



USAID's Engendering Industries Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries:

4.6 Institute an inclusive employee health and wellness program to improve the health, well-being, and productivity to support all female and male employees

About Your Gender Equality Plan

The following Gender Equality Plan was generated using Engendering Industries' online tool: [The Best Practices Framework for Advancing Gender Equality in Male-Dominated Industries](#). The best practices listed in this plan were identified and included to fill gender equality gaps at your organization. The information included in your plan provides an overview of how to implement best practices, challenges to implementation, and markers of success. More information and resources for advancing gender equality at your company are available at EngenderingIndustries.org.

Description

Align the employee health and wellness program with demographic profile and needs of all female and male employees, taking industry-specific health risks into account

Design interventions using a data-driven approach to address needs by conducting a health risk assessment for specific job categories and related to workforce demographics

Use employee surveys to evaluate the personal health and wellness needs of employees, ensuring both mental and physical health are addressed

Conduct health culture audits to assess potential workplace impact on employee wellness behavior

Develop strategy with supportive business case demonstrating the return on investment for the program to obtain management buy-in and allocate sufficient budget

Create a structure to ensure coordination and implementation of the initiatives (e.g., wellness committee)

Communicate and market continuously throughout the organization

The program can address:

- Health risk assessments and early detection initiatives, such as onsite screening
- General medical services, awareness, and treatment provided to employees on site or with partner organizations
- Gender-specific health topics such as breast cancer, pregnancy and breastfeeding, cervical cancer, prostate cancer
- Mental health topics such as substance abuse, domestic violence, depression, and suicide
- Health content and wellness programs
- Stress management and relaxation techniques
- Sponsored fitness programs, including onsite courses and gym

Challenges to Implementation

Lack of resources and budget lead to ad hoc, one-time measures that may be perceived as lip service, rather than genuine interest in the health and well-being of employees

Unequitable access for employees to the programs can create feelings of favoritism

Managers may not be willing to allow employees time away from KPI driven duties, and employees may be unwilling to spend additional unpaid hours at work.

Lack of visible sponsorship and modeling can undermine the effectiveness of the program (e.g., while leadership might endorse the program, they are not participating or “walking the talk”)

What Success Looks Like

Interventions are designed to meet the specific health risks related to the industry demographic and business and are designed in a way, that they do not perpetuate harmful stereotypes, but still address health risks stronger related to one of both genders

Female and male employees report that the programs address their needs and are using the services

Positive effects, such as increased productivity, less absenteeism,¹ and better physical and mental health can be measured

Employees demonstrate increased resilience to avoid and overcome challenges in their lives and reach out for support when seek support when needed

Resources and Tools

Guide: [Five Steps to a Successful Workplace Wellness Program](#) (RAND Corporation)

Article: [10 Great Examples of Workplace Wellness Programs](#) (RISE)

Article: [Why Workplace Health Programs Work More for Men than Women](#) (World Economic Forum)

Article: [And The Future Of Work: Some Of The Best Companies Share Their New Solutions Wellness](#) (Forbes)

Video: [Skills and Practices for Leaders](#) (JHU)

[1] **ABSENTEEISM.** Failure to show up for scheduled work. The main reasons for being concerned with absenteeism are increased cost to the organization, clues about employees' mental and physical health, and employees' job satisfaction. (Source: [resourcing edge, Human Resource Glossary](#))