



Health & Wellbeing At Key Life Stages

Adapt to changing employee needs.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Introduction 03

Introduction	03
--------------	----

Section 1: Career Stage Supports 04

Entry level considerations	05
Mid career	07
Late career and retirement	09

Section 2: Life Stage Supports 11

Women's health	12
Men's health	14
Parenting and caregiving	16
Financial wellbeing	19
Cultural / religious considerations	21

Section 3 : Life Events and Transitions 23

Illness / Injury	24
Bereavement	25
Redundancy	26
Divorce / Separation	27
Societal Challenges	28

Conclusion 29

Conclusion	29
------------	----

Introduction

Interventions and resources to support employee wellbeing at work are becoming increasingly more refined and multi-dimensional. ¹

This guide highlights some key life stage considerations for employers, HR and people managers to note, as making appropriate accommodations in these areas may improve conditions for employees to not only continue to participate in the workforce, but to truly thrive.

The scope of this subject is very broad, so it is subdivided into three main categories; career stage, life stage, major events and transitions.

Each category could delve into much greater depth, however the purpose of this booklet is to simply sign-post common challenges that require attention and to offer some basic suggestions in the respective domain to enhance employee support.

The objective is to expand the provision of wellbeing interventions and improve the impact and efficacy by aiding employees to navigate common life challenges with practical solutions when possible.

While your organisation may already have many of these items covered, there may be some inspiration for innovative approaches and expanding existing supports.



Section 1:

Career Stage Supports

Each phase of work life can come with specific challenges and opportunities – while these of course differ depending on an individual's work context, career path and pace of progression, there tends to be distinct considerations corresponding with each phase that can significantly impact upon employee wellbeing.

If employers are proactive in addressing these common challenges it may serve to greatly enhance work-life experience, performance, productivity and retention of staff – particularly among younger workers that have the greatest flight risk.²

In the interest of simplicity, this segment of the guide focuses on just three main career stages - early, mid and late and hones on specific work-related considerations that may impact health and wellbeing at these various stages.

The suggestions provided in each stage build upon foundational elements for wellbeing at work detailed more comprehensively in the Lead Well guide – as these apply across all phases, such as offering flexibility and the option of remote/hybrid work where possible.



Early Career (0-5 Years)

There are many known factors that can impact the wellbeing of entry level employees and those in the early stages of their career.

Key challenges include:

- Finding a healthy work-life balance
- Building rapport with colleagues if working remotely/hybrid
- Developing professional skills and confidence

A recent US survey reported the following insights:

- Burnout can be a prevalent problem among young professionals and impacts job tenure
- Third level education does not always adequately prepare students emotionally for the workforce
- Many young professionals believe their workplaces prioritises mental health, but despite this many are seeking more support
- Managers are seen as a primary confidant for mental health issues, though outreach is not always perceived as strong. ³



The following are some simple strategies to support individuals early in their career, and those just joining the organisation:

1. **Onboarding:** integrating core facets of wellbeing and professional self-care education in the onboarding process may help new starts to establish healthier work habits e.g. information on break taking, effective recovery, stress management and social connection.
2. **Mentorship:** establish a mentorship programme to teach and guide new starts, helping them to learn more about the organisation.
3. **Feedback Mechanisms:** new entrants have a fresh perspective and can see ways to improve or enhance current operations – providing a channel for their input may help to build their sense of belonging and value within the organisation.
4. **Career Development:** clarifying career progression paths, as well as opportunities for learning and development can both boost confidence and incentivise engagement.
5. **Social Connection & Belonging:** inviting involvement in employee resource groups, networking events, and social activities can help young employees to develop work relationships and feel connected.

One of the biggest stumbling blocks for those entering the workforce can be imposter syndrome. As mentioned above, young professionals can be at risk of burnout from over working and taking on too much. While this may yield a high output in terms of short-term productivity, it can cause major issues in the longer term.

