Good Work

Good Health

* Good Practice Guidelines

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European Telecommunications
Network Operators'
Association

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Good Work, Good Health / Good Practice Guidelines

Good Work Good Health

Improving the mental wellbeing of workers within the telecommunications sector

1. Introduction

1.1. Mental illness is now the commonest cause of ill health in the European Union (EU), representing some 25% of the total disease burden (fig. 1), and rates are rising year on year. Unlike many illnesses, mental health problems occur across the age spectrum and one in four people in employment can expect to experience some kind of mental health problem in a year. The impact on individual workers, employing organisations and society in general is very significant. Until recently the focus has been solely on the human and economic costs of ill health but there is a growing understanding that good mental health can benefit not just the individual and their family but also the businesses in which they work and the wider community.
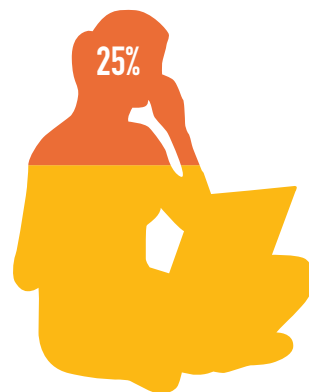

figure 1. *Percentage of mental illness in the European Union*

1.2. Most mental health problems are the result of Common Mental Illness (anxiety, depression, stress) and much of this is precipitated by adverse life events. Work can be the main issue but more often it is not. However, regardless of the cause of ill health the impact is material to employers and many companies are therefore addressing health and wellbeing as a business issue. There is a growing realisation that work can be good for health but that the quality of the work is critical. Telecommunications companies are generally perceived as being "good" employers offering fair working conditions and being early adopters of new technology that not only drives efficiencies but which can also improve the work life balance of staff. Communications technology is both a catalyst and an enabler for change – as such it can be seen either as part of the problem or as central to the promotion of improved mental wellbeing in the workplace. Reviewing working practices and the management of mental health problems across the sector can therefore act as a pointer to good practice which has relevance not just to Telecommunications companies but to the wider employment market.

1.3. The Health and Safety Working Group of the European Social Dialogue Committee for Telecommunications, with the support of the European Commission, therefore engaged researchers to examine both the scientific literature relating to mental health at work and the policies and practices of a selection of European Telecommunications companies chosen to be representative of different sizes and geographical coverage. The research has been published separately (1) and forms the basis for these Good Practice Guidelines. The findings highlight the work factors associated with both good and bad mental wellbeing and identify a number of examples from across Europe that demonstrate how problems can be avoided and how employees who become unwell can best be supported.

(1) www.gwgh.eu

2. Background

2.1. The Telecommunications sector is an important part of the economy of the European Union representing some 2.2% of GDP and employing directly more than 1 million people. The pace of change in the sector over the past 25 years is probably unparalleled. Technological and market shifts such as those from copper to fibre, from fixed line to mobile and from voice to data traffic have transformed the nature of the work undertaken by many. At the same time state monopolies have been privatised and the market opened to competition with many new entrants. There has been consolidation, increased efficiency and a substantial reduction in the size of the workforce; this last has accelerated an already ageing demographic trend. In consequence, a high proportion of the current employee population has had to adapt to multiple changes at multiple levels during the course of their working lives and there is no sign of that abating.

2.2. Employers have a duty to ensure the health (physical and mental) of their workers in every aspect of their work under the provisions of the legally binding Framework Directive 89/391/EEC on occupational safety and health. Additionally there are two policy instruments at Community level that are the result of European social dialogue and which specifically focus on mental health at work. The EU-level social partners concluded these two Framework Agreements in 2004 and 2007 to address the prevention of "work-related stress" and "harassment and violence at work" respectively. Together with their member organisations they committed themselves to implement these agreements at national level, with a view to identifying, preventing and managing problems of work-related stress, harassment and violence in workplaces across Europe.

2.3. However, there is growing evidence for a strong business case to encourage employers to go beyond minimum requirements not to harm their workers' health and to seek to both promote mental wellbeing in the workplace and to support people whose mental health is impaired, regardless of cause. Mental ill health is now the leading cause of sickness absence in many European countries giving rise to substantial costs for companies. Additionally, it is often the main reason for premature retirement on health grounds – for example in Germany this accounts for some 40% of all cases with an average age at work cessation of 48 years. This loss of skilled labour impacts significantly on companies and can result in costs arising from replacement, training and enhanced pensions. People who stay in work with impaired mental wellbeing also affect business profitability. The concept of presenteeism, whereby the sick attend work but are less productive, is now well established and conservative estimates put the cost for mental ill health at double that of absenteeism. Perhaps most compellingly for business, evidence indicates that those organisations which promote good mental health have higher levels of engagement among the workforce and deliver greater shareholder return.

