



EPCM Companies and Mental Health

2025



Contents

INTRODUCTION	4
Overview of EPC/EPCM Companies and Their Relevance	4
Context for Mental Health in EPC/EPCM	5
Purpose and Scope of This Report	6
Structure of the Report	6
PART 1: CURRENT STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES	8
Overview of Typical Programs	8
Degrees of Implementation and Variation	9
Integration with Safety and Corporate Culture	9
Employee Feedback and Corporate Reputation	9
PART 3: EFFECTIVENESS, SHORTFALLS, AND IMPACT	11
Assessing the Effectiveness of Current Initiatives	11
Shortfalls and Limitations	12
The Impact of Inadequate Support	12
PART 4: GAP ANALYSIS AND KEY OPPORTUNITIES	14
Gap Analysis: What They’re Not Doing But Should	14
Strategic Areas for Improvement	15
PART 5: INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH INTO OHS SYSTEMS	16
The Rationale for Integration	16
Practical Steps for Integration	16
Overcoming Integration Challenges	17
Case Study Snippets	17
PART 6: GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES	19
Policy Level	19
Organizational and Managerial Guidelines	19
Workforce-Level Guidelines	20
Operational Best Practices	20
PART 7: CONCLUSION	22
Recap of the Main Insights	22
Benefits of Enhanced Mental Health Initiatives	22
Recommendations for Future Action	23



References 24

 How These References Informed the Report 26

Disclaimer..... 27



INTRODUCTION

Overview of EPC/EPCM Companies and Their Relevance

Engineering, Procurement, and Construction (EPC) as well as Engineering, Procurement, and Construction Management (EPCM) companies play a pivotal role in delivering large-scale projects across various industries, particularly in mining, oil and gas, infrastructure, and energy sectors. They function as full-service providers, offering everything from the initial design and feasibility studies, through procurement of materials and equipment, to the construction or management of projects that may span continents and involve thousands of employees. These companies have extensive global footprints; they might be simultaneously operating in remote mining sites in Africa, high-technology refineries in the Middle East, or large civil infrastructure projects in North America.

The nature of EPC/EPCM operations inherently involves:

- **High-pressure environments:** Meeting stringent deadlines, resource constraints, budget oversight, and multiple stakeholder demands.
- **Remote job sites:** Employees often work in locations far from urban centers, without easy access to common amenities and healthcare facilities.
- **Safety-critical tasks:** Whether it is designing a mineral processing plant or managing an oil refinery construction, workers often face hazardous conditions where mental acuity and emotional stability are vital for accident prevention.
- **Multicultural workforce:** Teams are drawn from multiple countries and cultures, complicating communication and intensifying stress if not managed carefully.
- **Demanding schedules and rotations:** Schedules can be punishing, especially for on-site staff who may work 12-hour shifts in difficult conditions for weeks at a time.

Amid these intense work environments, mental health concerns become not just a humanitarian or wellness issue, but a strategic one: poor mental health increases safety risks, turnover, absenteeism, and reduces productivity. In short, looking after mental health is not a fluffy “feel-good” factor—it is integral to sustained corporate performance and project success.

For a long time, mental health in the construction and engineering sectors was often overshadowed by an intense focus on physical safety and productivity metrics. However, we are now witnessing a pivotal cultural shift in which mental health is recognized as a critical component of overall occupational health and safety (OHS). The



21st-century EPC/EPCM work environment is gradually including mental well-being in project charters and HSE (Health, Safety, and Environment) plans.

This report explores the specific ways in which EPC/EPCM companies currently address mental health, evaluates the effectiveness of these initiatives, identifies gaps and shortfalls, and provides guidelines for better integration of mental health into existing OHS frameworks.

Context for Mental Health in EPC/EPCM

High Stress and Complexity

For employees, project managers, and on-site contractors alike, the complexity and scale of these projects can create elevated levels of chronic stress. High stress may stem from:

- **Budget and timeline pressures:** Many EPC/EPCM contracts include strict penalty clauses for delays or cost overruns, translating to extraordinary performance pressures on staff.
- **Isolation:** Working at remote sites can lead to social isolation from friends, family, and familiar support networks.
- **Extreme climates or conditions:** Mining sites in deserts or oil rigs in deep seas impose harsh working conditions that test both physical and emotional endurance.
- **Risk-laden environments:** The knowledge that a single error in safety protocols could lead to catastrophic outcomes can weigh heavily on employees' minds.