Self-compassion-based interventions have been shown to help prevent the negative effects of compulsive and excessive work. ⁴

Equipping employees with skills and support to address common intrapersonal stressors and build self-awareness can help to foster healthier long term professional development.



Mid Career

There are many widely accepted misconceptions about midlife and the challenges faced by middle-aged adults – including the dominant narrative about mid-life crisis which has been scientifically debunked.⁵

However, there is no doubt that mid-life can indeed come with a host of challenges that can impact work life – from an increased prevalence of chronic health conditions, to double or triple duty care – but there are equally many rich opportunities in this phase too.

As an employer it can be helpful to be aware of common challenges in this phase and provide resources and supports where possible to retain talent and expertise.

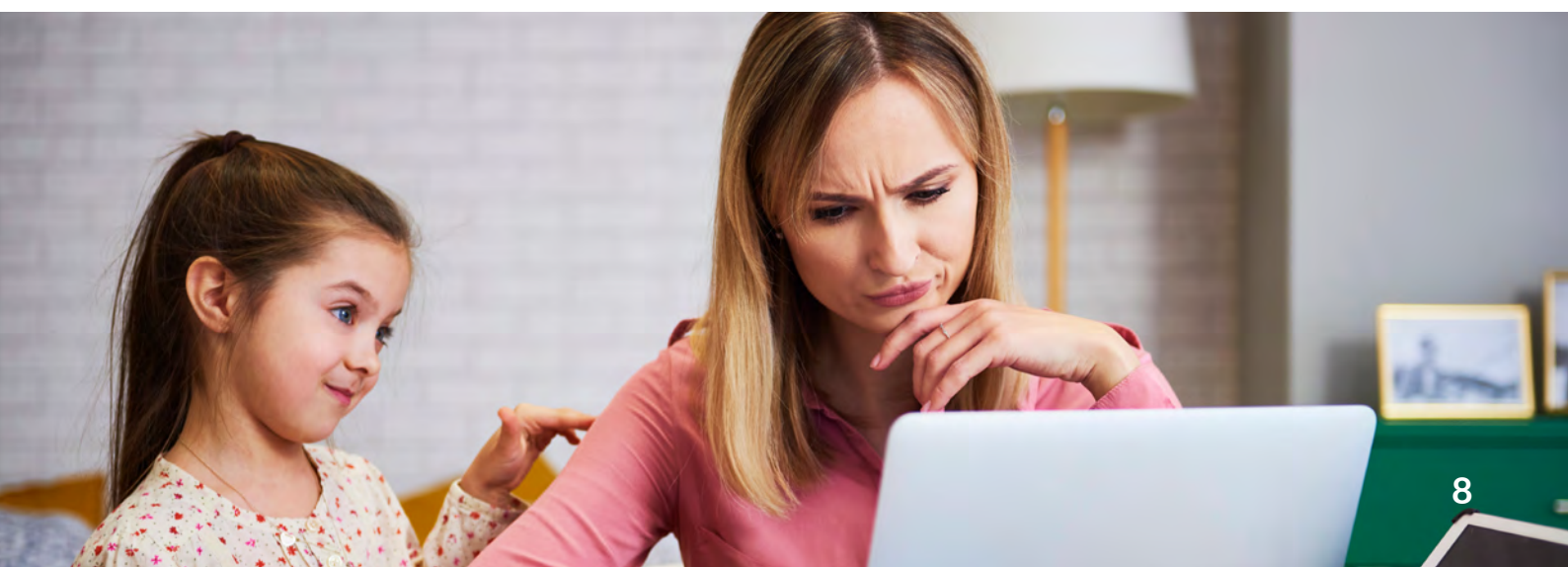
Key Work-Related Challenges:

- Career progression and pressures of leadership
- Changing relational dynamics with peers taking on managerial roles
- Skill relevance and job insecurity
- Navigating intensive life demands and work commitments
- Intergenerational values conflict at work
- Ongoing need for adaptability and growth