> *Work-related stress is a process where work demands, of various kinds, exceed an individual's capacity to cope. It can, if chronic and/or severe, lead to physical and mental ill health and is linked to sickness absence, turnover, and poor performance.*
> *It can result when there has been insufficient attention paid to the design of jobs and to how work is organised and managed. Addressing these upstream factors is the most effective mitigation strategy. However, interventions at the individual level in terms of assessment, treatment and rehabilitation will always be required.*

UK Health and Safety Executive (HSE)

figure 2. BITC Workwell Model

An integrated strategic approach

HIGHER PRODUCTIVITY

KEEP LEARNING

BETTER ENGAGEMENT

BE ACTIVE

BETTER BRAND IMAGE

CONNECT WITH OTHERS

BETTER PHYSICAL & PSYCHOLOGICAL HEALTH
Create an environment that promotes healthy behaviours

BETTER WORK**
Create a happy and engaging work environment

WORKING WELL

BETTER SPECIALIST SUPPORT
Provide interventions to mangage health and wellbeing

BETTER RELATIONSHIPS
Promote communications and social connections

TAKE NOTICE

BETTER ATTENDANCE

GIVE / VOLUNTEER

BETTER RETENTION AND RECRUITMENT

● *Business benefits*

● *Employee actions recommended by Foresight Mental Capital Report*

🌈 *Employer actions recommended by BITC*

** Using 'good work' criteria defined by Coats and Lehki (September 2008)

http://www.bitc.org.uk/workplace/health_and_wellbeing/healthy_workplace_model/the_workwell_model.html

3. Enhancing Mental Wellbeing

3.1. The workplace has long been recognised as important for health promotion activities but thinking has evolved from viewing the workplace as a venue in which external experts can operate to an integrated approach which puts health at the heart of a company's people agenda. In terms of mental health, the evidence indicates that benefits accrue by taking action at both an organisational and at an individual employee level. The UK organisation Business in the Community has created the "Workwell Model" to demonstrate the business benefits for employers who take a proactive approach to the prevention of illness and promotion of health and wellbeing. The model (figure 2) also promotes early intervention for employees who develop a health condition and active sickness absence management to rehabilitate people back into work.

3.2. Organisational Interventions

3.2.1. The way that work is constructed is critical to good mental health. Tasks need to be planned so that they are achievable, safe to undertake and (as far as possible) rewarding for the person carrying them out. Organisational structures need to be designed so that they promote effective operational delivery, avoid unnecessary ambiguity and distribute workload proportionately. A culture needs to be established which values individual contribution, supports people appropriately and ensures that justice is not only done but is seen to be done. Times of organisational change are particularly hazardous to mental health and require careful planning that takes account of people issues as well as structural and financial matters.

3.2.2. How can we design tasks to be "healthy"?

Ensure that work is adequately planned before it commences

Apply ergonomic principles to match the work to the person

Make sure demands are reasonable for the time and staff available

Give individuals as much control as possible over the way tasks are done

Allow individuals to influence the pace of work within overall targets

Make provision for people with vulnerabilities or impaired capability

Consider psychological as well as physical hazards in risk assessment

Provide clear guidance on achievement and respond to feedback

3.2.3. How can we make sure organisational design is "healthy"?

Match structures and resources to operational / customer requirements

Be flexible in resourcing to try and accommodate worker needs

Construct roles with clear reporting lines and responsibilities

Educate first line and middle managers in good people management

Ensure training is suitable and sufficient for all role requirements

Create a safe and comfortable working environment

Consider and support practical needs of staff (e.g. travel, meals, etc)

3.2.4. How can we create a healthy organisational culture?

Establish a clear set of values and ensure they are applied consistently

Create an environment that promotes open discussion and mutual support

Encourage leaders to model desired behaviours

Underpin policies with procedures and processes that are seen to be fair

Monitor attitudes and behaviours and take remedial action if required

3.2.5. How can we implement healthy change management?

Utilise transformational leadership skills

Apply a structured methodology consistently across the organisation

Address perceived justice issues (See page 7)

Take account of diverse needs and perceptions among the workforce

Consult and involve employees as far as is practicable

Communicate early, often and consistently

Deliver messages personally with the opportunity for dialogue

Engage middle management as a priority

Romtelecom — Recognising values

A programme was developed to disseminate the company's values and to demonstrate to staff that they are valued. In part this was through the use of positive feedback, encouraging people to send postcards to a colleague saying "well done!". This can either be done on paper or through the intranet where the postcard appears on the individual's profile page. This has been supported by a team of company ambassadors who have spoken to the entire workforce in workshops of about twenty people. The meetings have discussed the company values, how they impact on every member of staff and the future direction of the business. By using these two components the company is aiming to deliver transformational change through engaging its greatest asset — its people.