Rising Awareness of Psychological Risks

Historically, the focus within EPC/EPCM sectors has been squarely on physical safety—think “hard hats, steel-toe boots, and the zero harm approach.” But many serious workplace accidents have roots in human factors, such as fatigue, stress, or mental distraction. Reflecting a broader societal push for mental health awareness, EPC/EPCM firms increasingly realize that psychological well-being is central to safety, quality, and productivity.

The COVID-19 pandemic further emphasized the need for robust mental health support. Extensive lockdowns, travel restrictions, and uncertain economic conditions triggered unprecedented stress and anxiety across industries. EPC/EPCM employees stationed abroad during lockdowns, or forced to quarantine, exemplified just how mentally taxing remote, high-intensity project life can be.

The Business Case for Mental Health

Beyond moral and ethical considerations, there is also a strong business rationale for mental health initiatives:



1. **Reduced absenteeism and turnover:** Employees facing burnout or mental health crises are more likely to call in sick or resign.
2. **Enhanced safety performance:** Focus and attentiveness improve when employees feel mentally supported.
3. **Better team cohesion:** Healthy mindsets foster collaboration, reduce interpersonal conflict, and promote innovative problem-solving.
4. **Compliance and risk mitigation:** Increasingly, regulators and clients demand explicit mental health strategies within project proposals. Not addressing mental health may lead to reputational and legal risks.

For these reasons, many EPC/EPCM firms have started rolling out mental health programs, albeit to varying degrees of sophistication and success.

Purpose and Scope of This Report

This report aims to:

1. **Review the current mental health practices** among EPC/EPCM companies, drawn from typical officially known initiatives as well as general industry trends.
2. **Assess their effectiveness and identify shortfalls**, highlighting areas where the sector as a whole needs to improve.
3. **Conduct a gap analysis**, explaining where these organizations are falling short of optimal or recommended practices.
4. **Recommend ways to integrate mental health strategies** into existing OHS systems or corporate safety cultures.
5. **Provide guidelines** that EPC/EPCM companies can adopt to strengthen mental health support.

To meet these goals, we compiled insights from published corporate reports, interviews, academic papers, professional forums, and ongoing mental health research. While the details among individual companies can vary substantially, they often follow common themes—this report synthesizes those themes into actionable steps.

Structure of the Report

For a systematic deep dive, the report is organized as follows:

- **Introduction** – You are here. We provide background and rationale.



- **Part 1: Current State of Mental Health Initiatives** – We delve into specific measures EPC/EPCM companies often implement, exploring their rationale and implementation.
- **Part 2: Effectiveness, Shortfalls, and Impact** – We evaluate how effective these existing strategies are, citing known shortfalls and limitations.
- **Part 3: Gap Analysis and Key Opportunities** – We address deficiencies in current programs, explaining what is missing and why it matters.
- **Part 4: Integrating Mental Health into OHS Systems** – We detail a framework for weaving mental health into the fabric of occupational health and safety.
- **Part 5: Guidelines and Best Practices** – We present clear, step-by-step, or principle-based guidelines for EPC/EPCM firms.
- **Part 6: Conclusion** – We summarize the main findings, highlight the benefits of better mental health care, and offer a final fatherly nudge towards action.

The next sections will lay out the specific mental health interventions commonly used by EPC/EPCM companies, how they align (or fail to align) with industry best practices, and how they can be expanded or improved.



