



Mental Health Policy

Policy brief & purpose

VPK's Mental Health policy outlines our provisions to prevent and address mental health issues among our employees.

Mental health is just as important as physical health. Mental illness may be detrimental to a person, as it impacts happiness, productivity and collaboration. Mental health issues may affect companies, in the form of:

- Turnover
- Absenteeism
- Poor employee performance
- Employee substance abuse
- Work-related accidents
- Workplace violence or harassment

With this policy, we aim to support our employees and create a healthy and happy workplace. We want everyone to feel appreciated and be treated fairly.

Scope

This policy applies to all our employees. [HR/ Mental Wellness Committee] is primarily responsible for communicating this policy and overseeing its implementation.

Our policy starts by seeking input from all stakeholders. We will consult employees, senior management and mental health professionals to develop and revise our policy.

Policy elements

What are mental health issues?

Mental health issues in the workplace are any conditions that affect employees' state of mind. These conditions may include mild depression, stress and severe anxiety which may result in burnout and nervous breakdowns. Substance abuse may also perpetuate mental health issues.

Mental health problems manifest in different ways. Some employees may suffer with no physical side effects, while others may experience physical symptoms (e.g. increased blood pressure, lethargy, changes in eating habits.)

Factors that cause mental health issues

Employees may experience mental health issues for various reasons that an employer cannot control (e.g. hereditary, family conflicts, general health.) But, there are also work-related reasons for mental health problems, including:

- Job insecurity.
- Excessive pressure.
- Work-life imbalance.
- Lack of appreciation.
- Hostile workplace conditions.
- Unsatisfactory job or workload.
- Unpleasant relationships with colleagues or managers.

To every extent possible, our company's leaders aim to recognize and address cases of workplace pressures that contribute to mental health issues.

VPK'S actions

We aim to:

- Treat mental illness seriously.
- Identify issues proactively and resolve them.
- Support employees who face mental health problems.
- Create pleasant workplaces in collaboration with managers, employees, unions and health experts.

Internal Policies

As a way to prevent employee distress, we will set up policies for:

- Anti-retaliation
- Anti-discrimination
- Workplace violence
- Open communication
- Work from home/ Flexible hours
- Parental leave/ Short-term disability leave

This list isn't exhaustive. All of these policies aim to preserve a harmonious workplace where employees can enjoy their work and balance their jobs with their personal lives. All managers and HR must ensure the company adheres to these policies.

Professional services

We will engage the services of a mental health professional (e.g. psychologist) who will visit our company [*once a month*] as part of our EAP. Employees may reach out to this professional when they are in need of counseling. Anything they share with this person will remain confidential.

Mental health awareness

We want to raise mental health awareness and combat the stigmas associated with them. To do this, we will:

- **Host information sessions.** We will schedule [*quarterly*] workshops for managers and employees explaining important elements of mental health.
- **Keep employees informed.** We will organize an event to present updates to this policy whenever it's modified. HR will also present this policy to new hires.
- **Compile helpful resources.** We will establish a repository of articles, videos and infographics about mental health. These resources will exist in a shared folder, on our website or as part of an HRIS.

Job-related issues

Issues related to work, compensation, job insecurity and work-life balance can heavily burden our employees. In these cases, we encourage our employees to speak to our mental health professional about how to handle their individual situations better.

Additionally, we encourage open communication between employees and managers. If employees have a work-related problem, they should speak openly to their managers. Managers are in turn obliged to listen to their employees and should search for a mutually satisfying solution together.

Managers' responsibilities

Managers should also proactively identify mental health issues among their employees. If they perceive that an employee is in a state of emotional or psychological distress, they should reach out to them.

Compliance with the law

The law protects employees who suffer from medical conditions (e.g. clinical depression) or mental disorders (e.g. schizophrenia.) Consistent with our non-discrimination practices, we will treat these employees fairly and we won't oblige anyone to disclose their condition or other medical information. Instead, we will attempt to support employees who come to us with mental health issues and establish strategies that apply to everyone.

Also, we will make reasonable accommodations for people with mental disabilities (e.g. flexible work hours.)

Evaluating outcomes

This policy's provisions are not restrictive. We will test its elements to find out what works and what doesn't. HR should continuously research mental health topics and evaluate the results of our policy with managers' help.

To develop, revise and establish this policy, we need everyone's help. We can all work to define mental health issues, their causes and seek or offer help when needed. We encourage employees to share their ideas and concerns.