Simple strategies to support individuals mid-career include;

1. **Career coaching and mentorship:** investing in high quality support from internal mentors in conjunction with standard EAP services may help employees feel cared for and yield better outcomes for career progression. Job insecurity can be a real threat at any stage on the career path, however this can be greater for older workers in certain contexts – and even more so recently with the pace of AI and technological developments. Assisting employees to reevaluate their skills and consider new avenues of training and development may help to increase engagement and wellbeing.
2. **Managerial and leadership skill building:** many employees progress into management roles based on their tenure and technical expertise, however managing people requires the development of new skillsets. Supporting individuals who progress into managerial or leadership roles with the development of communication skills, conflict resolution, adaptability and professional self-care may help the establishment of healthier work habits and mitigate the risk of burnout. This can also help with navigating changing relational dynamics between co-workers that become managers. Interventions that assist in the development of self-awareness such as Acceptance and Commitment Therapy (ACT), Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction and Non-Violent Communication (NVC) are proven to contribute to improved work life quality and personal wellbeing. ⁶
3. **Digital and technological upskilling:** it is also highly important to support individuals to keep up with the rapidly changing technological landscape and support skill building to dispel fears and resistance that may otherwise arise when confronted with change. This will be more relevant in some work contexts.



Late Career & Retirement

There are a host of considerations to support the wellbeing of older workers as they are confronted by a unique set of challenges.

Novel evidence across OECD countries shows that older workers can boost firm productivity not only directly through their expertise and input, but also by enhancing team performance via age and skill complementarities between younger and older workers. ⁷

That said, a multigenerational workforce requires ongoing support to ensure benefits are fully realised. Older workers may be more experienced in many regards but also can be more vulnerable in many ways – and therefore the design and implementation of supports may be an iterative process, best formulated with their input and feedback.

Key Work-Related Challenges:

- Career longevity and job security
- Health and personal energy levels
- Retirement planning and transition concerns
- Desire for meaningful contribution and purpose
- Intergenerational values conflict
- Leadership and managerial responsibilities



Simple ways to support individuals late in their career include:

1. **Lifelong Learning & Career Adaptation** – if possible, provide programmes that support late-career skill-building for those who are interested in staying engaged in new ways at work. ⁷
2. **Social Integration** – offer community-building initiatives, social groups, and purpose-driven projects to build and maintain intergenerational connection in the workplace. Those who have progressed to senior leadership or higher tiers of management may sometimes feel isolated or lonely in their position – create opportunities for both peer to peer support, as well as more casual outlets for connection to build better quality relationships.
3. **Purpose & Legacy Programmes** – provide opportunities to mentor younger employees, lead knowledge transfer initiatives, and engage in the ongoing development of meaningful work. ⁷
4. **Support Retirement Planning** – beyond simply addressing the financial aspect of retiring, support employees with the psychological and emotional preparation to navigate the transition as smoothly as possible.
5. **Phased Retirement Options** – explore ways to gradually reduce hours, offer consultancy roles, or flexible retirement plans to support continued engagement and facilitate a gentle transition.

While it may take ongoing effort and creativity there is compelling evidence that employers who respond positively to the changing individual needs of employees during their lifecycle and career stages improve their success in attracting, motivating and retaining workers. ⁷



Section 2:

Life Stage Supports

Outside of work, employee life circumstances can vary significantly. Research indicates certain demographics are at a higher risk of chronic stress and burnout due to navigating additional pressures or challenges which include women, younger generations, members of marginalised groups such as LGBTQ+ and ethnic minorities.

To provide an equitable workplace that enables all employees to thrive, it is important to consider accommodations where possible and provide additional supports so that all workers can thrive and contribute optimally in a healthy balanced way. Again, this topic is addressed in greater depth in the Lead Well Guide.