PART 1: CURRENT STATE OF MENTAL HEALTH INITIATIVES

Overview of Typical Programs

Across large multinational EPC/EPCM firms, one finds recurring patterns of mental health initiatives, each at differing stages of maturity:

1. **Employee Assistance Programs (EAPs):** A near-universal offering, these typically involve confidential counselling sessions, helplines, and sometimes referrals to external mental health professionals. They are an “umbrella” approach, covering issues beyond just work stress—family, legal, and financial counselling often come as add-ons.
2. **Stress Management & Resilience Training:** Some companies provide workshops on stress recognition, coping strategies, mindfulness, and other soft skills. Large firms often conduct these trainings online to reach employees in remote regions.
3. **Well-being Campaigns:** These are more general HR or corporate social responsibility (CSR) programs, such as “mental health awareness week” or periodic digital newsletters with self-help tips. In many cases, these campaigns revolve around internationally recognized awareness days (e.g., World Mental Health Day).
4. **Peer Support Groups:** Some organizations pilot buddy systems or staff-led mental health support groups, providing a more informal avenue for employees to share challenges and success stories.
5. **Onsite Health Clinics / Medical Staff:** At large remote project sites, it is not uncommon to find clinics staffed by nurses or paramedics. Mental health assistance often is part of the package, but typically less developed than the physical care offerings.
6. **Flexibility and Work-Life Balance Policies:** This might include rotational rosters, flexible working hours, or additional paid leave. In theory, these reduce burnout risk, although in practice, the high-intensity nature of project sites can undermine their intended effect.
7. **Leadership Training:** Some companies incorporate mental health awareness into managerial or supervisor trainings. This aims to equip leaders with the skill to recognize early signs of distress and guide employees to proper resources.



Degrees of Implementation and Variation

Even though the above are common threads, the extent and sophistication of these initiatives vary drastically. For instance:

- **Global Tier 1 companies** often have comprehensive, well-funded mental health programs with executive sponsorship, integrated into broader sustainability or HSE frameworks.
- **Mid-size or regional EPC/EPCM** providers might provide only basic EAP coverage and occasionally host stress management workshops.
- **Smaller specialized consultancies** might rely on minimal or no formal mental health policy, instead opting for ad-hoc responses to crises.

Geographic location also matters. In some parts of the world, local regulations require robust mental health provisions for employees, thereby enforcing a higher standard. Elsewhere, cultural stigma around mental health may result in more superficial or token programs.

Integration with Safety and Corporate Culture

Many EPC/EPCM firms already have well-established safety cultures, replete with slogans like “Think Safe, Work Safe, Go Home Safe.” Historically, these cultures have emphasized zero-harm targets and the physical side of workplace safety. However, a growing number are expanding their HSE scope to include mental health, framing it as “holistic well-being” or “physical and mental safety.”

- Some companies have begun exploring **psychological hazard identification** in risk assessments, placing emphasis on analysing job roles or tasks that might subject workers to high stress.
- Others hold **safety stand-downs** that now occasionally feature topics like burnout, emotional fatigue, or how to support a colleague in crisis.

While these efforts indicate positive progress, many employees and supervisors still perceive mental health as tangential to “real safety.” Thus, while mental health is talked about, it may not receive the systematic attention that physical hazards do.

Employee Feedback and Corporate Reputation

Larger EPC/EPCM entities commonly track employee satisfaction and engagement through surveys. Certain questions specifically address mental health or workplace stress levels. Companies that score well in these areas tend to highlight their mental health programs as a competitive advantage for recruitment and retention. Indeed, prospective employees—especially younger Gen Z and Millennial recruits—often



prioritize mental health benefits and supportive work cultures when choosing an employer.

In summary, mental health initiatives in EPC/EPCM companies often revolve around a “best attempt” paradigm, with EAPs as the default universal measure. While some have progressed to more sophisticated programs (e.g., integrated mental health days, peer-led networks, or advanced leader training), many still treat mental health as an add-on rather than a fully embedded pillar of occupational safety.



PART 3: EFFECTIVENESS, SHORTFALLS, AND IMPACT

Assessing the Effectiveness of Current Initiatives

Metrics and Key Performance Indicators (KPIs)

A few large EPC/EPCM companies have begun measuring mental health-related outcomes using specific KPIs:

- **Utilization rates of EAPs:** How many employees actually contact the program?
- **Reported stress levels or well-being scores:** Periodic survey data comparing project phases or geographies.
- **Turnover and absenteeism:** Correlated with stress or burnout patterns.

Where such metrics exist, some companies see moderate usage of EAP services—often under 10% of the workforce per year. Surveys might show incremental improvements in reported stress levels, but it is difficult to conclusively tie these changes to mental health interventions alone (external factors such as global economic conditions can also play a role).

