

Workplace Wellness

Over recent years organizations have been challenged by a rapidly changing environment: expanding, globalized markets, increasingly diverse workforces, new technologies, political changes, and the dynamic movements of both capital and labour. Consequently, there has been increasing awareness about the multiple stresses on employees including an alarming growth in chronic conditions such as hypertension, diabetes, obesity, chronic fatigue and, of course, AIDS. This has resulted in increased attention to employee wellness programmes focusing on the mainstreaming of health and wellness issues. Simply put, mainstreaming is a management process by which the multiple environmental issues with which organizations must deal on a daily basis, become part of the normal routine functions and core business of a ministry or institution. As a process, mainstreaming has no definitive timeframe and organizations, depending upon their capabilities, mandate, management, organizational arrangements, etc., have moved along the process at different rates. The two areas of focus in promoting wellness are the internal domain and the external domain. The internal domain corresponds to the workplace environment and addressing the vulnerabilities of staff and risk situations associated with the performance of the ministry's or organization's core functions. Focusing on these internal considerations assists in the formulation of programmes and policies for the organization. These, in turn, have the effect of deepening the organization's understanding of the multi-dimensional impact of many of the day-to-day environmental challenges. The external domain refers to the business or service delivery relationship between an organization and its clientele. Mainstreaming in this domain focuses attention on how the organization might practically change the way in which it does business in order to better meet the changing needs of its clientele in the context of environmental challenges such as HIV and AIDS, gender, poverty, etc.

Minimum Internal Package

In terms of workplace programmes focusing on the internal domain, these basically follow the Minimum Internal Package, as outlined in the National Strategic Framework for HIV AND AIDS 2003-2009:

1. Promotion of counselling and testing and linking staff to testing services
2. Ensuring availability of both male and female condoms
3. Staff awareness creation, especially regarding available services
4. Targeted behaviour change information and communication initiatives
5. Routine collection, collation, analyzing and dissemination of human resource data for the organization
6. Providing access to counselling services
7. Developing strategic documents such as plans, profiles, guidelines, etc, to assist the organization to address environmental challenges
8. Ensure workplace policies and codes of conduct are in place
9. Establish budgets to provide financial resources to address challenging issues