



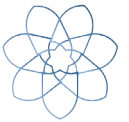
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مجلس السياسات  
POLICY COUNCIL



## FUTURE OF WORKPLACE WELLBEING: **Let's measure impact**

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هيئة الصحة بدبي  
DUBAI HEALTH AUTHORITY





## Preamble

Increasing global mental health concerns are causing unprecedented workforce productivity and retention concerns. As technology and AI quickly evolves, it is imperative to examine their role within wellbeing solutions, and measure the impact of how these collectively improve workforce wellbeing alongside business outcomes. This multifaceted challenge requires a comprehensive understanding of the components and objectives of the Dubai Wellbeing Strategy, and global wellbeing initiatives.

In the wake of recent global events and societal advances, there has been a surge in mental health struggles on a global scale. The collective impact of unprecedented challenges such as the COVID-19 pandemic, geo-political events, and environmental change has prompted an increase in the negative implications on mental health. The mental wellbeing of healthcare professionals is critical for the health of their patients and the wider community. With studies showing health professionals are increasingly vulnerable to poor mental health and burnout, it's clear the system is not supporting them. Despite mental health issues being very common in both UAE and New Zealand, 75% of people in the region who need mental health care do not seek help.

Since the pandemic, the UAE has seen a 14% increase in the prevalence of mental health disorders in healthcare professionals. In New Zealand, the burnout rate of medical doctors is 21%. This is a global issue and requires a global effort focused on increasing psychological safety in the workplace to fix. Anxiety, particularly among the younger generations, has reached unparalleled heights, underscoring the critical need for effective interventions for psychosocial support. Suicide is now the second leading cause of death for 15-29 year olds (World Health Organization, 2019). Female physicians in the same age group are 2.2 times higher risk for suicide than general population. There is growing international acknowledgment of the imperative need to address mental health and wellbeing issues systemically, as we begin to understand the true implications this is having on society. Through measuring the impact of wellbeing on professional performance, there is a highlighted need for implementing solutions to limit the effects mental health might have on the workplace. This is through business performance, client/patient care, and overall organisational wellbeing.

Through addressing the impact of mental health struggles globally, it is imperative that businesses take action on ensuring psychological safety within their teams to enhance wellbeing. There are severe implications of poor mental health on business outcomes including detrimental impacts towards productivity, job satisfaction, and workforce retention. A study conducted in 2023 demonstrates the key interrelationship between poor mental health/wellbeing, alongside productivity. In fact, enhanced psychological safety directly correlates with boosted productivity (Patil et al., 2023). Furthermore, wellbeing struggles often contribute to heightened stress levels which directly links to absenteeism and burnout, further diminishing workforce productivity. When wellbeing is fostered and the mental health of employees prioritised, key business outcomes and indicators have more room and accessibility for growth.

A viable solution lies in measuring mental wellbeing as a key metric to enhance the Future of workplace productivity, job satisfaction, and workforce retention. There is an opportunity to utilise the power of data-driven leadership and measuring the impact of mental wellbeing to transform workplaces and enable people-first culture. Furthermore, as there is a rapid evolution of technology and AI, it is essential to understand the seamless role of AI in mental health and wellbeing strategies and how we can use this to our advantage.

A global health study is being undertaken with a purpose to empower healthcare leaders to create positive change in their organisations. This international collaboration includes Dubai Health Authority (DHA), two international Universities Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG) and Massey University, and research implementation partner, chnrl. This has been internationally recognised, and won the People's Choice Award at the International Hospitals Federation Congress in Lisbon, 2023. The need for wellbeing and creating positive change is here, and it is essential to be implementing meaningful strategies, alongside utilising new technologies and AI to enhance it.