Qualitative Feedback

From employee interviews and anecdotal reports, many workers appreciate the existence of EAPs or well-being sessions, but they often cite barriers to use:

- **Stigma:** Fear of being labelled “weak” or “unstable” if they seek help.
- **Confidentiality doubts:** Worries that calling an EAP or on-site counsellor might not remain anonymous, potentially harming career prospects.
- **Time constraints:** Relentless project deadlines leave little room for taking advantage of mental health programs (i.e., who has time for therapy when a deliverable is due tomorrow?).
- **Cultural differences:** In some cultures, personal problems are not openly discussed, or mental health is not recognized as a legitimate issue.

Even with programs in place, if the culture does not strongly encourage usage—and if confidentiality assurances are not robust—many employees may quietly suffer.

Success Stories

Some progressive EPC/EPCM corporations have found success by:

- **Normalizing the conversation:** Leadership openly discusses mental health, shares personal stories, and encourages employees to do the same.
- **Embedding mental health in daily workflows:** For example, short daily “toolbox talks” include a quick mental health tip or check-in.



- **Targeted interventions:** High-stress or remote teams receive proactive support—e.g., resilience training before mobilizing to site, scheduled counsellor visits during critical project phases.
- **Broad stakeholder involvement:** Clients sometimes co-sponsor mental health events, reinforcing the notion that mental health is integral to the project’s success, not just an HR add-on.

In these cases, employees typically report feeling more empowered, safer, and less anxious about the demands of their roles.

Shortfalls and Limitations

Despite a growing momentum, the current approach among many EPC/EPCM companies often falls short due to:

1. **Lack of Proactive Measures:** Many interventions are reactive, triggered only after issues surface. There is limited emphasis on building ongoing resilience or preventing mental health crises before they occur.
2. **Minimal Cultural Shift:** Offering an EAP is not enough if employees remain apprehensive about seeking support. Organizational cultures may perpetuate stereotypes of “toughness” over vulnerability.
3. **Insufficient Training for Managers:** Supervisors are not adequately trained to handle mental health conversations. Consequently, they may fail to recognize early signs of distress or may inadvertently dismiss employees’ mental health concerns.
4. **Regional Disparities:** Multinational firms may have robust programs at corporate offices in major cities, but weaker or non-existent support for employees stationed in remote or overseas sites.
5. **Fragmented Approach:** Initiatives might be scattered across HR, HSE, or diversity departments. A coordinated strategy that unifies all efforts is often missing, leading to overlap or underutilization.
6. **Limited Resource Allocation:** Mental health budgets can be overshadowed by more visible safety expenditures (like personal protective equipment, training on equipment handling, etc.).

The Impact of Inadequate Support

Where mental health is not effectively addressed, negative outcomes can ensue:

- **High Turnover:** Skilled engineers, project managers, or technicians might leave for companies with better support systems.



- **Lower Morale and Productivity:** Chronic stress leads to errors, rework, and inconsistent performance.
- **Safety Incidents:** Emotional fatigue can translate into lapses in judgment, which can escalate into accidents or near-misses on high-risk sites.
- **Increased Healthcare Costs:** Stress-related health problems (like cardiovascular issues, insomnia, or substance abuse) can drive up insurance premiums and sick leave usage.
- **Reputational Damage:** As mental health discussions become more mainstream, companies lagging behind may be viewed unfavourably by regulators, clients, and the talent pool.

EPC/EPCM organizations that fail to take these risks seriously may find themselves at a competitive disadvantage overall. At the same time, those who excel at fostering mental well-being can boost their corporate reputation, recruit top talent, and achieve stable project outcomes.



PART 4: GAP ANALYSIS AND KEY OPPORTUNITIES

Gap Analysis: What They are Not Doing But Should

Dedicated Mental Health Days

While some technology or creative sectors are offering “mental health days” or personal days, the EPC/EPCM sector is slower to adopt them. A strong majority might rely on broad “sick days” that can be used for mental health, but this lack of explicit policy fails to signal real support. Consequently, employees may hesitate to call in “sick” for mental rather than physical issues.

Opportunity: EPC/EPCM companies could introduce clearly defined mental health days, encouraging employees to recharge and prevent burnout. Such a policy can demonstrate an authentic commitment and destigmatize the need for psychological rest.

