based approaches to mitigate their impact.

 **Activity: Group discussion on common stressors experienced by gig workers.**

2. Navigating Social Comparison and Status Anxiety

The digital nature of much gig work, particularly through platforms, often exposes individuals to curated portrayals of success, fueling social comparison and status anxiety. Witnessing seemingly effortless achievements of peers can diminish one's own sense of accomplishment and worth, leading to increased worry and self-doubt. This can be particularly acute when income or project acquisition is inconsistent. This session will delve into psychological strategies to counteract these feelings, focusing on developing self-compassion and a realistic appraisal of one's own progress, thereby fostering a more stable and positive professional identity.

 **Activity: Individual reflection exercise on managing social media comparisons.**

3. Platform Company Responsibilities and Opportunities

Platform companies, like Ola and others, hold a unique position to influence the well-being of their vast gig workforce. By integrating mental health support into their operational models, they can significantly mitigate risks associated with gig work. This could involve providing access to resources, offering flexible working conditions where feasible, and fostering a sense of community among their workers. This section will outline practical, evidence-informed initiatives that companies can implement, demonstrating how investing in worker well-being can lead to greater loyalty, retention, and overall business success.

 **Activity: Brainstorming session on company-led well-being initiatives.**

4. Individual Strategies for Gig Worker Well-being

While systemic support is crucial, gig and freelance workers can also adopt proactive strategies to safeguard their mental wellness. This includes establishing clear boundaries between work and personal life, cultivating a strong support network outside of work, and engaging in regular self-care practices such as mindfulness or physical activity. Developing financial literacy and planning skills can also alleviate stress related to income fluctuations. This session will equip participants with practical, self-directed tools and techniques to build personal resilience and manage the unique demands of independent work effectively.

 **Activity: Pair-share on personal self-care strategies.**

5. Building a Case for Policy Advocacy

The gig economy's growth necessitates a conversation around basic protections and support structures for its workers, including mental health provisions. Advocating for policies that provide access to mental health services, offer avenues for grievance redressal, and ensure a degree of income stability is vital for the long-term sustainability of this sector. This session will explore the current landscape and build a compelling case for why proactive policy interventions are not just beneficial but essential for the equitable growth of India's gig workforce.

 **Activity: Group discussion on key policy advocacy points.**

6. Fostering Community and Connection

The inherent independence of gig work can sometimes lead to feelings of disconnection from a larger professional community. Actively building and nurturing a sense of belonging is paramount for mental well-being. This can be achieved through participation in professional networks, engaging in peer support initiatives, and seeking opportunities for collaboration and shared learning. This section will highlight the importance of social connection and provide actionable methods for gig workers to combat isolation and build a supportive professional ecosystem.

 **Activity: null**



Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Develop and disseminate a resource guide on mental wellness for gig workers.	HR/Platform Management	Week 1	Include contact information for relevant support services and self-help techniques.
Initiate a pilot program offering access to mental health counseling sessions for a segment of the gig workforce.	HR	Month 1	Partner with a reputable mental health provider to ensure quality of service.
Organise a webinar or workshop specifically addressing the mental health challenges of gig work for all workers.	Manager	Week 2	Ensure the content is tailored to the Indian gig economy context.
Integrate mental health awareness modules into onboarding processes for new gig workers.	HR	Month 1	Emphasise the company's commitment to worker well-being from the outset.
Establish a feedback mechanism for gig workers to share their mental health concerns and suggestions.	HR/Manager	Month 2	Ensure anonymity and confidentiality for sensitive feedback.
Formulate a formal policy statement acknowledging and addressing the mental health needs of the gig workforce.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Communicate this policy clearly and consistently to all stakeholders.

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 This document does not constitute a legal instrument and carries no legal standing or admissibility in any court of law or official proceeding.