Therefore, the Future of mental health and wellbeing is here, and it is vital to prioritise and foster psychological safety through the power of data-driven action focused leadership. With the evolution of addressing mental health struggles, it is crucial to identify and implement a meaningful strategy. The UAE is addressing mental health at both federal and local levels highlighting the importance of wellbeing and happiness. Furthermore, it is important to increase awareness of the need, and implement comprehensive and holistic programmes incorporating high-level technology and AI to ensure quality integration and execution.

## The Policy Council Dialogue

The Policy Council Dialogue was held face-to-face on January 31st, 2024, at the MBRSG premises in Dubai. The panel event's organizers, Chnnl- New Zealand, the Dubai Health Authority, and the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (MBRSG, Dubai), believe that the relationship between digital health and wellness remains complex, multifactorial, and fraught with challenges of definitions, measurements, and outcomes. In this panel discussion, our objectives encompass a comprehensive exploration of various dimensions pertaining to workplace wellbeing. Firstly, we aim to delve into the key components and objectives of the National Strategy for wellbeing 2031 and Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy, understanding its fundamental principles and implications for businesses. Subsequently, we will analyze prominent frameworks for workplace wellbeing, dissecting their methodologies and applications in organizational contexts. Building upon this foundation, our discussion will focus on elucidating strategies for businesses to effectively integrate programs and align their approaches with established frameworks to optimize employee wellbeing. Moreover, we will examine the burgeoning role of artificial intelligence in shaping wellbeing strategies, emphasizing how leveraging technology can enhance the success and impact of initiatives. Additionally, we will underscore the evolving landscape of data and analytics in workplace wellbeing, highlighting its growing significance and potential to drive informed decision-making and innovation. Lastly, we will emphasize the importance of measuring the success of wellbeing initiatives, recognizing it as a critical aspect of fostering accountability, demonstrating ROI, and perpetuating a culture of continuous improvement within organizations. Through these objectives, our dialogue aims to provide insights and actionable strategies to propel workplace wellbeing initiatives forward in an increasingly complex and dynamic environment.

The policy dialogue panel featured multidisciplinary experts, including Dr. Elizabeth Berryman (Chnnl), Dr Khulood Mohamed Hussain Ibrahim Alsayegh (Dubai Health Authority), Prof. Immanuel Azaad Moonesar PhD, R.D. (MBRSG), and Dr Louise Lambert. Esteemed panelists discussed the following key areas: Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy: Implications for businesses, Key frameworks, Role of AI in wellbeing strategies, and Future of Data in workplace wellbeing.

### Policy Dialogue Panel Objectives

- Understanding the key components and objectives of the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy.
- Analyse key frameworks for workplace wellbeing.
- Discuss how businesses can best integrate programs and align their strategies with these frameworks to enhance employee wellbeing.
- Examine the role of AI in wellbeing strategies and how technology can enhance success.
- Emphasise the evolving Future and significance of data and analytics in workplace wellbeing.
- Identify the importance of measuring the success of wellbeing initiatives .



## The policy dialogue panel event addressed several questions, including

- What specific aspects of the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy do you believe have the most significant implications for businesses?
- How do you foresee the role of data evolving in shaping future workplace wellbeing initiatives?
- Why do you think measurement of wellbeing alongside the success of implemented initiatives is important?
- Do you believe that AI will shape the future of wellbeing programmes? How might this impact the strategies we currently see?
- Looking ahead, how do you foresee the evolving landscape of data and analytics influencing workplace wellbeing, and what steps can businesses take to stay ahead in this aspect?

Panelists and Participants' views, experiences, and shared knowledge enriched the dialogue. The dialogue intended to encourage action and put the policy issue on the policy agenda by engaging with the stakeholders who took part in the dialogue and sharing the summary with those who may review the summary and take action within their own institutions.