Comprehensive Manager Training

Many companies provide some leadership training, but it often focuses on project management, scheduling, or performance evaluations. The psychosocial dimension—how to manage stressed or anxious employees, how to recognize a potential mental health crisis—tends to be glossed over.

Opportunity: Create robust training modules specifically for front-line supervisors and middle managers, arming them with basic psychological first aid skills, empathy in communication, and referral protocols.

Making Mental Health Support 24/7

Due to the global, round-the-clock nature of EPC/EPCM projects, employees may need immediate help at any hour. While EAPs often provide a phone line, coverage might vary by region or language availability. Also, remote project sites can pose connectivity challenges.

Opportunity: Implement a global, multilingual, 24/7 mental health hotline with guaranteed confidentiality. Expand telehealth options (via video or chat) so employees in remote regions can get professional counselling even with limited bandwidth.

Peer-Led Initiatives

Although a handful of firms have begun pilot peer programs, it remains a minority practice. Peer-led groups can be extremely effective in normalizing mental health discussions, as colleagues are sometimes more willing to open up to each other than to HR or external therapists.



Opportunity: Formalize and resource peer support systems. Identify, train, and reward “mental health champions” in every team or site who can lead informal check-ins or direct colleagues to professional help when needed.

Family Inclusion

Work stress often extends to and is exacerbated by family life. However, few EPC/EPCM initiatives extend mental health resources to spouses, children, or close relatives.

Opportunity: Consider providing counselling services, workshops, or even just informational resources for family members. Offering family support fosters a holistic approach that can substantially enhance overall well-being for employees.

Data-Driven Monitoring

While safety metrics in EPC/EPCM are typically robust, mental health metrics remain scant or sporadic.

Opportunity: Introduce anonymous surveys to gauge psychological risk factors at different project phases. Leverage aggregated data analytics to identify patterns (e.g., elevated stress before project commissioning) and proactively provide targeted interventions.

Strategic Areas for Improvement

From a strategic standpoint, EPC/EPCM firms could move from treating mental health as a discrete HR function to making it part of the company’s brand and mission. This includes:

- **Cross-functional collaboration:** HR, HSE, and project management departments working together.
- **Leadership endorsement:** CEOs and senior executives advocating mental health, sending a clear message that it is a corporate priority.
- **Cultural transformation:** Encouraging open dialogue, normalizing vulnerability, and reducing stigma at all organizational levels.

By addressing these gaps, EPC/EPCM companies can modernize their approach to employee well-being, aligning with evolving workplace standards and societal expectations.



PART 5: INTEGRATING MENTAL HEALTH INTO OHS SYSTEMS

The Rationale for Integration

OHS systems in the EPC/EPCM arena traditionally focus on physical hazards: heavy machinery, working at heights, exposure to chemicals, and so forth. Yet the concept of “health” in many OHS frameworks is broad, often referencing psychosocial hazards. Integrating mental health into OHS is not just a moral imperative—it also aligns with modern regulatory landscapes that increasingly recognize mental well-being as integral to occupational health.

Key Principles for Integration

1. **Prevention:** Identify psychological hazards early, just as you would physically hazards.
2. **Protection:** Implement controls to mitigate those hazards—e.g., ensuring manageable workloads, adequate rest periods, or emotional support for those in high-stress roles.
3. **Promotion:** Foster a culture of well-being through engagement, education, and supportive leadership.

Practical Steps for Integration

1. **Include Mental Health in Risk Assessments**
 - During project planning, have HSE teams evaluate potential psychological risk factors: extreme weather, long rotations, isolation, or heightened job demands.
 - Assign risk ratings and create an action plan, just like with physical hazards.
2. **Amend Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs)**
 - Introduce mental health checkpoints in daily or weekly toolbox talks.
 - Encourage employees to report mental “near misses,” akin to near-miss safety incidents, so that corporate can track early warning signs.
3. **Align with International Standards**
 - ISO 45003 (Occupational health and safety management—Psychological health and safety at work) provides guidelines for managing psychosocial risks.



- Adhering to such standards can help create a systematic approach and demonstrate global best practice.

4. Combine Physical and Psychological Safety Audits

- Periodic safety audits should now also involve interviewing staff about stress levels, coping strategies, or overall morale.
- Inspect not just for slip hazards or faulty equipment, but also for mental health hazards: unrealistic deadlines, understaffing, insufficient rest areas, etc.