This segment addresses some general life stage specific challenges for employers to consider when developing wellbeing supports. The following areas are some of the most relevant areas to consider in the current climate;

- Women's Health
- Men's health
- Caregiving and parenthood
- Financial wellbeing across the life cycle
- Cultural / religious life commitments



Women's Health

Employers can play a pivotal role in the quality of women's work-life by offering tailored supports and resources to manage challenges at various stages of the life cycle.

Menstruation

Workplaces are increasingly normalising conversations around menstruation and offering practical supports such as access to menstrual products, flexible work arrangements during painful cycles, and designated rest areas if and when needed.

Research suggests that moderate to severe menstrual symptoms are common and can significantly impact energy levels and several other aspects of physical and psychological function that influence productivity.⁸ Period leave policies are already in place in some progressive organisations – although these initiatives are relatively new, they are helping to destigmatise a formerly taboo topic.

Fertility

Fertility challenges can be an emotional and physical rollercoaster. New government funding is increasing accessibility to treatment and supports,⁹ this can be further supported by employers offering additional fertility-related healthcare benefits, paid leave for treatments, and access to counselling services. Up to one in six couples in Ireland face fertility issues, corresponding with global estimates – and this often affects workplace engagement and wellbeing.



Pregnancy

Beyond ensuring compliance with maternity protections, employers can offer risk assessments, adjusted workloads, and mental health supports during pregnancy. The WHO underscores the importance of workplace adjustments to support healthy pregnancies. ¹⁰

For more comprehensive information, refer to the HSA's guidance on pregnancy at work including a risk assessment template. ¹¹

Breastfeeding

Lactation-friendly policies such as offering workers a private, hygienic space for pumping and adequate break times are essential. ¹¹ Research highlights that supportive workplace environments significantly improve breastfeeding duration and maternal satisfaction.

Motherhood

Balancing caregiving with work demands ongoing structural support. Flexible working, parental leave, and access to parenting resources can help to reduce stress and burnout. Working mothers can benefit greatly from organisations that support work-life integration and the return to work after maternity leave.

Menopause

Menopause and perimenopause are gaining increasing attention in recent years, as this challenging life transition can be marked by many moderate to severe physical and psychological symptoms. ¹² Employers can provide education, offer reasonable adjustments (like temperature control and flexible hours), and ensure access to menopause-informed healthcare. Research indicates that 59% of women experiencing menopause symptoms reported a negative impact on work making this a priority aspect of health to address. ¹²

Elevated Risk of Chronic Illnesses

Approx. 33% of Irish women over the age of 45 have a longstanding illness or health condition. ¹³ Women have higher risks of certain health conditions such as autoimmune diseases, osteoporosis, and depression. Preventive health checks, health and wellness programmes, and ergonomic work environments may help mitigate the risk of developing chronic health issues and contribute towards better management of disease.