## Introduction

The opening remarks were by Dr. Khulood Alsayegh, Head of Clinical Standards and Guidelines at the Dubai Health Authority who delivered a speech that would shed light on the critical issue of mental health and wellbeing. With a commanding presence and a tone that resonated with authority, Dr. Alsayegh began by presenting sobering statistics, emphasizing the urgency of the matter. "In the UAE, mental disorders affect an estimated 14% of the population," she declared, her words punctuated by a collective murmur of concern from the audience. "Yet, despite the prevalence of these conditions, a staggering 75% of individuals in the Middle East Region who need help do not seek it." With a firm grasp of the socioeconomic implications of mental illnesses, Dr. Alsayegh highlighted the substantial burden they impose. "Mental disorders account for 5% of disability-adjusted life years lost globally," she stated, her expression grave. "In the UAE alone, we lose 3.9 billion AED per year in productivity due to mental health issues, with 9% of disability-adjusted life years lost as a result."

Transitioning seamlessly, Dr. Alsayegh turned her attention to vulnerable populations, underscoring the importance of federal initiatives towards mental health. "We must prioritize the mental wellbeing of vulnerable groups," she asserted, her voice unwavering. "This includes implementing recommendations issued by the Federal National Council and fostering initiatives such as the National Program for Happiness and Wellbeing and the National Policy for the Promotion of Mental Health." An example of the Dubai Health Authority is as follows:



## DHA Strategic Themes and Priorities (Framework)

| Health Outcomes   |  |   | Health Sector Regulation And Sustainability  |  |   |
|---|--|---|--|--|---|
| Promote the <b>healthiest lifestyle</b> for the people of Dubai                                   | Pioneering prevention efforts <b>against non-communicable</b> diseases | <b>Pioneering Human-centered health system</b> to promote trust, safety, quality and care for patients and their families | Make Dubai a model <b>for accessible value-based ealth care</b>  | Make Dubai a lighthouse <b>for healthcare governance, integration and regulation</b> | Ensure a conducive environment <b>to attract and develop the best health talents</b> while enhancing the Emiratization in the healthcare sector |
| Health System Innovation and Resilience   |  |   | Economic Impact  |  |   |
| Pioneering in combating <b>epidemics and infectious diseases</b> and <b>prepare for disasters</b> | Become a global <b>digital health hub</b>                              | Foster <b>healthcare education, research and innovation</b>   | Strengthening the economic contribution <b>of the health sector, including health tourism</b> to support Dubai economy |  |   |

As she delved into the strategies employed by the Dubai Health Authority, Dr. Alsayegh exuded passion and determination. "Our approach is centered on person-centered care," she explained, her commitment palpable. "We strive to provide tailored care to individual needs, promoting respect, inclusiveness, and empowerment." Emphasizing accessibility and value-based care, she stressed the importance of evidence-based practices and equal access for all, including vulnerable groups.

Throughout her speech, Dr. Alsayegh articulated a vision for an integrated, multisectoral approach to mental health, where physical and mental wellbeing are treated with equal importance. "We must connect individuals to appropriate services and ensure continuity of care," she urged, her words echoing with conviction.

As she concluded her address, Dr. Alsayegh called for leadership and governance that prioritizes mental health, reduces stigma, and allocates resources effectively. "We must embrace innovation and invest in the future of mental health," she proclaimed, her gaze sweeping across the audience. "Together, let us forge a path towards a healthier, more resilient society, where mental wellbeing is not just a priority but a fundamental human right." And with those words, she left an indelible mark on all who had the privilege of hearing her speak, igniting a renewed sense of purpose in the fight for mental health and wellbeing.



## Policy Council discussion

### 1. What specific aspects of the Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy do you believe have the most significant implications for businesses?

The Dubai Health Authority Mental Health Strategy encompasses various dimensions crucial for businesses. One of the most significant aspects is its emphasis on holistic wellbeing, which goes beyond physical health to include mental, emotional, and social wellness. For businesses, this implies a shift towards comprehensive employee wellness programs that address diverse needs. Additionally, the strategy's focus on creating a supportive work environment and promoting a healthy work-life balance can enhance employee engagement, productivity, and retention. Moreover, the strategy's incorporation of innovative technologies and data-driven approaches presents opportunities for businesses to optimize their wellness initiatives and tailor them to individual needs, thereby fostering a culture of wellbeing and resilience.