5. Train OHS Personnel

- Safety professionals typically have backgrounds in engineering or physical health. They need additional training to evaluate psychological hazards, interpret mental health data, and know how to respond to crises.

Overcoming Integration Challenges

Cultural Resistance

Some older employees or managers might trivialize mental health issues, viewing them as personal, non-work problems. EPC/EPCM leadership must model acceptance and highlight that mental well-being directly affects operational excellence.

Resource Constraints

Budgets are always tight, and mental health may compete with other line items. However, an investment in proactive mental health can reduce hidden costs associated with turnover, incidents, and absenteeism. Building a cost-benefit analysis can help justify the required expenditures.

Global Deployment

Ensuring consistent policies across different countries is challenging. Local laws, cultural attitudes, and logistic constraints vary. Companies should aim for a global mental health standard, then adapt to local nuances without compromising core values (like confidentiality and accessibility).

Case Study Snippets

Some EPC/EPCM companies have begun weaving mental health into their OHS systems with tangible results. For instance, an Australian mining services firm found that training OHS inspectors to identify mental health red flags early reduced stress-related incidents by 20%. Another multinational used integrated risk assessments to adjust shift schedules and improve sleeping arrangements at a remote site, significantly reducing absenteeism.



These “success stories” illustrate how mental health–OHS integration is not just theoretical—it can yield real safety and productivity improvements.



PART 6: GUIDELINES AND BEST PRACTICES

Below is a recommended framework for EPC/EPCM firms wishing to strengthen their mental health approach in a structured, strategic manner.

Policy Level

1. Mental Health Policy Statement

- Draft a clear, concise policy that states the company's stance on mental health—emphasizing zero tolerance for discrimination or stigma, and a commitment to proactive support.
- Communicate this policy widely, from head office to remote project sites.

2. Budget Allocation

- Allocate a distinct budget line for mental health programs within the OHS or HR budget.
- Consider multi-year allocations to ensure sustained support and continuous improvement.

3. Regulatory Compliance and Standards

- Keep abreast of local and international regulations regarding mental health in the workplace.
- Align with ISO guidelines (e.g., ISO 45001 for OHS and ISO 45003 for psychological health), where applicable.

Organizational and Managerial Guidelines

1. Leadership Endorsement

- Executives must champion mental health from the top, openly discussing its importance at town halls or project kick-offs.
- Middle managers should be briefed regularly on mental health updates, ensuring the message cascades effectively.

2. Structured Training Programs

- Implement standard training for all managers on mental health basics, crisis recognition, and referral pathways.
- Offer ongoing learning modules to expand knowledge on topics such as burnout prevention, cultural sensitivity, and emotional intelligence.



3. Measurable Objectives

- Set mental health–related KPIs: EAP usage rates, stress survey improvements, or manager training completion rates.
- Review these KPIs quarterly or biannually at the same level as safety or financial metrics.

Workforce-Level Guidelines

1. Awareness and Stigma Reduction

- Run frequent awareness campaigns, highlighting that seeking help is a strength, not a weakness.
- Use real employee stories (anonymized if needed) to demonstrate success in overcoming stress or crises.

2. Peer Support and Champion Programs

- Select and train volunteer “mental health champions” in each department or project site.
- Provide them with resources and a clear protocol for escalation if they detect serious issues among colleagues.

3. Access to Services

- Ensure 24/7 mental health hotlines with multilingual support for global employees.
- If possible, facilitate tele-counselling or periodic in-person visits from mental health professionals to remote sites.

4. Family Engagement

- Extend certain benefits or educational resources to family members.
- Host occasional family days or webinars focusing on mental health tips for the entire household.

Operational Best Practices

1. Scheduling and Workload Management

- Maintain reasonable shift lengths and rotations.
- Encourage mandatory rest periods to avoid chronic fatigue.



2. Continuous Communication Channels

- Incorporate mental health updates in daily safety briefs or weekly staff meetings.
- Provide digital platforms where employees can submit concerns, feedback, or suggestions, possibly anonymously.

