



# Mental Health Ireland The New Workplace Framework

🕒 10am - 11am

📅 12th October 2023

🗣️ Recorded

# About Me



## Areas of Expertise



Mind



Body



Physical



Social



Sleep

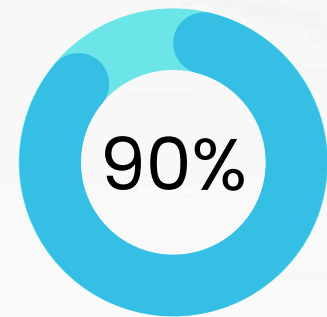
## Sue Landsberg

DCM Learning Trainer



# A workplace survey

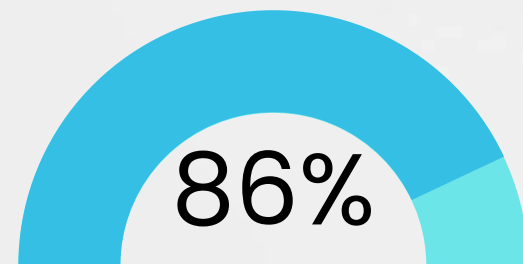
with 900 respondents released by Mental Health Ireland



90% of employers had noticed an increase in mental health challenges in the workplace since the pandemic.



A third of respondents said working out of hours and almost a quarter of respondents said having little or no breaks affected their mental health



86% of employers had noticed an increase in openness to talk of mental health within the workplace.



33% of respondents felt their company did not adhere to the policies or put them into practice.

“What worked for me when I was experiencing Mental Health challenges was being able to chat with my line manager about my situation, and them offering a listening ear, and being supportive and understanding. It meant everything to me.”

Workplace Mental Health Survey, Mental Health Ireland 2022



By attending to our mental health, we can avoid burnout, disengagement, absenteeism, and strained relationships in the workplace.

We have created a workplace framework to support leaders and managers to protect and sustain their staff's mental health at work and respond supportively when a team member experiences a mental health challenge.

Using the framework to develop a workplace mental health policy will support management to understand the scope of their own responsibilities in relation to employee mental health. Having clear boundaries like this can increase managers' confidence, improve communications with employees who may be experiencing a mental health challenge, and ultimately protect all parties.



**Mental Health  
Ireland**

**Martin Rogan**  
CEO, Mental Health Ireland

# How will the framework support

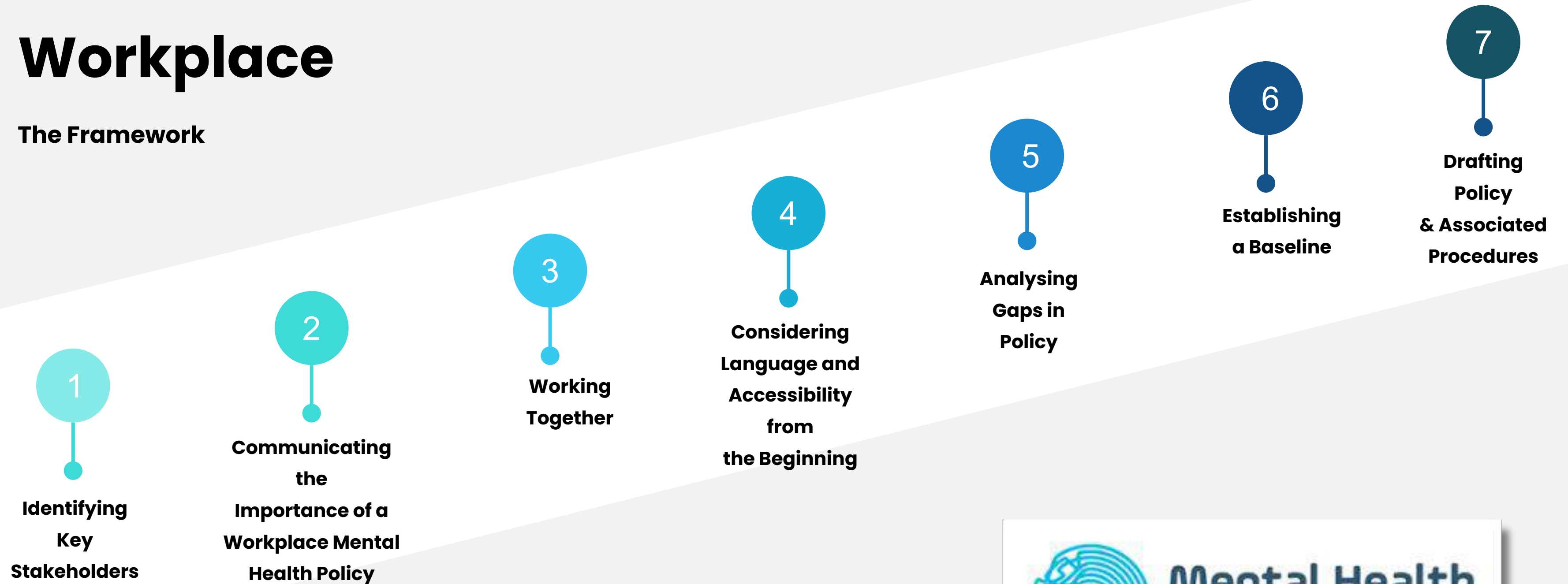
## Leaders & Mental Health Champions?