### 2. How do you foresee the role of data evolving in shaping future workplace wellbeing initiatives?

Data will play an increasingly pivotal role in shaping future workplace wellbeing initiatives. As organizations strive to personalize and optimize their wellness programs, they will rely on data-driven insights to understand employee needs, preferences, and behaviors better. This could involve leveraging data from wearable devices, health assessments, surveys, and performance metrics to identify trends, assess program effectiveness, and make informed decisions. Furthermore, advanced analytics and artificial intelligence will enable predictive modeling and proactive intervention, allowing businesses to anticipate and prevent potential issues before they escalate. Ultimately, data will empower organizations to design more targeted, evidence-based wellness strategies that yield measurable employee health and productivity improvements.

### 3. Why do you think measurement of wellbeing alongside the success of implemented initiatives is important?

The measurement of wellbeing alongside the success of implemented initiatives is crucial for several reasons. Firstly, it provides businesses with actionable insights into the effectiveness of their wellness programs, allowing them to identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement. By tracking key metrics related to employee health, engagement, absenteeism, and performance, organizations can assess the impact of their interventions and make data-driven adjustments as needed. Secondly, measuring wellbeing enables businesses to demonstrate a return on investment (ROI) for their wellness initiatives, which is essential for securing ongoing support and funding from stakeholders. Finally, it fosters a culture of accountability and transparency, where organizations are held accountable for the outcomes of their efforts to promote employee wellbeing, driving continuous improvement and innovation in this area.

### 4. Do you believe that AI will shape the future of wellbeing programmes? How might this impact the strategies we currently see?

AI is poised to revolutionize wellbeing programs in the future. AI-powered technologies can analyze vast amounts of data to personalize interventions, predict health risks, and offer proactive support to employees. For instance, AI-driven chatbots and virtual assistants can provide real-time guidance and support for mental health concerns, while predictive analytics can identify individuals at risk of burnout or other health issues before they occur. This shift towards AI-driven wellbeing solutions will likely lead to more scalable, cost-effective, and accessible programs that cater to the diverse needs of employees. Moreover, AI can enhance the efficiency and accuracy of data analysis, enabling organizations to derive deeper insights and make more informed decisions about their wellness strategies. However, it's essential to ensure that AI applications in wellbeing programs are ethically designed, respecting privacy, consent, and inclusivity.



## 5. Looking ahead, how do you foresee the evolving landscape of data and analytics influencing workplace wellbeing, and what steps can businesses take to stay ahead in this aspect?

The evolving landscape of data and analytics will continue to transform workplace wellbeing by enabling organizations to adopt more proactive, personalized, and evidence-based approaches. As data collection methods become more sophisticated and integrated with everyday workflows, businesses will have access to a wealth of real-time insights into employee health and behavior. This will facilitate the development of targeted interventions tailored to individual needs and preferences, ultimately leading to better outcomes for both employees and employers. To stay ahead in this aspect, businesses should prioritize investments in data infrastructure, analytics capabilities, and digital tools that support comprehensive wellbeing initiatives. Moreover, fostering a culture of data literacy and innovation within the organization will be essential for maximizing the value of data in driving continuous improvement in workplace wellbeing. By staying abreast of emerging trends and best practices in data-driven wellness strategies, businesses can position themselves as leaders in promoting employee health, happiness, and productivity.

## Deliberations about the Policy Elements

The policy elements were presented along with the relevant literature to include: element description, the underlying factor it addresses, benefits, risks, cost and cost-effectiveness, and uncertainty around elements as cited in the examined literature.

### The policy elements were:

- **Element #1:** Person - centered care tailored to individual needs
- **Element #2:** Improve accessibility of Mental Health services
- **Element #3:** Multi-sectorial approach
- **Element #4:** Building Mental Health and well-being awareness & resilience (especially at schools and at working places)

Panelists and Participants acknowledged the importance of all the elements and the challenges in exploring the Healthcare's Role in Wellbeing Initiatives.