There are three key dimensions that influence whether individuals accept that change is being implemented fairly:

1

Distributive justice

The selection criteria for the individuals and parts of the organisation subject to changes. This incorporates elements related to "needs", such as legislation and collective agreements, as well as "efficiency" which captures skills, productivity, etc.

2

Procedural justice

This requires consistent procedures executed without bias and on the basis of accurate information. There must be a trusted mechanism for correcting poor decisions and the system must be founded on ethical and moral standards appropriate for the society in which the organisation is operating.

3

Interactional justice

The nature and timing of internal and external communication is vital in maintaining trust. Clear, early, open and personal communication with those involved is critical in avoiding uncertainty, rumour and de-motivation.

Kieselbach T et al. 2009

3.3. Individual Interventions

3.3.1. The individual worker also has a role to play in promoting their own mental wellbeing both within and outside the workplace. Some mental illnesses are constitutional and occur without any obvious precipitant whereas others (including the majority of common mental health problems) are provoked by an event or a series of circumstances. Some personality types are more vulnerable to pressures than others but no-one is immune from developing mental ill health. Adopting fairly simple behaviours and reframing some attitudes can have a beneficial effect for all, regardless of underlying personality or mental health status; the protective effect is by no means absolute but it can help to reduce risks and mitigate severity. Employers can encourage these activities to promote good mental health through education and participation programmes.

3.3.2.
What are the key features of a healthy lifestyle?

- Using alcohol only in moderation
- Taking regular exercise
- Practicing good sleep hygiene
- Avoiding mind altering chemical agents
- Consuming a balanced and nutritious diet

3.3.3.
What can people do to increase their own resilience?

- Be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses
- Improve time management skills
- Make time and space for themselves and those who mean most to them
- Work at maintaining good relationships at work and elsewhere
- Focus on breathing slowly and deeply when under pressure
- Think rationally and respond only after reflection

3.3.4.
What does having a positive outlook mean?

- Welcoming the chance to test yourself and learn from it
- Seeing the good in situations – opportunities rather than threats
- Being aware that negative thinking affects your own emotions and behaviour
- Taking control of your own life where you can
- Challenging your own negative thoughts and unrealistic expectations

3.3.5.
What do people who maintain a good work/life balance do?

- Take a regular vacation that is a break from work issues
- Ensure they are enjoying what they do and make changes if they are not
- Set life priorities and recalibrate those periodically
- Are honest about what they can and cannot do at work and at home
- Delegate and escalate appropriately
- Use communications technology to work flexibly when possible

Deutsche Telekom – Structuring flexible hours to manage workload

The company uses work time accounts to help manage flexible working safely and effectively. This means there is not a fixed end or start time for work and time is recorded electronically. Each individual can collect excess time worked up to a maximum of 120 hours.

The system triggers flags with up to 40 hours being marked green, 40-80 hours yellow and 80-120 red. Employees with a yellow flag – indicating excess hours on the account - are required to reduce their excess and where a red flag occurs the line manager must talk to the employee and aim to clear the account by reduced working hours or taking leave. If the line manager cannot achieve resolution in this way it is taken as a sign that the employee is overloaded and work must be reallocated. The account for each employee has to reach the zero line within 18 months to ensure that individuals are not working excessively. Some employees, with management agreement, use this system to work a compressed week, or to accrue time for a longer period of annual leave.

Portugal Telecom – Mens sana in corpore sano

The company has a large health promotion programme directed towards a range of health issues with a number of different awareness campaigns. The aim of all these programmes is to maintain and improve physical and mental wellbeing among the employees. Our general approach is to promote physical activity and good nutrition as key components in keeping fit, healthy and happy. Specific campaigns have included raising awareness on how to protect your heart and how to reduce obesity. Other campaigns have been launched to prevent risks arising from smoke and loss of memory. There is a permanent campaign for breast cancer, geared to both raising awareness among workers and screening for disease. In relation to mental wellbeing, there is currently a campaign on stress which highlights both the potential causes and the impact on employees. These "business as usual" health initiatives are supplemented by additional health activities such as those related to the pandemic flu, where emergency plans were set up to protect employees and to help keep the business running. Communication is critical and a combination of posters within the workplace and the company intranet are used.

4. Work Hazards to Mental Health

4.1. Work pressures can harm mental health either in isolation or in combination with other sources of stress. The relationship is not a straightforward one because work can also have a protective effect on mental health and there is very substantial variability between individuals. Nevertheless there is now quite strong evidence relating to the attributes of work which are associated with impaired mental health. It is clearly in the interests of all in the workplace to try to control these hazards and for employers that is underpinned by a legal and a moral duty. The following factors outline the commonly described problems:

4.1.1. How can Demands harm mental health?

The volume of work is beyond the worker's capacity

The pace of the work is beyond the worker's capacity

The intensity of the work is beyond the worker's capacity

The nature of the work is beyond the worker's capacity

There is insufficient work to keep the worker occupied

The work is too monotonous for the worker to get job satisfaction

The working environment is unsuitable for the worker

4.1.2. What aspects of Control can be hazardous?

The worker has a low level of control over the work flow

The worker has little decision latitude over how the work is done

The worker is restricted on when to take a break

The worker has little choice in working hours or shift patterns

The worker has little control over his working environment

4.1.3. What kinds of Support issues can be harmful?

There is a lack of help and support from line managers

There is a lack of help and support from colleagues

There is a lack of help and support from the organisation in general

There is no-one to talk to about work related problems

There is no-one who will listen to work concerns

There is no-one to turn to when work is emotionally demanding

There is little praise or encouragement in the workplace

4.1.4. Which aspects of Relationships are important at work?

Poor management style (See figure 3)

Conflict with or between colleagues

Disrespect from colleagues or managers

There is no-one to talk to about work related problems

Bullying and harassment

4.1.5. How can Role impact on mental health?

There is lack of clarity about the worker's duties and responsibilities

There is lack of clarity about departmental goals and objectives

There is no clear link between the worker's duties and organisational aims

The worker has multiple and possibly conflicting reporting lines

The worker is isolated organisationally or geographically

The worker's training and experience are insufficient for the position

4.1.6. How can Change be harmful?

Inconsistent or badly managed
change processes

Lack of consultation in
the planning of change

Poor communication of
the impact of changes

No opportunity to discuss
or question changes

Failure to engage middle management
as change agents

4.1.7. How can Justice issues affect mental wellbeing?

Perceived unfairness in selection
(promotion, redundancy, etc)

Perceived unfairness in procedures
(performance, discipline, etc)

Perceived unfairness in communications
(inaccuracy, duplicity, etc)

Perceived imbalance between
effort and reward

Perceived imbalance between work
and home demands

Perceived poor job security

Perceived lower than deserved status
in the organisation

Belgacom — Addressing the perception of justice

In one part of the company it was perceived that management and the workforce, especially at lower grades, needed to understand each others' issues better. Meetings between managers and their staff were set up for 30 minutes each week and attendance at meetings was tracked. This helped to develop good interaction between managers and workers giving them a forum to discuss issues including engagement with the company, worries in business life and the work problems employees were facing. The process began with simple toolbox talks and then moved to asking people at the meetings to engage in discussion. The process has developed a new connection between managers and employees and has helped everyone to understand better the business situation, how budgetary decisions have been made and what impact they will have. The company intranet was used to publicise topics, discussions and solutions. Developing this more open communication style has taken time and investment but is seen by everyone to be a good thing. It has helped improve the feeling that the company tries to act fairly and the process is being extended to other parts of the business.

Telenor — Reducing the risk of change

The company uses a specific risk assessment process for organisational change. This helps to identify potential risk factors including management (not taking care of employees' needs), the work tasks (skills, workload and loss of tasks during period of change), loss of skills, working environment (job security or insecurity and loss of social contact) and whether the employees will have enough information or influence on the change process. Use of the process in planning allows for change to be managed better with improved business results as well as reduced psychological risks for the workforce.

5. Mitigating Harm & Assisting Rehabilitation

5.1. Companies in the Telecommunications sector have implemented a range of different policies, products and services to prevent harm to their employees and to help those who do develop mental health problems. However the approach taken by most follows the well established principle of primary prevention, secondary intervention and tertiary rehabilitation. Similarly most structure their programmes around education and training, assessment and practical support. The hard evidence for the effectiveness of this approach is limited but it does represent the current consensus among experts worldwide and has face validity. Factors to consider when constructing a programme would include:

5.2. Primary Prevention

5.2.1. Education & Training

Management training on elements of "good work" (See 3.2.)

General awareness to whole workforce of mental health issues

Workforce education on protective behaviours (See 3.3.)

Company wide measures to combat stigma and discrimination

Management training in psychosocial risk assessment (See 4.)

Promotion of management competencies to enhance mental wellbeing

5.2.2. Assessment

Identifying higher risk roles (e.g. customer facing)

Identifying vulnerable individuals to place appropriately and mobilise support

Validating management competencies and risk assessment skills

Gauging general knowledge and attitudes concerning mental health

5.2.3. Practical Support

Recruitment and promotion processes that avoid stigma and discrimination

Open access education and training material (hard copy, intranet & web links)

Active promotion of healthy lifestyle (gymnasia, smoke free, good food, etc)

Flexible employment patterns that balance work and home demands

Adjustment processes and services for vulnerable people

figure 3. Management competencies to promote mental wellbeing

Reasoning/managing difficult situations

Managing conflict

Use of resources

Empowering

Managing the individual within the team

Personally accessible

Empathetic engagement

Sociable

Respectful and responsible: managing emotions and having integrity

Considerate approach

Managing emotions

Integrity

Managing and communicating existing and future work

Proactive management

Problem solving

Empowering

Line management behaviour and stress at work: Guidance for line managers (2008) Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development