Men's Health

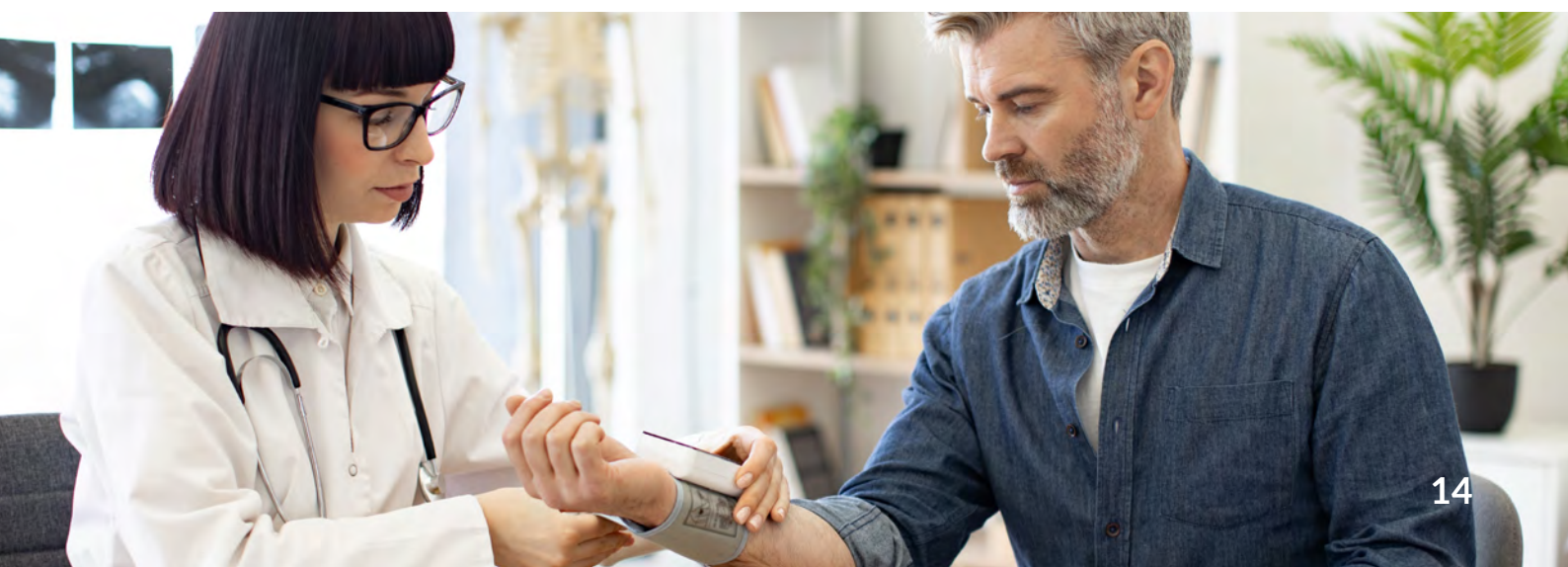
Approx. 35% of Irish men over the age of 45 suffer with a chronic illness or health problem.¹³ While men may not have to deal with the same extent of reproductive health issues women typically face – there are several health risks more common among men.

Main health challenges include;

- Higher risk of suicide and mental health issues ¹⁴
- Higher incidence of poor health behaviours such as smoking and alcohol consumption that increase risk of chronic illnesses
- Lower attendance at GP and seeking medical support, leading to late detection and intervention of chronic illnesses

Employers have a vital role to play in addressing these issues by creating work environments that promote and support men's health and wellbeing on all levels.

As with all health and wellbeing intervention design, when possible, it is important to involve the employees in deciding which solutions and resources would be most supportive.



Simple ways to support men's health in the workplace include;

1. **Mental Health Awareness and Support** – Men in Ireland have a suicide rate significantly higher than women, with males accounting for eight in ten deaths. ¹⁴ Employers can address this by fostering workplace culture that prioritises mental health. Initiatives might include offering confidential psychological support services, mental health workshops, and peer support groups to encourage open discussions and reduce stigma.
2. **Promote Healthy Lifestyle Choices** – Risky health behaviours, such as smoking and excessive alcohol consumption, are more prevalent among Irish men. Employers can promote healthier lifestyles by offering fitness programmes, providing nutritional education, and facilitating smoking cessation workshops. For example, introducing workplace fitness challenges or providing access to exercise facilities can be effective ways to motivate male employees to adopt healthier habits.
3. **Provide Health Screening** – Irish men are often less likely to seek medical attention, leading to delayed diagnoses of conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Employers can mitigate this by offering regular onsite health screenings for blood pressure, cholesterol, and glucose levels. Providing convenient access to these services can encourage early detection and intervention, ultimately improving health outcomes.
4. **Encourage Community Engagement and Social Connection** – Social isolation can contribute to mental health issues among men. Participating in community groups, such as Men's Sheds, has been shown to enhance wellbeing by providing a sense of belonging and purpose. ¹⁵ Employers can support this by encouraging involvement in community projects, facilitating volunteer opportunities, or even establishing workplace-based social groups that foster camaraderie and support networks.



