

National Conference on Mental Health and Wellbeing @ Work

Why does it matter?

- Applied Positivity Enterprise Sdn Bhd plans to join forces with the Human Resource Development Fund (HRDF) Malaysia to create an awareness of mental health and wellbeing in the workplace as we share a common work focus and concerns. Can we do something about it? Yes, we can. It is a worthy endeavor to organize jointly with HRDF - National Conference on Mental Health and Wellbeing @ Work based on the World Mental Health Day presented by the World Federation of Mental Health to 'increase awareness about mental health and the importance of mental health in overall health of a person.' The goal and objective of National Conference on Mental Health and Wellbeing @ Work is to help raise mental health awareness in workplace and to promote proactive strategies rather than reactive strategies in resilience and coping skills for employees to deal with pressures and stresses in the workplace so that they do not just merely surviving but thriving and flourishing at work.
- We must focus more on employees in creating awareness of them as a 'person' – their needs, worries, anxieties, fear i.e. how they feel, think and behave, as they navigate new challenges and opportunities in the workplace. If employees believe in themselves as a 'person' – knowing thyself in acquiring the way they understand themselves and their relationships (soft skills) which is the root of everything they do in life, they can accomplish great things in their productive work and "the so-called soft side of business begins to look not so soft after all" (Goleman & Boyatzis).
- Understanding and creating an awareness of mental health and wellbeing is one of the central challenge in the 21st century as we need to shake off the stigma of negativity associated with mental health and to explore the implication of mental health in the workplace. We have been continuously focused on economic and industrial development, often at the expense of employees' mental health and wellbeing. To quote Geoff Mulgan (2007), "Wellbeing will be the major focus of government in the twenty-first century, in the way that economic

prowess was in the 20th and military prowess in the nineteenth.” Mental health and wellbeing issues exist and occur everywhere and anything related to reality in the 21st century in the best of time and in the worst of time – at workplace, at home, at schools.

- It is the right steps and timing, now in the 21st century to address and acknowledge the hidden problems of mental health issues in the workplace which has been a taboo for a long time and therefore the need to break the ‘wall of silence.’ To put it bluntly, ‘mental health is stigmatized’ even though mental health issues are often an open secret. ! in 4 working adults have experienced mental health problems. All of us have known someone in the family or people at work that have gone through mental illness in their life. We should accept mental health as part and parcel of our wellbeing especially during the midst of life significant transitions such as career shifts, position change, unemployment and what keep them at work. It is our duty and we have a responsibility to better educate employees to acquire soft skills (intrapersonal and interpersonal) in creating awareness of mental health and wellbeing at work.
- We can develop understanding and expertise in our collaboration and partnership in jointly organising HRDF National Conference on Mental Health and Wellbeing @ Work that includes (i) keynote presentations; (ii) a series of training workshops presentations; and (iii) professionals dialogue sessions. We hope we will be able to challenge all of you to think very differently and laterally in a new light – in a positive ways and perspectives about mental health and wellbeing @ work. We would like to take these ideas forward and to discuss our thoughts on mental health issues in the workplace and to explore together the possibilities of jointly organising the National Conference on Mental Health and Wellbeing @ Work. What we are trying to achieve is just a starting point whereby we do the best we could, we do what we can, as best as we can, hoping that the best we can do is good enough in making and creating opportunities for we do not just wait for the opportunities to come.