5.3. Secondary Intervention

5.3.1. Education & Training

Awareness for senior management of links with engagement & performance

Training for people managers in signs of distress and support available

General publicity to workforce of where to go in times of trouble

5.3.2. Assessment

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Metrics (attendance, performance, etc) to monitor company temperature

Engagement surveys and stress audits to identify organisational "hotspots"

Health assessment to identify and support individuals who are struggling

5.3.3. Practical Support

Occupational health advice on relevant work factors

Flexibility for line managers to make local temporary adjustments

Availability to staff of confidential advice on personal problems

Mechanism to report in confidence examples of bullying and harassment

5.4. Tertiary Rehabilitation

5.4.1. Education & Training

Guidance for people managers and colleagues on the effects of mental illness

Guidance for managers on rehabilitation adjustments that can be helpful

5.4.2. Assessment

★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Line managers listening to the sick worker and addressing any work issues

Occupational health assessment to gauge capability and recovery

Review of work arrangements to safeguard others and prepare for return

5.4.3. Practical Support

Maintenance of social contact during absences by managers and colleagues

Provision of voluntary and confidential counselling or psychological services

Occupational health support through absence and after return

Written plan detailing phased return, adjustments and timelines

Coaching and encouragement to help restore confidence

France Telecom – Improving people management skills

Managers are trained in people management and how to detect subtle signals of psychological distress. The classroom based training is mandatory and 6000 managers have been trained so far in their business unit management schools. The aim is to guide managers in providing initial support and signposting additional resources rather than trying to solve employees' problems for them. Team leaders are coached in how to manage teams, develop their leadership skills and to pick up on both verbal and behavioural signals from their colleagues. Greater clarity has been provided to team leaders about their role and the behaviours expected in carrying out their duties. Emphasis is placed on the use of team meetings to discuss problem solving and to identify sources of help. One unanticipated benefit of the training has been the creation of a community of team leaders exchanging ideas.
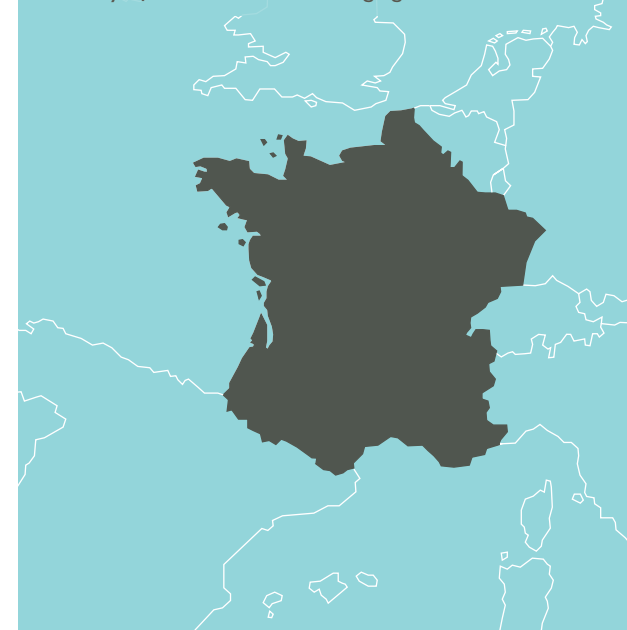
Telefonica – Supporting employees in difficulty

Individuals can report poor mental wellbeing through a number of different routes including medical services, prevention services or to their line manager. When reported, different solutions can be suggested from all sources of help. These include direction to the intranet for information on coping with stress but also to other sources of help within the company including psychological counselling. Advice is also available for problems outside of work (e.g. relationship issues, financial or legal problems) through the employee assistance programme. If people can continue to work, this will be accommodated by the company and the team leader can change the work schedule. The Trade Unions collaborate fully with the company where the problems necessitate a job change. Escalation to the most senior manager in the area occurs if it emerges that the problem relates to a group of people or a specific line manager.