The following are policy recommendation and identify the stakeholders involved:

### **1. Policy recommendation number 1: Person-centered care tailored to individual needs**

This recommendation emphasizes the importance of providing mental health services that are personalized and responsive to the unique needs of each individual. It entails a shift from a one-size-fits-all approach to mental healthcare to one that prioritizes the preferences, values, and circumstances of the individual seeking support.

Stakeholders involved:

- Mental health professionals: Psychiatrists, psychologists, counselors, and therapists play a central role in assessing individual needs and delivering personalized treatment plans.
- Healthcare organizations: Hospitals, clinics, and mental health centers need to adopt policies and procedures that prioritize person-centered care.
- Government agencies: Health ministries or departments are responsible for setting standards and regulations that promote person-centered care in mental health services.
- Patient advocacy groups: Organizations representing individuals with mental health conditions can advocate for policies that prioritize individual needs and empower patients in their treatment decisions.

### **2. Policy recommendation number 2: Improve accessibility of Mental Health services**

This recommendation aims to address barriers that prevent individuals from accessing mental health services, such as geographical, financial, cultural, and social barriers. Improving accessibility involves making mental health services more readily available, affordable, and culturally sensitive.

Stakeholders involved:

- Government agencies: Health ministries or departments are responsible for developing policies and funding initiatives to improve the accessibility of mental health services.
- Healthcare providers: Hospitals, clinics, and community health centers play a key role in ensuring that mental health services are available in underserved areas and that financial barriers are minimized.
- Insurance companies: Insurers can support accessibility by providing coverage for mental health services and reducing out-of-pocket expenses for individuals seeking treatment.
- Community organizations: Nonprofit organizations, religious institutions, and community centers can collaborate with healthcare providers to offer mental health support services tailored to the needs of local communities.

### **3. Policy recommendation number 3: Multi-sectorial approach**

This recommendation recognizes that mental health various factors beyond the healthcare system influence mental health

Stakeholders involved:

- Government agencies: Multiple government departments, including health, education, labor, housing, and social services, must collaborate to develop and implement cross-sectoral policies and programs addressing mental health.
- Employers: Employers have a role in promoting employee mental health through supportive workplace policies, mental health resources, and employee assistance programs.
- Educational institutions: Schools and universities can promote mental health awareness, provide support services for students, and implement policies to address mental health issues among students.





- Community organizations: NGOs, advocacy groups, and grassroots organizations can facilitate collaboration between different sectors and advocate for policies that prioritize mental health across various domains.

#### **4. Policy recommendation number 4: Building Mental Health and well-being awareness & resilience (especially at schools and at working places)**

This recommendation emphasizes the importance of raising awareness about mental health and fostering resilience to mental health challenges, particularly in educational and workplace settings. It involves implementing programs and initiatives that promote mental health literacy, destigmatize mental illness, and build coping skills.

Stakeholders involved:

- Educational institutions: Schools, colleges, and universities play a critical role in promoting mental health awareness and resilience among students through curriculum integration, awareness campaigns, and support services.
- Employers: Workplace wellness programs, training sessions, and employee assistance programs can help raise awareness about mental health and provide resources for building resilience among employees.
- Mental health professionals: Psychologists, counselors, and mental health educators can develop and deliver training programs aimed at enhancing mental health literacy and resilience-building skills.
- Government agencies: Health departments and education ministries can support initiatives to promote mental health awareness and resilience through funding, policy development, and coordination of efforts across sectors.
- Community organizations: NGOs, mental health advocacy groups, and community centers can organize events, workshops, and support groups to promote mental health awareness and resilience-building activities at the local level.

