



MINISTRY OF HEALTH

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Type: Oral Presentation

THE FUTURE IS HERE: SUPPORTING GEN Z MENTAL WELL-BEING THROUGH SCIENTIFIC AND INCLUSIVE WORKPLACE DESIGN

Introduction:

This presentation aims to examine the mental health and integration challenges facing Generation Z (born 1997–2012) in the workplace, and to offer practical, science-informed solutions for creating supportive environments that promote wellbeing and productivity across sectors. It explores how organizations can proactively adapt to the expectations, vulnerabilities, and strengths of Gen Z employees to foster sustainable engagement and mental health.

Methods:

The paper combines current research from global and regional sources on Gen Z workplace experiences and mental health. It is complemented by practice-based evidence from the presenter's work with Kenyan early-career Psychology professionals through mentorship, as well as experience in corporate wellness programs. Data points from Kenyan sources are integrated to ground recommendations in the local context.

Results:

Globally, Gen Z reports the highest levels of workplace-related mental health stress. A 2022 McKinsey Health Institute study found that over 60% of Gen Z workers globally reported symptoms of anxiety or depression, compared to 41% of Millennials.

In Kenya, the Federation of Kenya Employers reports that over 68% of employers have observed difficulty integrating Gen Z workers, with common concerns including emotional fragility, difficulty receiving feedback, and disengagement. However, Gen Z workers also bring strong digital skills, a passion for purpose, and a desire for psychological safety—qualities that, when supported, can fuel innovation.

Practice-based interventions such as peer coaching, structured mental health onboarding, and training managers in generational intelligence have shown promise in improving retention, team cohesion, and mental wellness. One local mentorship program for early-career psychologists recorded significant improvements in confidence, communication, and job readiness after adopting a strengths-based coaching approach.

Conclusion:

To build truly supportive work environments, Kenyan organizations must shift from reactive to proactive mental health strategies that consider generational differences. Integrating neuroscience, emotional intelligence, and youth development science into workplace culture is not just good for Gen Z—it future-proofs the entire workforce. This presentation proposes a practical model rooted in inclusive leadership, mentorship, and adaptive workplace policies that equip all sectors to welcome Gen Z in ways that protect their mental health and unlock their full potential.

References:

Federation of Kenya Employers. (2023). Youth Employment Trends in Kenya: Integration of Gen Z into the Workforce. Nairobi, Kenya: FKE.

McKinsey Health Institute. (2022). Addressing employee burnout: Are you solving the right problem? McKinsey & Company.

Keywords:

Gen Z, workplace mental health, future of work, employee wellbeing, psychological safety, youth employment, inclusive workplaces, generational intelligence

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Track Classification: Securing the Future: Holistic Approach to Mental Health for Generations:
Promoting Workplace Mental Well-being: Creating Supportive Environments Across All Sectors