Caregiving & Parenting

Individuals providing care for family members face unique challenges balancing their professional roles with the demands of caregiving or parenting.¹⁶

To foster healthier, more resilient families and workplaces, employers can implement several key wellbeing supports that extend beyond basic leave entitlements and flexible hours.

The additional stressors these employees endure can vary significantly depending on circumstances.

Parental stressors can differ depending on many factors such as the age of children, size of family, if a child has a disability, as well as the relational status of parents.

Caregiving stressors can be equally unique depending on the circumstances, there will be distinctly different challenges if looking after an ailing parent with dementia, or a partner with a disability of some kind.

As an employer it can be helpful to proactively assist workers to access supports that can best alleviate the pressures that come with their unique parenting and caregiving responsibilities.



General supports that may help working parents include;

1. **Onsite or Subsidised Childcare** – Access to affordable, high-quality childcare is a major concern for working parents. Employers who provide onsite childcare or contribute to childcare costs reduce stress and absenteeism. The First 5 Strategy emphasises that employer-supported childcare enhances both family wellbeing and workforce participation. ¹⁶ While this may not be feasible for some organisations, opening dialogue about this topic and assisting employees to find childcare solutions demonstrates care and support for what can be a major life challenge.
2. **Mental Health Supports** – Working parents often juggle emotional and mental load, which can affect their wellbeing. EAPs offering confidential counselling and support services can be supportive to develop healthy coping skills.
3. **Health and Wellbeing Workshops and Resources** – Educational workshops on topics such as stress management, family nutrition, healthy parenting skill development, and sleep hygiene can empower parents to better care for themselves and their children. Providing forums, toolkits, or signposting parental services can help access support. The National Parents Council is an example of a resource provider to strengthen parental capacity and confidence. ¹⁷
4. **Parent Peer Support** – Creating opportunities for parents to connect—such as parent employee resource groups—can foster belonging and reduce isolation to improve parental mental health.



Additional resources may be supportive for individuals at different stages of the parenting journey;

Babies and Toddlers

Lactation consultants, infant sleep specialists, and early development educators may help with feeding, sleep, and development.

Young Children

Child psychologists, speech and language therapists, and play therapists can support behavioural, emotional, and communication development during early school years.

Teens

Youth mental health services and digital safety education can aid parents managing emotional wellbeing in teenagers.

Adult Children

Family counsellors and financial planning advisors support relationship boundaries, housing transitions, and intergenerational financial responsibilities with adult children.

Adoption

Support workers, trauma-informed therapists, and legal advisors can help parents to navigate identity, attachment, and post-adoption challenges.

Caring for Parents

Geriatric care managers, dementia advisors, and palliative care coordinators assist with ageing-related health needs and end-of-life planning for parents.

Some employees may have double or triple duty care, looking after both children and their parents or family members with disability.

Understanding the biggest challenges employees face in this domain and consulting with them to elicit solutions is a positive first step.

Financial Wellbeing

Financial pressure is among one of the top stressors impacting employees – not only due to high inflation and cost-of-living crisis in recent years, but also due to financial challenges at different life stages.

The Dept. of Finance is soon launching a National Strategy for Financial Literacy in Ireland to highlight that financial wellbeing goes beyond knowledge, requiring capability and resilience. ¹⁸

Financial literacy is the ability to understand and apply financial knowledge – financial behaviour is the day-to-day decisions about spending, saving, and borrowing. This is interlinked with financial mindset which encompasses deeper beliefs and attitudes about money, such as financial confidence or scarcity thinking. ¹⁹ Each facet is important to address to promote financial wellbeing.

As an employer it can be helpful to better understand the financial pressures employees are confronted by during distinct life stages and offer different forms of support to navigate these challenges - covering not only the essential information but also supporting skill development and behaviour change to cultivate sustainable healthier financial habits.



