



World Mental Health Day

Grant Thornton Indonesia

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Mental Health Inclusivity in the Workplace

Does being mentally healthy mean the absence of mental disorder?

What do you think of this notion? Some of us may believe so, and that's completely understandable since it is what people usually think about mental health. Yet, according to the World Health Organization, mental health is more than that.

“Mental health is a state of well-being in which an individual realizes his or her own abilities, can cope with the normal stresses of life, can work productively and is able to make a contribution to his or her community.”

The definition emphasizes mental health issues which include not only mental illness, but also daily problems. Several examples include stress caused by daily troubles like work, difficulties in decision making and experiencing life phenomena which affect our mood and may lead to less productivity.

The Rise of Mental Health Awareness in Indonesia

Mental health has become a growing concern in Indonesia. Social media and open source access play a big role in spreading awareness on this matter at least to younger generations (Gen Z and Millennials) in Indonesia as they are the majority of social media users. This is consistent with the American Psychological Association Report showing that younger generations are more likely to report about their mental health concerns than older generations. Some older generations view mental health as a sign of a lack of faith (in God), gratitude and perseverance. Due to these stigmas, many individuals with mental health issues prefer to conceal their condition. In line with Dodok, Indriawaty, and Alfianto et al

(2022), mental health in Indonesia is still stigmatized, especially in some of the older generations. Previous generations tend to perceive mental health issues as a sign of weakness. This may be due to limited sources of information regarding this matter.

Prioritizing Mental Health in the Workplace

The stigma held by older generations creates a gap in knowledge about mental health between generations which sometimes poses a threat to professional relationships in the workplace. Mental health in the workplace is still often considered insignificant and not treated the same as physical health issues. Workers with mental health issues are frequently stereotyped as ‘attention-seekers’ or ‘overreacting’. This causes workers to conceal or downplay their mental health because of the fear of potential repercussions at work, such as being treated differently. If this is the case, is it better to keep one’s personal and professional life separate? In reality, the effects of mental health issues are no less severe than those of physical health issues. Mental health is not only about having a clear mind and pleasant feelings, but also affects a person’s psychological well-being. The enhancement of psychological well-being among workers has also received recent attention as a means of enhancing worker productivity. Prior research has confirmed that happier and healthier employees increase their performance and productivity (Huang et al., 2016).

Mental Health Inclusivity Through Psychological Safety

According to this year’s World Mental Health Day theme, mental health is a universal human right. We hope that together we can improve our knowledge, raise awareness and drive actions that promote everyone’s mental health, especially in the workplace. We can start by reinforcing psychological safety in the workplace through the organization’s leaders, peers and culture.

Leaders in organizations play a significant role in promoting psychological safety in the workplace. They can support this by demonstrating vulnerability through sharing personal challenges and learning in ways that create authentic and relatable connections. This, in turn, empowers others to feel safe in their own vulnerability as well (Kaplan, 2023).

For peers, we can encourage them to partake in active listening to create an inclusive workplace. Kaplan (2023) said that we encourage active listening by acknowledging and valuing every team member’s input. Thus, it is important to make sure everyone’s voice is heard and considered, regardless of their role or tenure. By encouraging individuals to share their unique perspectives the organization may earn richer discussions and innovative solutions.



All parties such as leaders and peers that promote psychological safety will form an inclusive culture for mental health. A culture that respects diversity and values different viewpoints. This is highlighted by Dr Camile Preston, a leading business psychologist and CEO of AIM Leadership, who mentioned that one of the many fundamental actions to build a culture is to create a safe environment where people can freely talk about their mental health.

That's why the concept of psychological safety in the workplace has been implemented in Grant Thornton through our international KPI for each GT employee. We monitor the KPI implemented by adding psychological safety in our annual people voice survey.

Every individual experiences psychological safety in various ways. Some team members experience it through a fun, safe, and productive atmosphere while others may perceive it differently. Creating a supportive environment to express vulnerability and talk about it can be a baby step toward creating an inclusive work environment (Preston, 2020).



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