



## Perspectives

# A Policy Roadmap for Prioritizing Mental Health and Wellbeing in the Workplace

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**Abstract:** This perspective paper reflects on a Policy Council Dialogue event entitled "Future of Workplace Wellbeing: Let's Measure Impact," held on January 31, 2024 and organized by Chnml, the Dubai Health Authority, and the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) in Dubai, United Arab Emirates. The policy council highlights the increasing global mental health concerns and their impact on workforce productivity and retention. It emphasizes the need to examine the role of technology and AI in wellbeing solutions and measure their impact on improving workforce wellbeing alongside business outcomes. The policy council presents a comprehensive discussion on various aspects of workplace wellbeing, including the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy, critical frameworks, the integration of AI and data analytics, and the importance of measuring the success of wellbeing initiatives.

خلاصة: هذه الدراسة المنظرية انعكاس لما دار في برنامج حوار مجلس السياسات بعنوان "مستقبل العافية في مكان العمل: دعونا نقيس التأثير" الذي عقد في 31 يناير 2024، والمنظم من قبل كل من: شركة شنل وهيئة الصحة بدبي وكلية محمد بن راشد للدراسات الحكومية بدبي، الإمارات. قام مجلس السياسات بالتركيز على المخاوف المتزايدة عالمياً بشأن الصحة النفسية وتأثيرها على إنتاجية القوى العاملة والمحافظة عليها. كما يؤكد على ضرورة دراسة دور التكنولوجيا والذكاء الاصطناعي في إيجاد حلول لزيادة العافية إضافةً إلى زيادة الإنتاجية. يقدم مجلس السياسات حواراً شاملاً عن جوانب متنوعة من العافية في مكان العمل؛ تضم: استراتيجية هيئة الصحة بدبي للصحة النفسية، والأطر الهامة، وتفعيل الذكاء الاصطناعي وتحليل البيانات، بالإضافة إلى أهمية قياس نجاح أي مبادرة لرفع مستوى العافية

**Keywords:** mental health; workplace wellbeing; policy recommendations; artificial intelligence; data analytics; multi-stakeholder collaboration

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**Mental health challenges have emerged as a significant worldwide** issue, impacting labour efficiency, job contentment, and employee retention. The COVID-19 epidemic, geopolitical events, and environmental changes have led to a significant increase in mental health issues globally. This policy council emphasizes the importance of implementing effective solutions and providing psychosocial support, especially for vulnerable groups like healthcare personnel. The United Arab Emirates (UAE) (AlGhufli et al., 2021; Alsuwaidi et al., 2021) and New Zealand (Haar & Harris, 2023) have seen high incidences of mental health issues and burnout among healthcare personnel, highlighting the need to address this issue systematically.

The policy council dialogue examined the complex task of enhancing workforce wellbeing and emphasized the importance of fully understanding the components and goals of the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy and global wellbeing initiatives. Data-driven leadership is important, as well as quantifying the effects of mental well-being on transforming workplaces and fostering people-first cultures (Berryman et al., 2018). The policy council also analyses the swift development of technology and Artificial Intelligence (AI), and the possibility of smoothly incorporating these progressions into mental health and wellbeing policies.

### What Happened?

On January 31st, 2024, the Policy Council Dialogue included a panel discussion with specialists from many disciplines from organizations such as Chmnl, the Dubai Health Authority, MBRSG, and others. The discussion centred on four main goals: understanding the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy, evaluating essential frameworks for workplace wellbeing, deliberating on strategies for businesses to incorporate programs and conform to established frameworks, exploring the role of AI in wellbeing strategies, highlighting the importance of data and analytics, and recognizing the significance of measuring the success of wellbeing initiatives.

Panellists discussed various important topics such as the implications of the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy on businesses, the changing role of data in shaping future workplace wellbeing initiatives, the significance of measuring wellbeing and the effectiveness of implemented initiatives, the possible effects of AI on wellbeing programs, and the role of data and analytics in the changing landscape of workplace wellbeing. The panel was open to the participation of the public and simultaneously viewed online for New Zealand audiences.

### The Takeaways: Four Key Policy Recommendations

1. **Person-centred care tailored to individual needs:** This proposal stresses the significance of offering mental health services that are tailored and attentive to the specific requirements of each person. Stakeholders include mental health experts, healthcare organizations, government bodies, and patient advocacy groups.

2. **Improve accessibility of mental health services:** This advice is designed to overcome obstacles that hinder persons from obtaining mental health care, including geographical, financial,



cultural, and social barriers. The stakeholders engaged are government agencies, healthcare providers, insurance companies, and community organizations.

3. **Multi-sectoral approach:** This proposal acknowledges that circumstances outside of the healthcare system influence mental health. The stakeholders involved are government agencies, employers, educational institutions, and community organizations.

4. **Building mental health and wellbeing awareness and resilience (especially in schools, universities and workplaces):** This recommendation highlights the need to promote mental health awareness and cultivate resilience to mental health issues, especially in educational and working environments. Stakeholders include academic institutions, employers, mental health experts, government agencies, and community organizations.

The policy council dialogue emphasizes the need for collaboration among various stakeholders (Moonesar et al. 2024) and the implementation of evidence-based policies and programs to create a more supportive environment where individuals can access the mental health care they need and thrive mentally and emotionally.

### Conclusion

The Policy Council Dialogue report, "Future of workplace wellbeing: Let's measure impact" emphasizes the pressing need to tackle mental health concerns and their effects on worker wellness (Moonesar et al., 2024). The policy council emphasizes the significance of a thorough and diverse strategy that includes stakeholders from many sectors, such as healthcare, government, education, and community organizations. The policy council's proposals focus on person-centred care, enhanced access to mental health services, a multi-sectoral strategy, and promoting mental health awareness and resilience, particularly in educational and working environments.

The policy council emphasizes the changing role of technology and data analytics in influencing future workplace wellbeing programs, as well as the potential of AI to improve the effectiveness and influence of these programs. Organizations may create more focused wellness initiatives based on data-driven insights and innovative technologies to achieve demonstrable employee health and productivity gains.

The policy council urges all stakeholders to emphasize mental health and wellbeing, promote psychological safety, and develop effective solutions that utilize advanced technologies and AI. Collaborating and following the suggestions in the policy council can help us establish a stronger and more adaptable society where both mental health and wellbeing are important and basic human entitlements.

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