

What Happens to Workforce Mental Health When You Add Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging to the Mix?

Focal Brief
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Executive Summary

Mental Health at Work Index
Developed by

 COLUMBIA
UNIVERSITY
Mental Health+Work
DESIGN LAB

 ONE MIND
At Work

 ETHISPHERE
GOOD. SMART. BUSINESS. PROFIT.

You can't talk about mental health at work without addressing belonging. In a climate where people, despite their differences, feel like they're part of the organization, have a voice, and engage in positive, supportive relationships, everyone has the opportunity to perform at their best.

Ironically, in recent years, some have tried to frame Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB) as a divisive topic and others have backed away from efforts in order to avoid this manufactured conflict. DEIB is not a political issue; it is a people issue and a business imperative.

Employers who embrace differences and take steps to support a diverse workforce have a strong competitive advantage that drives worker well-being and organizational performance today and into the future.

70% of organizations that align their mental health and DEIB initiatives reported that employee engagement increased last year.

Research has linked DEIB to a variety of employee and organizational outcomes. In addition to well-being and performance, these include increased job satisfaction and enhanced retention. Employers also benefit from greater innovation, commitment to the organization, and engagement with diverse customer and client bases. Team cohesiveness and a sense of community and belonging help build capacity for resilience, supporting your people and organization through challenging times, as well.

Workforce mental health and DEIB initiatives go hand in hand and both get better results when approached as a strategic whole, rather than as separate programs. In this report, Mental Health at Work Index results provide a snapshot of how well organizations are aligning these efforts and ways to measure and improve them moving forward.

Key Findings

A majority of employers are committed to both workforce mental health and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging (DEIB), but efforts in these areas generally remain siloed.

Employers are not addressing the mental health needs of a diverse workforce. Mental health resources and benefits are insufficiently tailored to workforce diversity and DEIB training rarely includes mental health content relevant to workers from diverse backgrounds.

Organizations with workforce mental health and DEIB efforts that are aligned scored higher in overall program maturity on the Mental Health at Work Index compared to those whose efforts are not aligned.

“By recognizing the intersection between mental health and Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion, organizations can create more supportive, inclusive, and psychologically safe environments that promote the well-being and success of all employees.”



Chéla Gage

vice president, Global Chief Inclusion & Diversity Officer
Starbucks

KEY FINDINGS

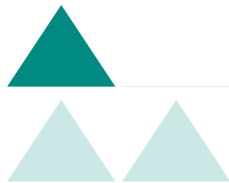
Most organizations have not aligned their workforce mental health strategy with their Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging initiatives

Results suggest that a majority of employers are committed to both workforce mental health and DEIB, but efforts in these areas remain siloed. Alignment with DEIB practices is a hallmark of more mature mental health at work programs.



83%

of senior leaders expressed a commitment to DEIB. But fewer than...



1 in 3

organizations (28%) have taken steps to align their workforce mental health strategy and DEIB initiatives for optimal impact.



40%

Organizations that have aligned their mental health and DEIB practices are better positioned to address the needs of a diverse workforce - scoring 40% higher in overall program maturity on the Mental Health at Work Index compared to those whose efforts are not aligned.

Taking Action

How can you align your mental health and Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Belonging programs to get the best results?

Ensure the cross-functional teams responsible for your workforce mental health and DEIB programs each include a member from the other team to facilitate information sharing and coordination.

Actively solicit input and feedback from Employee Resource Groups for diverse and underrepresented segments of your workforce and collaborate on initiatives where there is shared interest.

Segment employee data, so you can identify and address any specific mental health needs, risks, disparities, and health equity issues that may exist.

Add concrete DEIB-related goals to your workforce mental health strategy.

KEY FINDINGS

Employers are not addressing the mental health needs of a diverse workforce



To improve access, utilization, and impact, mental health resources and benefits must be customized to meet the needs of workers from diverse backgrounds. This can include differences in race, ethnicity, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion, language, ability, veteran status, economic background, location, and thought.

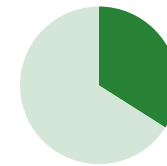
Mental health resources and benefits are not sufficiently tailored for a diverse workforce



Only half of organizations (52%) say their workforce has access to mental health resources for workers from diverse backgrounds.

Fewer than half (48%) say mental health resources and benefits are culturally appropriate, available in multiple languages as needed, and that providers are trained in cultural competency.

DEIB training is ubiquitous, but mental health content specific to workforce diversity is rare

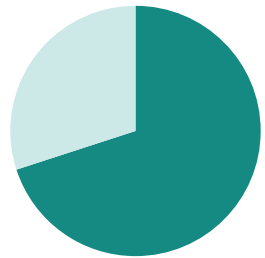


Only one-third (34%) of organizations include topics relevant to workers from diverse backgrounds in their mental health training.

Although 8 in 10 employers (83%) provide training on DEIB-related skills and two-thirds (65%) offer specific DEIB training for managers, mental health training is not typically customized for workforce diversity.

KEY FINDINGS

Organizations with workforce mental health and DEIB efforts that are aligned were more likely to see increases in employee engagement



70%

of organizations that align their mental health and DEIB initiatives reported that employee engagement increased last year, compared to fewer than half (45%) of those whose efforts were not aligned.

DEIB is a clear priority for employers. Nearly 8 in 10 (79%) report taking concrete steps to recruit and retain a diverse workforce and 7 in 10 (70%) say they have a DEIB strategic plan. Aligning mental health and DEIB initiatives and fostering high levels of employee engagement can help bolster these efforts to attract and keep top talent.

Research has linked DEIB to a variety of employee and organizational outcomes. In addition to well-being and performance, these include increased job satisfaction and enhanced retention. Employers also benefit from greater innovation, commitment to the organization, and engagement with diverse customer and client bases.

Where does your organization stand?

Find out how the Mental Health at Work Index™ can help you measure and improve your workforce mental health program.

The Index online self-assessment allows you to evaluate your program and compare it to target and benchmark scores, highlights red-flag areas of risk to your workforce and organization, prioritizes key actions for building program maturity, and links to an algorithm-driven resource library of tools and resources to help you get started.

Our team of experts is also available to provide guidance and can even work with you to create a priority action roadmap for rapid improvement.



Mental Health at Work Index

Taking the Guesswork out of Mental Health at Work

One Mind named to Fast Company's list of the World's Most Innovative Companies of 2024 for focusing on—and quantifying—workplace mental health.

[Read more about this achievement.](#)

Learn more at:

mentalhealthindex.org



[mentalhealthindex.org](https://www.mentalhealthindex.org)