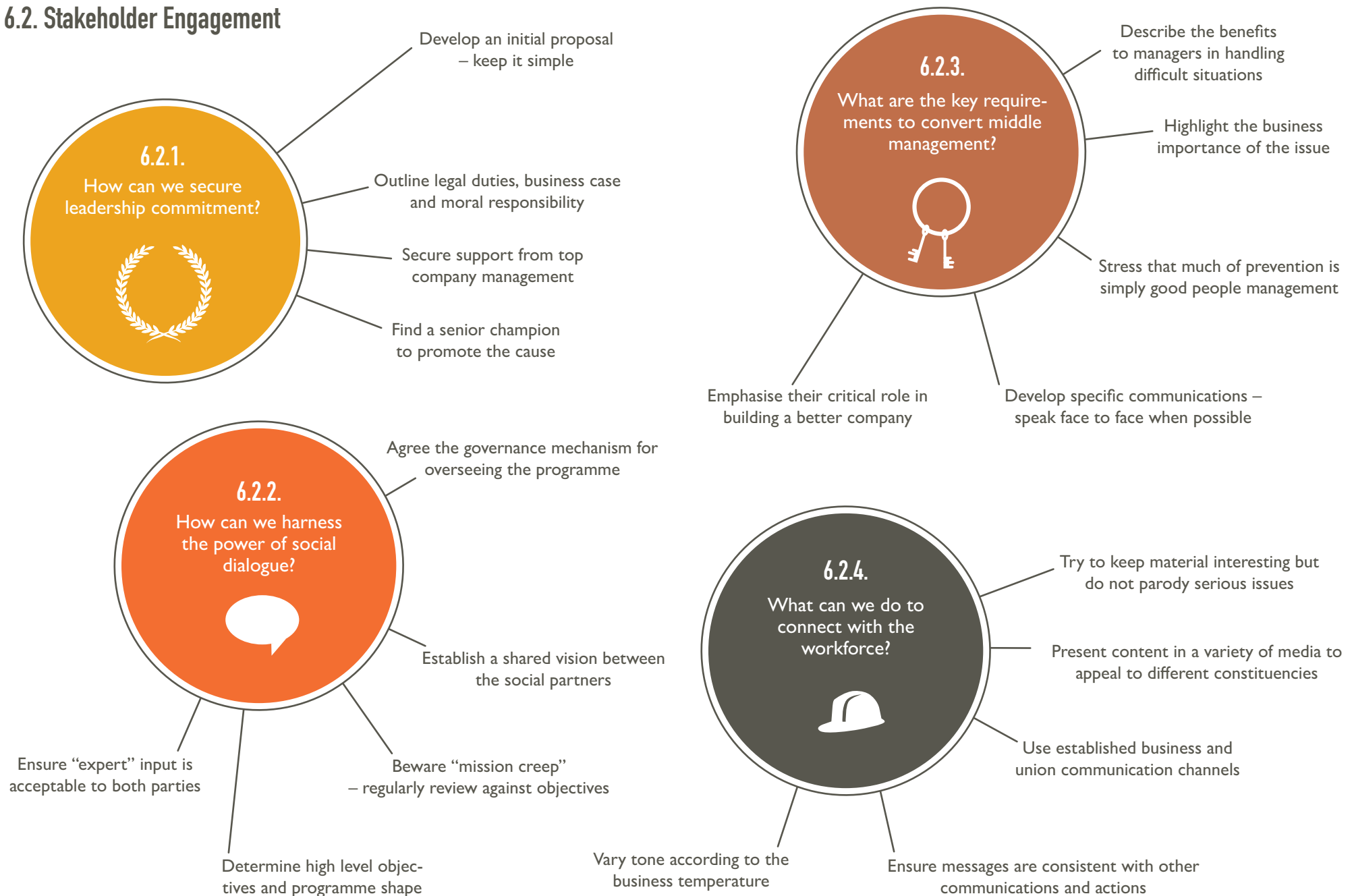# 6. Implementation of Good Practice

6.1. The review of practice, which included eight Telecommunications companies of varying size across different parts of Europe, demonstrated that, even when working to common principles, the detail of each programme is unique. Creating "good work" in any situation necessarily reflects the culture, the expectations and the economic situation of the company, the workforce and the society in which they operate. Multi-national organisations have frequently found that when implementing programmes, especially those that relate to sensitive issues such as mental health, in different geographies they have to make significant adjustments to reflect local issues. Even within a relatively homogenous region like Europe, views on mental illness, the healthcare system and the degree to which employer involvement is acceptable varies widely. In consequence the way that any programme is implemented is vital to its success. The guidance that follows therefore reflects the type of process that companies and their workforces have most often found to be effective.

figure 4. *Bridging the gap between evidence and practice*

Adapted from Promoting mental health: concepts, emerging evidence & practice – WHO (2005)

Evidence base

Generating the evidence

- *Assess needs and determinants*
- *Document process and outcome*
- *Employ a broad range of research methods*
- *Engage key stakeholders in the process*

Practice & policy

Enhancing policy and practice

- *Identify effective initiatives*
- *Devise active dissemination strategies*
- *Develop guidelines for practitioners and policy-makers*
- *Ensure relevance across cultural contexts and settings*

6.2. Stakeholder Engagement

6.2.1. How can we secure leadership commitment?

- Develop an initial proposal – keep it simple
- Outline legal duties, business case and moral responsibility
- Secure support from top company management
- Find a senior champion to promote the cause

6.2.3. What are the key requirements to convert middle management?

- Describe the benefits to managers in handling difficult situations
- Highlight the business importance of the issue
- Stress that much of prevention is simply good people management
- Develop specific communications – speak face to face when possible
- Emphasise their critical role in building a better company

