



Mental health at work strategy development: The WHO and the US Surgeon General advance the narrative.

The seismic shift that workplaces have experienced since the COVID-19 pandemic began has created profound changes in how employees see work, as well as both their needs and expectations of wellbeing support.

- The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health (Formerly LifeWorks) found that the proportion of working individuals with high mental health risk almost tripled since 2019
- Only half of workers felt their mental wellbeing was supported by their employer during the pandemic,
- Those workers **whose employers supported mental wellbeing have more favourable mental health and higher productivity scores than employees who did not feel supported**

The increase in mental health risk, and the recognition of the positive impact that workplaces can have, has increased the focus on workplace mental health and wellbeing.

- In September 2022, the World Health Organization published their revised [framework on developing an employee mental health strategy](#)
- In October 2022, the US Surgeon General published his first recommendations on strategy development in the form of his [Framework for Mental Health & Well-Being in the Workplace](#)

Taken together, the US Surgeon General's report and WHO recommendations demonstrate that successful workplace mental health and wellbeing initiatives require an approach that addresses both workplace experiences and the need for individual supports.

Key learnings from the WHO and US Surgeon General reports.

1. Employee mental health is the responsibility of three levels of stakeholders:
 - the organization
 - leaders/managers
 - employees
2. A holistic approach to developing a mental health strategy is required:
 - Organization-level interventions (i.e., psychosocial risk management)
 - Manager-level training (e.g., mental health awareness)
 - Individual-level training (e.g., mental health literacy) and interventions (e.g., counselling)
3. Policies, programs, and processes are interdependent and need to be aligned, well-communicated, measured, and supported by leadership to ensure the maximum value of each.
4. Certain foundational issues need to be addressed. Workplaces must be free of discrimination, harassment, and unsafe work practices before higher level programs are deployed.





How TELUS Health can help: the TELUS Health recommended mental health and wellbeing strategy development stages

The WHO and US Surgeon General reports echo TELUS Health approach to supporting organizations. TELUS Health recommends a four-stage approach to developing or optimizing an employee mental health and wellbeing strategy.

Needs assessment

To understand the mental health status and needs of employees and determine the drivers of mental health and wellbeing in your workforce.

- [The Mental Health Index by TELUS Health](#) and [psychosocial risk assessment](#)

Mental health and wellbeing strategy gap analysis.

To benchmark your organizational programs, policies, and practices against established frameworks and peer organizations, and receive recommendations on your next best steps.

- [The TELUS Health Workplace Strategy Index for Mental Health \(WSI-MH\)](#)

Roadmap

To reinforce the strengths of your programming and bring clarity to best next actions to take.

- TELUS Health is available to help you design and implement a roadmap for organizational-, manager-, and worker-level actions

Measurement and evaluation framework.

To determine whether objectives have been met, whether there are any emerging needs and insight into how to course correct if needed.

- TELUS Health is available to leverage assessment tools and the data you have available to provide insight into your progress