The Framework recommends three actions:



# Mental Health in the Workplace

## The Framework



**Mental Health  
Ireland**

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## Identifying Key Stakeholders

Stakeholder	Description
Employees and Managers	The employee, i.e. the end user of this policy should be involved throughout the policy development process and have decision making power (Stevenson and Farmer, 2017). This includes all employees at all levels of the organisation and representation across a range of roles.
Leadership Team	This may include top level management, the board, as ultimately their endorsement and commitment will increase the likelihood of successful development and implementation of the policy
Human Resources Team	The Human Resources Team have a particular role to play in the development of policies and procedures that protect all staff including those who are particularly vulnerable such as people with mental health challenges
People with lived experience of mental health challenges	Mental Health in the Workplace policy should be strengthened through the
Union Representatives	Union Representatives may wish to use this document for guidance on how mental health should be supported and promoted within organisations and to understand the legal obligations of employers.



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## Communicating the Importance of a Workplace Mental Health Policy

### Tips for making the case to the leadership team

- Clearly show the benefits of workplace Mental Health Policy to the organisation and its employee.
- Use data to demonstrate the need to lead. For example, the quantity of days lost due to stress, and the related and financial implications of same.
- Provide evidence on the psychosocial benefits of workplace health and safety
- Emphasise the legal and moral obligation on employers for implementing effective mental health in the workplace policies and practices.
- Emphasising the relationship between Corporate Social Responsibility and ethical workplace practices that include psychosocial safety at work. i.e. mental health is everybody's problem and respecting employee human rights starts with the business

### Tips for gaining buy in from employe

- Involve your employees from the start and ensure they are not only consulting but have a direct contribution to the development of the policy, especially those with lived experience of mental health challenges.
- Identify workplace champions who wish to be part of the process and have a genuine interest in furthering workplace wellbeing agenda in the workplace. Representation from across a range of roles and levels will help create an inclusive policy.
- Demonstrate your commitment to workplace health by sending regular updates on policy development and strategic approaches.
- Avoid tokenistic consultation processes whereby the employees input to the policy is unclear.
- Be transparent in how you communicate the reason for developing the policy to employees and the impact of their contribution.

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# Working Together



Monitoring

Process

Champions

Planning

Communal Gathering

Equal Participant

Evaluation

Delivery

4

**Considering  
Language and  
Accessibility  
from  
the Beginning**



5

## **Analysing Gaps in Policy**



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## Establishing a Baseline

### Take some time to get to know your organisation & culture :

- Review or redefine a set of desired values and behaviours (include behavioural descriptions of how these values are enacted).
- Make sure that these values and behaviours are aligned with your strategy and brand and are linked to practices of accountability.
- Have visible proponents – create performance objectives for the CEO / Head of the organisation that link to the values and behaviours.
- Define the non-negotiables – this will help you to respond with clarity and in a timely manner when a behaviour falls short of this standard.
- Measure culture and the emotional temperature of the organisation.
  - Employee surveys, focus groups, line management – be bold and ask the hard questions, ones that may require action.
  - Talent analyses – This will help you see are you making the most of the talent base. It will also help you to see if your employees are getting to work to their fullest potential.
  - Ethics – What are the fundamental principles driving your workforce and its practices?
- Don't rush it – Done properly at the outset, the insight you will gain from this type of review will become a bedrock for improving and sustaining mental health in your workplace.