6.2.2. How can we harness the power of social dialogue?

- Agree the governance mechanism for overseeing the programme
- Establish a shared vision between the social partners
- Beware "mission creep" – regularly review against objectives
- Determine high level objectives and programme shape
- Ensure "expert" input is acceptable to both parties

6.2.4. What can we do to connect with the workforce?

- Try to keep material interesting but do not parody serious issues
- Present content in a variety of media to appeal to different constituencies
- Use established business and union communication channels
- Ensure messages are consistent with other communications and actions
- Vary tone according to the business temperature

6.3. Constructing the Programme

6.3.1. How can we use the model to drive progress?

Create a matrix – rows and columns

Row – primary prevention, secondary intervention and tertiary rehabilitation

Column - education & training, assessment and practical support

Aim to eventually populate each cell with at least one intervention

6.3.2. What are the key steps in resourcing the programme?

Appoint a project manager with appropriate skills

Identify and obtain key skills required – internal or external

Prepare a project plan – be realistic

Start small and grow – pilot schemes, single interventions, etc

6.3.3. Where do we start in creating material?

Write a simple policy or framework

Review existing material and services and adapt if needed

Identify gaps in the matrix

Look externally for ways to fill the gaps – tailor as necessary

Only build your own services from scratch as a last resort

6.3.4. What are the tips for launching the intervention?
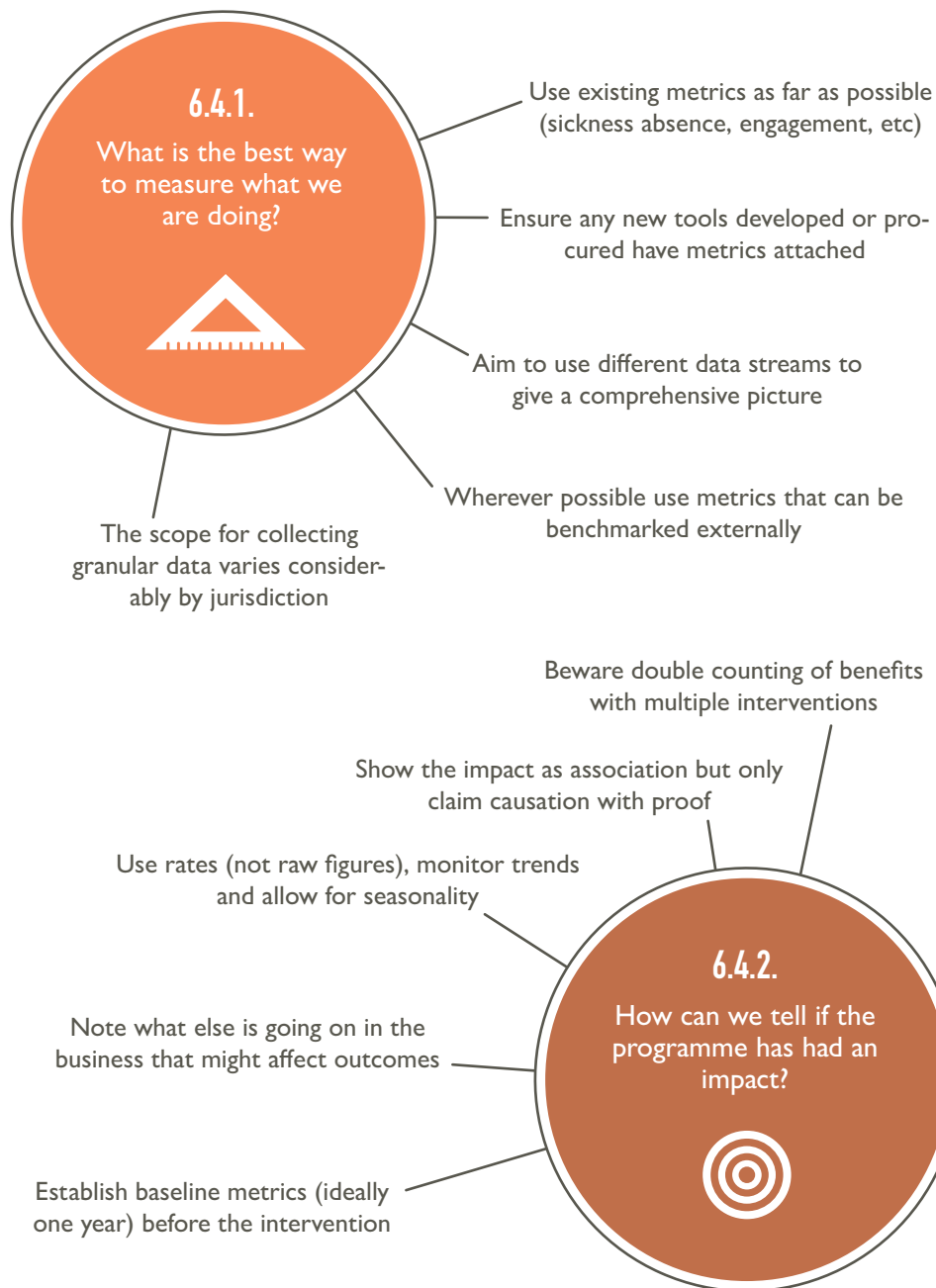
Do not try to do too much at the same time

Remember communication is key (See 6.2.4.)

