WEF Global Agenda Council on Mental Health
Case Study Examples of Good Practices for Addressing Mental Health in the Workplace

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### AT A GLANCE – CASE STUDY: BHP BILLITON

**RATIONALE & DEVELOPMENT**

BHP Billiton is a global resources company headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. With 45 per cent of people in Australia (Beyond Blue) expected to experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, and similar statistics in the other countries worldwide where BHP Billiton operates, mental health was recognised as an issue that needed attention. Additionally, BHP Billiton’s workforce is over 80 per cent male, with research showing that men are less likely to seek help for mental health issues.

BHP Billiton’s Health, Safety and Environment leadership team called for a session to speak with an expert from the Australian mental health organisation ‘Beyondblue’ to improve their understanding of the issue, and develop a way forward. This session was a catalyst for the Company’s Western Australia Iron Ore Business to set to work on developing a Mental Wellness Standard, which was launched in 2014. At a corporate level, the Health and Safety team saw the strategic need and made mental health a Company priority. A framework was developed (with a global expert) that would suit the diversity of BHP Billiton’s global organisation.

**PROGRAMME**

BHP Billiton works to ensure that the psychological aspects of health and safety are prioritised as much as the physical. Mental health is addressed holistically – not just looking at mental ill-health. The framework is built on four pillars: culture, capacity, prevention and recovery. At a broad level, a number of key areas are focused upon:

- **Leadership engagement and education**, including working with the senior leadership team to build their awareness and capability, and leveraging the Company-wide leadership development program.
- **Using external campaigns**, such as Movember, to raise awareness internally.
- **Better leveraging of existing Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).**
- **Improving capture and analysis of data** to help inform the approach.
- **Improving resilience** of its people. BHP Billiton is developing its own internal leader-led resilience program.

Moreover, BHP Billiton’s Western Australia Iron Ore business uses its own tailored channels. This includes national awareness campaigns to raise awareness and help reduce stigma, and partnering with external organisations to promote to employees and communities; mental health and suicide prevention programs for leaders; wellbeing education sessions for employees; a range of online information and training tools for employees and families; technology to promote and deliver EAP services, including video counselling at remote sites; active case management to support people in staying at, or returning to, work.

**STAKEHOLDERS**

- A cross-functional Working Group with members from across the Company was formed to identify and prioritise actions to support the framework. The Company’s senior leadership team formally endorsed the framework.
- Each part of the business develops their own implementation timetable and adopts or adapts program elements based on the specific needs of their workforce.
- Leaders at all levels are targeted through the Company’s global leadership program with a mental health e-module under development to build competencies in recognising and managing mental health issues.
- BHP Billiton continues to engage with external mental health experts to inform the development of its program.

**MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS**

- BHP Billiton’s operations are required to identify and manage of a range of health and wellbeing risks and to report against targets on a quarterly basis.
- Since the implementation of their Mental Wellness Standard, the Western Australia Iron Ore business have seen a marked increase in employee referrals to site-based health representatives relating to mental wellness issues. They have also seen EAP use increase from 8.7 per cent in 2013 to 10.7 per cent in 2014.

**KEY TAKE-AWAYS, LESSONS LEARNT, POINTS OF INTEREST**

- Visible leadership: making mental health part of the ‘corporate conversation’ shows employees this is important and helps reducing stigma.
- Leveraging existing programs and processes across the Company.
- Cross-functional working/steering groups to inform strategic direction.
- Flexible approach: allow for tailoring to accommodate for different workforce profiles.

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IN-DEPTH OVERVIEW– CASE STUDY: BHP BILLITON

PROFILE
Organisation: BHP Billiton
Sector: Global Resources
Country: Australia

“Work can, and should be, a positive influence on physical and mental wellness... As an employer, we have a responsibility to think about what we can do to make work a place where people feel safe, valued and supported”.

DEVELOPMENT STAGE

BHP Billiton is a global resources company headquartered in Melbourne, Australia. A few years ago, the Company was becoming increasingly aware of the impacts of mental health issues on the broader community and started to look more closely at its own workforce’s mental health. With 45 per cent of people in Australia expected to experience a mental health condition in their lifetime, and similar statistics in the other countries where BHP Billiton operates, mental health was recognised as an issue that needed attention. Additionally, BHP Billiton’s workforce is over 80 per cent male, with research showing that men are less likely to seek help for mental health issues.

The resources industry has had a strong, long-standing commitment to health and safety, and this is also reflected in BHP Billiton’s culture. BHP Billiton’s employee health and safety is put first, and their wellbeing protected by effectively managing workplace hazards. Over the last few years, the Company has been working to ensure that the psychological aspects of health and safety are prioritised as much as the physical.

BHP Billiton views mental wellness as ever changing and multi-dimensional. It recognises that it is influenced by many factors with some of those related to the workplace – where people spend so much of their time. The Company holds the position that work can and should be a positive influence on physical and mental wellness. But for those who are experiencing a mental health issue that might not be the case. As an employer, BHP Billiton believes that it has a responsibility to think about what it can do to make work a place where its people feel safe, valued and supported.

Around three years ago, BHP Billiton’s Health, Safety and Environment leadership team called for a session to speak with an expert from the Australian organisation ‘Beyondblue’ to improve their understanding of the issue, and develop a way forward. This session was a catalyst for the Company’s Western Australia Iron Ore Business to work on developing a Mental Wellness Standard which was launched in 2014. In parallel to what the Iron Ore business was doing, the Health and Safety team saw the strategic need at the corporate level and made mental health a Company priority.

