



SIOPSA ANNUAL CONFERENCE
MINDFUL ORGANISATIONS, PRODUCTIVE PEOPLE:
CULTIVATING A CULTURE OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLNESS

**Reimagining mental health and wellness at work:
A design thinking approach for healthier workplaces**

Panel Discussion

El Kharzazi (Chair/Panelist), Stolle (Panelist), & Baloyi (Panelist)



Session Overview

Romella Janene El Kharzazi, PhD, BA
Session Chair & Panelist

Background



Psychological Safety

- Around 61% of workers who experience lower psychological safety at work say that during their workday, they typically feel tense or stressed out. (APA, 2024)
- 66% of workers with a cognitive, emotional, learning, or mental disability and a similar number of workers with a physical disability (63%) reported experiencing lower levels of psychological safety, compared with 45% of workers who did not report having a disability. (APA, 2024)



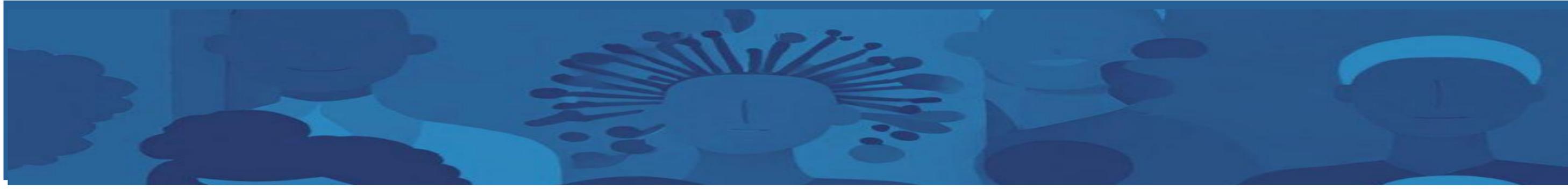
Indeed (2023) found that only 29% of workers are thriving, which is costing society and business. <<<

Wellness

A majority (67%) of workers reported experiencing at least one outcome often associated with workplace burnout, such as lack of interest, motivation, or low energy, feeling lonely or isolated, and a lack of effort at work. (APA, 2024)

Wellness programs can help prevent employee sickness, fatigue, and mental burnout. (APA, 2023a)

- The U.S. Surgeon General's framework for wellness (2022) aims to address disparities in healthcare access and outcomes by promoting equal opportunities for well-being.



Design Thinking

- Kreitzer et al. (2019) suggested that:
 - Design thinking could be applied to wellness programs to address the complex and interconnected factors that contribute to stress and burnout.
 - Specifically, design thinking can be a useful framework for developing strategies to address stress and burnout.

Regardless of whether they work in person, remotely, or hybrid, the majority of workers agreed that they could be just as effective at work if they only worked four days a week (81%) and would be happier at work if they only worked four days a week (79%).

(APA, 2024)

AI & Wellness

- Artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to transform employee wellness programs by offering improved functionality and personalization (Fabbrizio, 2023).
- For example, AI can be used to:
 - Analyze exercise data
 - Provide personalized suggestions
 - Create AI-based exercise plans
 - Monitor health conditions to prevent injuries



The South African Context

- According to SADAG (2023), 1 in 3 South Africans will or do have a Mental Illness at some point in their lifetime, facing Mental Health challenges,
 - In South Africa, only 1 in 10 people with a Mental Illness have access to treatment SADAG (2023)
 - A recent study estimated the annual loss due to mental health disorders at ZAR 161 billion (Shisana et al. 2024)
 - Access, funding, discrimination, and stigma are still a concern for most people faced with mental health issues
 - Multidisciplinary experts, stakeholders and resources can significantly contribute to a comprehensive approach to mental health.
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Digging Deeper

Q&A with Wellness Experts



Our Panelists

Sylvia Baloyi

**Lehlogonolo HR Consulting
SIOPSA Workplace Counselling**



**Dr. Dennis P. Stolle, JD
American Psychological
Association**





Questions

- 1. How can the design thinking process be adapted to meet the unique needs of different communities?**
 - 2. What are some strategies for creating culturally sensitive mental health and other wellness programs?**
 - 3. What should organizations be thinking about in terms of how AI can impact the wellbeing of employees?**
 - 4. How would you empower individual to address mental health issues in the workplace?**
 - 5. What are some important future trends in wellness?**
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Final Tips & Takeaways





THANK YOU

CITATION

El Kharzazi, R.J. (Chair), Baloyi, S., & Stolle, D. (2024). Reimagining mental health & wellness at work: A design thinking approach for healthier workplaces [Plenary]. SIOPSA Annual Conference, Fountainebleu, South Africa.