Use existing delivery vehicles as far as possible

figure 5. Examples of interventions used by European Telcos

	Primary prevention	Secondary intervention	Tertiary rehabilitation
Education & training	General awareness training to workforce of mental health issues, healthy lifestyle and stigma avoidance	Training of people managers to recognise signs of distress and to signpost support services	Guidance for managers and employees on effective return to work adjustments
Assessment	Risk assessment of work and change to control psychosocial hazards	Stress audits to identify people and/or business units at risk of harm	Access to occupational health service for assessment of sick employees and advice to management
Practical Support	Adoption of flexible working (time and/or location) to help balance work and home commitments	Availability of confidential employee assistance programme	Provision of psychological support (CBT) services for mentally ill staff

6.4. Defining Metrics & Measuring Impact

6.4.1.
What is the best way to measure what we are doing?

Use existing metrics as far as possible (sickness absence, engagement, etc)

Ensure any new tools developed or procured have metrics attached

Aim to use different data streams to give a comprehensive picture

Wherever possible use metrics that can be benchmarked externally

The scope for collecting granular data varies considerably by jurisdiction

Beware double counting of benefits with multiple interventions

Show the impact as association but only claim causation with proof

Use rates (not raw figures), monitor trends and allow for seasonality

6.4.2.
How can we tell if the programme has had an impact?

Note what else is going on in the business that might affect outcomes

Establish baseline metrics (ideally one year) before the intervention

BT – A measured approach to better mental health

Tracking metrics is an integral part of the way that the company manages its business and mental health is no exception. The company's "Positive Mentality" mental health promotion programme had evaluation built in from the start. 51% of people who participated reported an improvement in their mental wellbeing and 34% reported they had learned something new about mental health. The mental wellbeing of the workforce is monitored continuously and reported monthly to senior management through a mental health dashboard. The dashboard takes feeds from the sickness absence, occupational health, employee assistance and stress assessment databases to give a picture down to divisional level of the extent, severity and work causes for impaired mental health. Management, supported by the company psychologist, use the information to develop and refine tailored mental health action plans for each part of the business. This approach has helped to mitigate the impact on employees of very difficult economic circumstances.

6.5. Review, Refresh & Renew

6.5.1. How do we make sure that programmes remain effective?

Ensure that results from measuring impact are used to refine interventions

Compare different parts of the organisation to improve implementation

Benchmark externally to monitor effectiveness of programme

Audit periodically to make sure that policies are being applied

6.5.2. What do we need to be doing for the future?

Monitor legislation, guidance and published studies for new thinking

Look to other disciplines for ideas that might be translatable

Stay aware of business developments to identify potential problems

7. Conclusion

The factors in work which help to promote mental wellbeing or which can pose a hazard to mental health are becoming increasingly well understood. The Telecommunications industry is well placed to apply this learning because of its size, structure, access to new technology and history of collaborative working through social dialogue. Every organisation will have to develop its own solutions which reflect the business environment, culture and social framework in which it operates. This document sets out common principles that apply to all who work in the sector and practical guidance, based on what a range of companies are already doing, which can be used selectively to meet local needs. It is hoped that managers, employees and their representatives in the telecommunications industry will find the document helpful and that it may also have wider applicability to other employment sectors.

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ETNO

The European Telecommunications Network Operators' Association (ETNO) has been the voice of Europe's telecommunications network operators since 1992. Its 41 members in 35 countries collectively account for a turnover of more than € 270 billion and one million employees. ETNO members are pan-European operators, also holding new entrant positions outside their national markets. ETNO brings together the main investors in e-communications platforms and services, representing 70% of total sector investment. ETNO closely contributes to shaping the best regulatory and commercial environment for its members to continue rolling out innovative and high quality services and platforms for the benefit of European consumers and businesses.

UNI Europa

UNI Europa is a European trade union federation. It unites trade unions organising in services and skills sectors in 50 different countries. With over 320 affiliated trade union organisations, UNI Europa represents 7 million workers in key service sectors vital to the welfare of European citizens: Commerce, Postal services and logistics, Information Technologies and Communication, Financial services, Temporary agency workers, Social insurance, Property services (cleaning, security), Graphical sector, Media, entertainment and the arts,Tourism, Hair and beauty, Gaming, Sport. UNI Europa is based in Brussels and is part of UNI global union whose headquarters are in Nyon (Switzerland).