Be bold and lead – It takes courage to ask questions of your workforce that might reveal areas for improvement. This is your role as a leader.

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**Drafting  
Policy  
&  
Associated  
Procedures**

**What should be  
included?**

- ✓ **Introduction**
- ✓ **Aims & Objectives**
- ✓ **Scope**
- ✓ **Legislation**
- ✓ **Recommended Policy**
- ✓ **Related Policy & Procedure**
- ✓ **Complaints with Workplace MH**
- ✓ **implementation of Policy**
- ✓ **Monitoring & Adherence**
- ✓ **Policy Change Process**

**Tips for Managers  
&  
Mental Health Champions**

# Things to Keep in Mind

Avoid making  
assumptions

You are not  
there to  
diagnose or fix

Your role is to  
support and  
signpost



Being  
non-judgemental  
& compassionate

Give time &  
space

Be prepared  
with helpful  
information



## What do I say?

Keep these things in mind when chatting with someone about their mental health.

*“Whilst what you say is of course important, giving someone the time and safe space to say how they feel and to really be listened to is essential.”*

## What do I say?

- Compassion and non-judgment
- Be honest, direct and clear in what you are saying
- Respect confidentiality but explain the limitations of that confidentiality:
  - You may have to disclose if you have concerns for their safety or the safety of others
- Questions to ask / Questions to avoid
- Push back

**Let's look at some examples...**



## What do I say?

Work has been full on this month, how are you managing?

I noticed you've been quiet this week, you ok?

How are you Doing?

I haven't caught up with you in a while and wanted to see how you are feeling?

You got time for a coffee & a catch up?



You don't seem yourself lately, how is it going?

How's life?  
How are the family?

What's happening for you lately?

## Avoid accusatory or assumption-based questions

What's  
wrong with  
you?

Why are you  
acting  
strangely?

What's with  
the low  
energy?

Is it the time  
of the  
month?

You're not  
the same  
person we  
took on,  
what's  
wrong?

Why are you  
always  
looking  
depressed?



**If now is a good time for them to talk and they do engage with you, LISTEN.**

Take what they say seriously and don't interrupt or rush the conversation

Don't judge their experiences or reactions but acknowledge that things seem tough for them. If they need time to think, sit patiently with the silence



## Listening Tips

- Encourage them to explain
  - “How are you feeling about that?”
  - or
  - “How long have you felt that way?”
- Show that you’ve listened by repeating back what you’ve heard (in your own words) and ask if you have understood them properly.
- Know you don’t have to have any or all the answers.

And remember:  
COMPASSION, COMPASSION,  
COMPASSION.



## Avoid Statements Like

- You should do mindfulness.
- Man up.
- It'll pass.
- Cheer up.
- It's not as bad as you think.
- Sure, it's that time of year. Get a SAD lamp/  
vitamin tablets/a weighted blanket.
- You should give up the pizzas and eat  
healthier.
- I go to the gym and I always feel great. Try it.
- Why don't you go to the GP and ask for  
antidepressants? They worked for my  
sister/aunt/neighbour's stepmother.



## Instead try these...

- Thank, Acknowledge, Reassure
- Focus on Strengths, Encourage

## Action

- Agree a Plan
- Set a date for Check In
- Closing the Conversation
- If Unsure Seek Support
- Self-Care
- Returning to Work
- Crisis Support
- Irish Legislation





# Signposting



# Construction Industry Helpline

## 1800 939 122

CONFIDENTIAL 24/7 SUPPORT



The free Construction Industry Helpline provides a free 24/7 safety net for all construction workers and their families.

- Advice on welfare and mental wellbeing
- Emergency financial aid
- Support on legal, tax and debt management

<p>Medical Advice</p>  <p>01850 241850</p>	<p>Emotional Support 24/7</p>  <p>116 123</p>	<p>Cancer Advice + Support</p>  <p>1800 200 700</p>	<p>Financial Support</p>  <p>07610 72000</p>
<p>Relationship Support</p>  <p>01 505 3112</p>	<p>Bereavement Support</p>  <p>01 679 3188</p>	<p>Supporting Older People</p>  <p>0818 222 024</p>	<p>Mental Health Support</p>  <p>1800 804 848</p>

The free Construction Industry Helpline app offers expert information, advice and guidance on a huge variety of mental, physical and financial wellbeing issues.



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