Some stages of life can require additional financial supports to navigate the unique challenges and extra expenses involved – the following is not an exhaustive list but highlights some prevalent employee experiences.

Student Loans

Provide tailored budgeting workshops and access to Student Universal Support Ireland (SUSI) guidance, helping graduates manage repayments and navigate tax reliefs such as the Tuition Fees Tax Credit.

First-time Buyers

Offer sessions with mortgage advisors and information on the Help to Buy and First Home schemes, along with saving tools offered by financial institutions.

Fertility Treatment

Subsidise fertility-related costs through flexible benefits, and offer signposting to Revenue's tax relief on IVF, counselling supports, and time-off policies recognising emotional and financial stress.

Parenthood

Support new parents with income protection planning and guidance on budgeting for childcare via the National Childcare Scheme (NCS).

Children in University

Host seminars on budgeting for college, SUSI grants, and tax relief on tuition, while encouraging saving plans like the State Savings' Education Savings Account.

Retirement

Facilitate retirement planning workshops covering the State Pension (contributory), employer pensions, AVCs to support financial preparedness for the transition.



Religious / Cultural Life

Ireland's workforce has become increasingly multicultural in recent decades, reflecting broader societal changes driven by migration, globalisation, and EU expansion. Approx 15.5% of the Irish population is non-national, with significant representation from Eastern Europe, Africa, Asia, and South America. ²⁰

This cultural diversity brings richness to the workplace—new perspectives, languages, and traditions—but also calls for greater cultural sensitivity from employers to ensure equity and wellbeing.

Inclusive workplaces foster a sense of belonging, which is closely linked to employee engagement, mental health, and performance.

The Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015 places a legal obligation on employers to prevent discrimination on grounds including race and religion. ²¹

However, moving beyond compliance to genuine cultural inclusion involves active listening, policy development, and practical supports – it is important for employers to be aware of religious calendar events and cultural milestones that may be important for employees.



Key cultural/religious considerations for Irish employers:

1. **Religious Observances** – Accommodate practices such as fasting during Ramadan, prayer breaks, or time off for religious holidays when possible (e.g. Eid, Diwali..)
2. **Dietary needs** – Ensure catering options at work are respectful of halal, kosher, vegetarian, or other dietary requirements – ensuring that variety and choice is provided where possible.
3. **Establish shared agreement on dress codes** – Invite open conversation regarding cultural attire such as hijabs, turbans, or religious symbols among employees and endeavour to accommodate personal needs where possible.
4. **Flexible scheduling** – Support time off or flexible hours during cultural festivals or rituals when it is feasible to do so.
5. **Cultural awareness training** – Provide psychoeducation to reduce bias and foster understanding across teams and support the integration of multi-cultural workers. This may be particularly relevant among older Irish workers who may have had less exposure to multi-cultural settings than younger generations.
6. **Provide designated space** – If possible, provide quiet spaces for prayer or meditation so that employees can comfortably engage with their daily practice around their work schedule.



Section 3:

Unexpected Events & Life Transitions

Life can be unpredictable. We are currently navigating a melting pot of global challenges - from political tensions disrupting geoeconomics, to climate crisis. As a result, our work environments have become increasingly volatile, uncertain, complex, ambiguous – often referred to as VUCA in the literature.¹

Employees inevitably face personal crises and major transitions that impact their emotional, mental, and financial wellbeing.

Whether sudden or unfolding over time, these events can profoundly affect a person's capacity to focus, cope, and perform at work. Forward-thinking organisations recognise that supporting employees through such moments isn't just compassionate—it's essential for fostering a resilient and engaged workforce.

Having accessible, inclusive wellbeing supports in place—such as Employee Assistance Programmes (EAPs), compassionate leave, mental health resources, and flexible working options—signals to staff that their humanity is valued as much as their productivity.

These supports can build trust and help people feel less alone during life's most vulnerable moments.

