

PREPARED FOR

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

# Workplace Mental Health Crisis Protocol

A Complete Response Framework for HR and Leadership

Presented by Dr. Priya Dubey Sharma

Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

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## Programme Overview

Organisations will inevitably face mental health crises, from acute distress to traumatic events, yet preparedness is often minimal. This programme equips leaders with a robust, step-by-step protocol to effectively manage these critical situations, ensuring timely support and minimal disruption.

### Learning Objectives

- ✓ Participants will learn to identify various types of mental health crises that can occur in the workplace and understand the appropriate response hierarchy for each, enabling a structured and effective approach to emergent situations.
- ✓ Participants will gain proficiency in executing the immediate response protocol within the crucial first 60 minutes of a crisis, ensuring swift and appropriate intervention to stabilise the situation and provide initial support.
- ✓ Participants will develop skills in managing both internal and external communications during a mental health crisis, maintaining transparency, empathy, and control over the narrative to protect individuals and the organisation's reputation.
- ✓ Participants will understand the critical components of providing effective post-crisis support, both for the individual directly impacted and for the wider team, fostering a supportive environment for recovery and well-being.
- ✓ Participants will learn to develop and implement a structured return-to-work plan for individuals who have experienced a mental health crisis, ensuring a safe, supportive, and gradual reintegration into the workplace.
- ✓ Participants will gain an understanding of how to integrate Indian emergency services and available resources into their crisis response plan, ensuring comprehensive support during critical events.

#### WHO SHOULD ATTEND

This programme is designed for Chief Human Resources Officers (CHROs), HR professionals, managers, security personnel, and medical teams who play a vital role in organisational safety and employee well-being.

## Programme Content

### 1. Understanding Workplace Mental Health Crises and Response Tiers

This section will delve into recognising diverse mental health emergencies, such as severe emotional distress, disclosures of abuse, or responses to traumatic incidents. We will explore the critical need for a tiered response system, differentiating between situations requiring immediate intervention by trained personnel and those managed through established HR procedures. Understanding these distinctions is paramount for allocating resources efficiently and ensuring the right level of support is provided promptly, thereby mitigating potential harm and fostering a sense of security.

 **Activity: Group discussion on identifying potential crisis scenarios within their specific work environments.**

### 2. The Critical First 60 Minutes: Immediate Response Protocol

The initial hour following a mental health crisis is often the most critical for de-escalation and support. This segment will outline a clear, actionable protocol for these first 60 minutes, focusing on safety, assessment, and initial intervention. We will cover essential steps such as securing the environment, making initial contact with the individual, assessing immediate risks, and coordinating with internal resources or external emergency services if necessary. A well-rehearsed immediate response can significantly influence the trajectory of the crisis and the individual's recovery.

 **Activity: Role-playing exercise simulating an immediate crisis response scenario.**

### 3. Navigating Communication During a Crisis

Effective communication is pivotal during and after a mental health crisis. This section will provide guidance on crafting clear, empathetic, and appropriate messages for both internal stakeholders (employees, management) and external parties (families, media, authorities). We will discuss the importance of maintaining confidentiality while ensuring necessary information is shared responsibly, and how to manage rumours or misinformation. Strategic communication helps in maintaining trust, providing reassurance, and supporting the organisation's overall stability.

 **Activity: Developing sample internal and external communication statements for a hypothetical crisis.**

#### 4. Sustaining Well-being: Post-Crisis Support Mechanisms

The aftermath of a crisis requires focused attention on recovery and support. This segment will explore the essential elements of post-crisis care, addressing both the individual who experienced the primary crisis and the broader team who may be affected by witnessing or being aware of the event. We will discuss strategies for providing ongoing emotional support, facilitating access to professional help, and creating an environment that encourages healing and resilience. Prioritising post-crisis support is vital for long-term well-being and preventing future distress.

 **Activity: Brainstorming a list of available internal and external support resources.**

#### 5. Facilitating a Safe Return to Work

Bringing an individual back to the workplace after a significant mental health crisis requires careful planning and sensitivity. This section will guide participants through the process of developing a tailored return-to-work plan, ensuring that the individual's needs are met while maintaining workplace safety and productivity. We will cover aspects such as phased returns, necessary accommodations, ongoing check-ins, and the role of managers and HR in supporting this transition. A well-managed return-to-work process is crucial for the individual's successful reintegration and sustained well-being.

 **Activity: Developing a template for a return-to-work plan, considering various scenarios.**

#### 6. Leveraging Indian Emergency Services and Resources

Understanding and effectively utilising India's emergency services and mental health resources is a critical component of any crisis response protocol. This section will familiarise participants with key national and local helplines, government health services, and NGOs that can provide immediate assistance during mental health emergencies. We will discuss how to integrate these external resources into the organisation's internal response framework, ensuring a seamless escalation of care when needed. Proper coordination with these services can significantly enhance the effectiveness and reach of the organisation's support system.

 **Activity: Mapping out key emergency contact numbers and service providers relevant to their region.**

## Action Plan

Concrete steps for implementation.

Action	Owner	Timeline	Notes
Establish a dedicated Crisis Response Team with clear roles and responsibilities.	CHRO/HR Head	Week 1	Identify team members and ensure they receive initial training on this protocol.
Develop and disseminate a company-wide policy on mental health crisis response.	HR	Month 1	Ensure the policy is easily accessible to all employees and clearly outlines reporting procedures.
Conduct initial training sessions for all managers and supervisors on crisis identification and immediate response.	HR/Training Department	Week 2	Focus on de-escalation techniques and knowing when to escalate to the Crisis Response Team.
Compile and circulate a comprehensive list of internal and external mental health support resources.	HR	Month 1	Include contact details for helplines, local mental health professionals, and Employee Assistance Programs (EAP).
Integrate crisis response training into the onboarding process for new employees.	HR/Onboarding Team	Month 2	Ensure all new hires are aware of the organisation's commitment to mental well-being and crisis support.
Schedule regular (quarterly) review and update meetings for the Crisis Response Team.	Leadership	Quarter 1	Incorporate lessons learned from any incidents, policy changes, or new resource availability.

## 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™.

### Manas – Center for Mental Wellness & Counselling

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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](mailto: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.