A framework was developed (with a renowned expert) that would suit the diversity of BHP Billiton’s global organisation. To drive this, a cross-functional internal working group with members from across the organisation was formed to identify and prioritise actions to support the framework. This included identifying where it makes sense for the Company to have a common approach as well as acknowledgement of its diversity (gender, age, vocation - mix of functional and operational, education, language, geography, and other cultural factors) – empowering each part of the business to develop their own implementation timetable and adopting or adapting program elements based on the specific needs of their workforce. A key objective was to ensure there are programs in place to manage the risks faced by BHP Billiton people, with each part of the business tailoring its implementation in accordance with the risk profile of their workforce.

As a business, it was also important that mental health was built into the Company’s existing focus on employee health and wellbeing, and that this could be integrated with and make use of existing systems and processes. This...
was an area of focus for the internal working group.

In 2015, the Company’s senior leadership team formally endorsed the framework. The Board of Directors have also been strong supporters of the work and BHP Billiton continues to engage regularly with external experts such as ‘Beyondblue’ to help inform its progress.

**PROGRAMME**

The Company-wide framework aims to drive a workplace that recognises mental health issues, where stigma is not a barrier to accessing available support when required, and where care for its people is paramount. It also aims to address mental health holistically – not just looking at mental ill-health.

The framework is focused on four pillars: culture, capacity, prevention and recovery.

- **Culture**: actively supporting wellbeing, at all levels of the organisation, and reducing stigma associated with mental ill-health.
- **Capacity**: enhancing ability to identify and respond to mental ill-health in the workplace.
- **Prevention**: preventing the onset of mental ill-health through addressing risk factors and developing skills to build resilience and positive mental health.
- **Recovery**: ensuring workers with mental ill-health have access to resources and are actively supported in their return to work.

Each part of the business is responsible for determining their own implementation plan based on the specific needs of their workforce. At a broad level, a number of key areas are focused upon:

- Leadership engagement and education, including working with the senior leadership team to build their awareness and capability, and leveraging the Company-wide leadership development program.
- Using external campaigns such as Movember to raise awareness internally.
- Better leveraging of existing Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs).
- Improving capture and analysis of data to help inform the approach.
- Exploring ways to improve the resilience of people. For example, BHP Billiton is developing its own internal leader-led resilience program.

Stigma is considered one of the key challenges. To address this, one area of focus is on working with senior leaders to improve their understanding of the issue and broaden the scope of their messaging to include mental health and wellness.

Each unit of the business implements its own plan. For example, the Western Australia Iron Ore business has used:

- National awareness campaigns to raise awareness and help reduce stigma – and partnering with external organisations to promote to employees and communities.
- Mental health and suicide prevention programs for leaders.
- Wellbeing education sessions for employees.
- A range of online information and training tools for employees and families.
- Technology to promote and deliver EAP services – including video counselling at remote sites.
- Active case management to support people in staying at, or returning to work.

At a high level, the Company’s senior leadership team is being engaged. The Sustainability Committee of the Board is also highly engaged on the issue. Leaders at all levels are targeted through the Company’s global leadership program and a mental health eLearning module is presently in development to be made available to all people leaders. This supports the development of a common level of core competency in understanding, recognising and supporting people who may be experiencing mental health issues.

Company-wide communications target the broader employee population, and each part of the business is responsible for directly engaging with employees at all levels. Communication channels include CEO and senior leadership messages, and the internal website is used to share personal stories, leverage awareness campaigns and encourage access to resources like EAPs.
MONITORING & EFFECTIVENESS

BHP Billiton’s operations are required to identify and manage a range of health and wellbeing risks and to report against targets on a quarterly basis. The Company’s annual Employee Perception Survey (EPS) includes a number of leading and lagging indicators on mental wellness. These include level of stress, challenges, positive feeling at work and ability to sustain energy levels. Following the next EPS, the Company will have the ability to measure potential trends over time and do further analysis to identify potential workplace factors that may positively or negatively influence mental health. Data from EPS, along with data on use of EAPs, will help to improve and refine the Company’s management strategies.

At a day-to-day operational level, there are a range of indicators that are monitored to determine the effectiveness of strategies. These include:

- Personal responsibility/self-care: use of self-testing and self-referral to support services.
- Peer monitoring: people actively looking out for team members to support them.
- Leader-led monitoring: through pastoral care and leader referrals.

These inputs help to improve and refine management strategies. Some data is specific to individual business units, and the Company is looking at ways to better aggregate this data at a global level. A range of other outcomes are measured for specific programs. For example, in the Western Australia Iron Ore business, since the implementation of their Mental Wellness Standard they have seen a marked increase in employee referrals to site-based health representatives relating to mental wellness issues. They have also seen EAP use increase from 8.7 per cent in 2013 to 10.7 per cent in 2014.

Anecdotally, feedback has been overwhelmingly positive. Leveraging existing programs like EAPs is proving successful. While many employees were aware that the services existed, they may not have realised the breadth of services available. There has also been highly positive feedback on leadership communication. Employees are seeing that this is on the agenda for the Company’s most senior leaders which is helping to reduce the stigma around talking about mental ill-health. It has also come to light that, through simple discussion or a presentation, some at risk had the courage to ask for help.

Appendix

- N/A