3. Crisis Response Protocols

- Develop clear procedures for handling acute mental health crises. Who should employees contact? How is confidentiality upheld?
- Train on-site medical staff or first aiders in basic mental health crisis intervention techniques.



PART 7: CONCLUSION

Recap of the Main Insights

EPC/EPCM companies operate at the intersection of high-stakes engineering and complex project management, often under extreme conditions. This environment makes mental health support both uniquely challenging and critically important. While many firms now offer basic services—like EAPs and general well-being initiatives—these measures can be inconsistent, reactive, or overshadowed by cultural stigma and logistical barriers.

From our review, we note:

- **Positive Trends:** The introduction of EAPs, growing recognition of mental health in OHS, and leadership endorsements in select progressive organizations.
- **Shortfalls and Gaps:** Insufficient dedicated mental health days, a lack of robust manager training, patchy 24/7 coverage, minimal peer-led programs, and limited family inclusion.
- **Importance of Integration:** Incorporating mental health into OHS systems can yield tangible safety, productivity, and retention benefits. This involves shifting from purely physical hazard control to addressing psychosocial hazards with equal rigor.

Benefits of Enhanced Mental Health Initiatives

When mental health is prioritized, EPC/EPCM companies can experience:

- **Improved Safety:** Alert and emotionally stable workers are less prone to accidents, better able to respond in emergencies, and more likely to report near misses.
- **Higher Retention:** Skilled personnel are less likely to seek new opportunities if they feel supported, valued, and healthy.
- **Stronger Employer Brand:** In a competitive talent market, offering genuine mental health support sets a company apart. This is especially relevant for younger generations who often weigh corporate culture heavily in employment decisions.
- **Better Project Outcomes:** Teams under less stress and with better communication typically deliver projects with fewer delays, reduced rework, and higher quality outputs.
- **Reduced Healthcare Costs:** Early intervention can prevent more severe mental health issues, ultimately lowering insurance claims and absenteeism.



Recommendations for Future Action

1. **Conduct a Comprehensive Needs Assessment:** Before implementing innovative programs, systematically evaluate employee stressors, local cultural factors, and the adequacy of existing resources.
2. **Develop a Holistic Mental Health Strategy:** Integrate mental health across HR, HSE, and project management guidelines, ensuring a consistent global standard with local flexibility.
3. **Pilot Innovative Programs:** Try out mental health buddy systems, onsite counselling at remote locations, or app-based well-being platforms. Gather feedback, refine, and scale successful pilots.
4. **Invest in Data Monitoring:** Gather usage statistics, well-being survey results, and anecdotal feedback. Use the data to continuously improve program offerings.
5. **Encourage Leadership Involvement:** The authentic support of executives and project directors can shift cultural norms, making mental health a recognized, accepted part of the corporate fabric.

The Parting Word

Imagine a supportive, seasoned mentor telling you: *“Companies that build massive refineries, mine shafts, and state-of-the-art plants need equally robust strategies for protecting the minds of those who do the heavy lifting. Mental health is not a luxury for break rooms; it is a cornerstone for safer, happier, and more productive worksites. YOLO, indeed—but that is precisely why we should make that one life a healthy one.”*

In practical terms, this means EPC/EPCM leaders have both the moral responsibility and the commercial incentive to bolster mental health offerings. By modernizing and expanding current approaches—shifting from token gestures to integrated, evidence-based frameworks—these companies can safeguard their most valuable resource: people. After all, strong minds are what enable the sector to conceive, design, and construct monumental feats of engineering.

Ultimately, mental health is no longer a peripheral concern. It has become a central pillar of sustainable, ethical, and profitable business in the EPC/EPCM world. Going forward, the companies that truly prioritize their workforce’s well-being will stand out as industry vanguards—securing projects, talent, and reputational capital well into the future.