## **Summary of Insights**

In conclusion, the policy recommendations outlined above highlight the multifaceted approach needed to address mental health challenges effectively. Emphasizing person-centered care, improved accessibility, a multi-sectoral approach, and building awareness and resilience, these recommendations underscore the importance of collaboration among various stakeholders. From healthcare providers and government agencies to employers, educational institutions, and community organizations, each has a role to play in promoting mental health and wellbeing. By working together and implementing evidence-based policies and programs, we can create a more supportive environment where individuals can access the care they need and thrive mentally and emotionally.

## **Next Steps**

It was agreed that further steps need to be taken to build on the discussion and its findings, and the participants offered support in disseminating the dialogue summary and policy brief within their teams. In addition, both documents will be communicated with relevant departments, institutions, and professionals to advocate for action. All relevant stakeholders, subject matter experts, and institutions in public and private sectors shall be engaged in agenda-setting, priority-setting, and implementation. Additional work is needed to set the implementation plan and evaluation process to ensure evidence is collected throughout the implementation and not only at the end-stage. Generated evidence can aid in planning the next steps.



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1. Abu Hail Management & Administration Training
2. Al Manar Islamic Centre
3. American University In The Emirates
4. Arab Planning Institute
5. BWH
6. Center On Democratic Performance
7. Central Bank Of UAE
8. Centre For Technology, Innovation & Economic Research
9. Cleveland Clinic Abu Dhabi
10. COP28
11. Dubai Air Navigation Services
12. Dubai Airports
13. Dubai Health Authority
14. Dubai Media
15. Fuji Office Machines
16. Chnml
17. HCT
18. Human Rights
19. ICRC
20. Independent Consultant
21. International Committee Of The Red Cross (ICRC)
22. International Humanitarian City
23. IQVIA
24. MBRSG
25. Middlesex University
26. Ministry Of Health And Prevention
27. Ministry Of Energy And Infrastructure
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## Research at The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government

The Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government (formerly Dubai School of Government) is a research and teaching institution focusing on public policy in the Arab world. Established in 2005 under the patronage of HH Sheikh Mohammed bin Rashid Al Maktoum, Vice President and Prime Minister of the United Arab Emirates and Ruler of Dubai, in cooperation with the Harvard Kennedy School, MBRSG aims to promote good governance through enhancing the region's capacity for effective public policy.

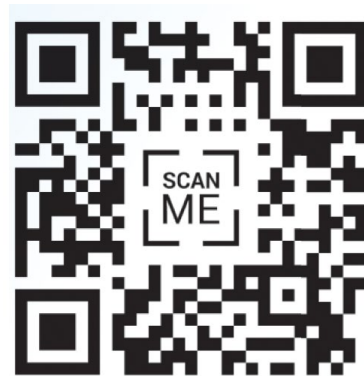
Toward this goal, the Mohammed Bin Rashid School of Government also collaborates with regional and global institutions in delivering its research and training programs. In addition, the School organizes policy forums and international conferences to facilitate the exchange of ideas and promote critical debate on public policy in the Arab world. The School is committed to the creation of knowledge, the dissemination of best practice and the training of policy makers in the Arab world. To achieve this mission, the School is developing strong capabilities to support research and teaching programs, including:

- Applied research in public policy and management;
- Master's degrees in public policy and public administration;
- Executive education for senior officials and executives; and,
- Knowledge forums for scholars and policy makers.

The MBRSG Research Department focuses on the following seven priority policy areas:

1. Future Government and Innovation
2. Education Policy
3. Health Policy
4. Public Leadership
5. Social Policy, Wellbeing and Happiness
6. Sustainable Development Policy
7. Economic Policy

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The **Dubai Health Authority (DHA)** is a governmental organisation that plays a pivotal role in shaping and regulating the healthcare landscape in Dubai. The DHA was established in 2007 as the governing body responsible for planning, regulating, and overseeing the healthcare system in Dubai. Its mandate includes developing and implementing strategic plans to ensure the delivery of high-quality and accessible healthcare services.

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