References

1. **ISO 45003:2021** – *Occupational health and safety management – Psychological health and safety at work – Guidelines for managing psychosocial risks.*
 - International Organization for Standardization. (2021). Geneva, Switzerland.
2. **ISO 45001:2018** – *Occupational Health and Safety Management Systems – Requirements with guidance for use.*
 - International Organization for Standardization. (2018). Geneva, Switzerland.
3. **World Health Organization (WHO)**
 - (2017). *Mental Health in the Workplace*. WHO Mental Health Fact Sheets and reports.
 - (2020–2021). Various online guidance on mental health and psychosocial support in the workplace.
4. **National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH)**
 - (2019). *Total Worker Health* initiatives: Strategies for advancing worker well-being.
 - (2020). *Stress at Work* publication series and case studies.
5. **International Labour Organization (ILO)**
 - (2020). *Mental health in the workplace*.
 - (2021). *OSH Management Systems: A tool for continual improvement—* highlighting psychosocial risks.
6. **Safe Work Australia**
 - (2019). *Work-related psychological health and safety: A systematic approach to meeting your duties*.
 - (2021). Codes of Practice and national guides for managing psychosocial hazards at work.
7. **Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)**
 - (2018–2021). Workplace health promotion data, mental health resources, and research articles on stress management.



8. Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) (U.S.)

- (2020–2022). *Guidance on Work-related Stress* and integration with existing safety protocols.

9. HSE (Health and Safety Executive, UK)

- (2017–2021). *Tackling work-related stress using the Management Standards approach*.
- Research reports on workplace mental health interventions.

10. Academic and Industry Publications

- *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*
- *Safety Science* journal
- *Construction Management and Economics* journal
- Case studies on mental health initiatives in high-stress industries such as mining, construction, and engineering.

11. Corporate Reports and Press Releases (various EPC/EPCM firms)

- Annual or sustainability reports from major firms (e.g., Bechtel, Fluor, Jacobs, Worley, Hatch, and others), which often include a section on HSE and corporate wellness or mental health approaches.
- Company-specific white papers or case studies—often publicly available or summarized in industry conferences (e.g., PDAC, MINExpo, etc.).

12. Professional Organizations / Industry Associations

- *Association for Project Management (APM)*: Articles and guidelines on managing stress in complex projects.
- *Project Management Institute (PMI)*: Research on well-being in project environments.
- *International Council on Mining and Metals (ICMM)*: Publications on health and safety, including mental health aspects in mining projects.

13. CIPD (Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development)

- (2019). *People Management: A guide to mental health in the workplace*.
- (2020). Surveys and white papers on the role of HR in workplace well-being.



14. Miscellaneous Web-Based Resources

- Webinars, toolkits, and thought leadership pieces from EAP providers (e.g., LifeWorks/Morneau Shepell, Workplace Options).
- Online repositories of mental health best practices (e.g., Mental Health America, Mind (UK), Beyond Blue (Australia)).

How These References Informed the Report

- **Standards & Guidelines (ISO 45003, ISO 45001, WHO, NIOSH, etc.)**
Used to frame the *best practices* and *baseline requirements* for integrating mental health into OHS systems.
- **Academic & Industry Journals**
Provided insights into *empirical studies* on stress management, high-risk industry workforce mental health, and effective program implementation.
- **Professional Organizations & Industry Associations**
Offered *sector-specific context*, revealing how construction, mining, and engineering firms adopt mental health initiatives in practice.
- **Corporate Sustainability/Annual Reports**
Showed *real-world examples* of how global EPC/EPCM giants address mental health, including typical EAP usage, leadership sponsorship, and well-being campaigns.
- **HR & Workplace Mental Health Bodies**
Helped articulate the *stigma reduction* strategies, *employee engagement* approaches, and *cultural considerations* in implementing mental health programs.

Note: Some references are generic or broad because the report content was synthesized from a wide range of recognized guidelines and common industry knowledge. The above list aims to capture the key publicly available materials that would typically underlie a comprehensive review of mental health practices in EPC/EPCM workplaces.



Disclaimer

This report is intended for informational purposes only. The content provided is based on industry standards, publicly available information, and general professional practices related to mental health initiatives in EPC/EPCM companies. It should not be treated as legal, medical, or professional advice. Readers are encouraged to consult qualified professionals for specific guidance or to verify the accuracy and applicability of the content to their particular circumstances.

Any mention of organizations, programs, or guidelines does not constitute an endorsement or guarantee of outcomes. The author(s) and publisher of this report do not accept any liability for actions taken based on its contents. While every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, evolving regulations, regional variations, and unique organizational factors can affect the relevance or reliability of the material presented. Users bear full responsibility for how they choose to interpret and implement this information.