In this segment we explore how to meaningfully support employees through five common life challenges: sudden illness or disability, bereavement, redundancy, divorce or separation, and wider societal crises such as war or the climate emergency.



Sudden Illness or Injury

Injury or severe illness can strike anyone at any time. As an employer endeavouring to foster greater wellbeing among workers, it is important to consider supports beyond the basic legal requirements. Some possible supports for unexpected illness or injury include:

Recognition

In the first instance, extending messages of sympathy and care from coworkers and managers can be a meaningful gesture.

Employee Assistance Programmes

Most EAPs offer confidential counselling and support services to employees dealing with personal or work-related issues.

Occupational Health Services

These services encompass prevention, promotion, and rehabilitation – referring employees internally or to an external support if available.

Flexible Work Arrangements

Implementing flexible working options can facilitate return to work after illness or injury, accommodating individual recovery needs.

Income Protection

Many employers offer group income protection - providing a portion of the individual's salary if they are medically certified as unable to work long-term due to illness or injury.



Bereavement

Bereavement is a deeply personal yet universal experience that can profoundly affect an employee's emotional wellbeing and capacity to function at work. Employers who acknowledge the complexity of grief, and offer compassionate, flexible supports, can help to create a culture of care, resilience, and trust. There are many different types of loss that can require different levels of support.

Death of a spouse/partner

This loss can cause significant emotional and practical upheaval. Offer extended compassionate leave, access to grief counselling and phased return-to-work options.

Death of a family member or friend

Recognise that relationships vary in depth and significance. Be flexible with time off and encourage open, non-judgemental conversations about the support needed.

Miscarriage

Miscarriage is a uniquely sensitive loss, often accompanied by grief, shame, or silence. Ensure managers are trained to respond empathetically. While there is no formal paid leave for miscarriage, some workplaces implement specific supports.

Death of a colleague

The workplace itself can become a site of mourning. Acknowledge the loss through team debriefs, memory spaces or rituals, and offer counselling for those closest to the deceased. Partnering with organisations such as the Irish Hospice Foundation can further guide trauma-informed workplace responses. ²²



Redundancy

Redundancy is a significant life transition that can trigger emotional distress, financial anxiety, and identity loss. Supporting employee wellbeing during this time is essential—not only for those leaving, but also for remaining colleagues and managers navigating uncertainty and change.

For employees being made redundant

Offer clear, compassionate communication, along with practical supports such as CV and interview workshops, financial planning sessions, and access to mental health resources or EAP. Giving as much notice as possible beyond legal requirements and supporting the opportunity for closure through farewell meetings can help preserve dignity.

For remaining staff

Redundancy can lead to guilt, increased workloads, and fear about future cuts. Regular check-ins, transparent updates, and opportunities to share concerns in safe spaces are key.

For managers

Delivering redundancy news can be emotionally taxing and often unsupported. Provide specific training in compassionate communication and managing emotionally charged situations. Peer support, coaching, and wellbeing resources can also be made available.



Divorce / Separation

Divorce and separation are among the most stressful life events an employee can experience, often impacting emotional, financial, and psychological wellbeing. The effects can spill over into the workplace, leading to decreased concentration, absenteeism, and burnout.

Employers who offer compassionate, confidential support during this period can make a significant difference in helping staff navigate the transition with dignity.

Practical supports include access to EAP counselling, legal information, and emotional support.

Flexibility is key—temporary adjustments to working hours or remote working can help employees manage legal appointments, co-parenting demands, or emotional overwhelm.

Equally important is the role of empathetic management. Line managers should be trained to recognise distress, maintain appropriate boundaries, and signpost supports. A culture of trust and flexibility helps employees feel safe, valued, and supported through personal upheaval.



Societal Challenges

Unexpected societal challenge such as global public health crises, war, economic instability, and climate-related events can significantly impact employee wellbeing in a multitude of ways, even if individuals are not directly affected.

These events often trigger heightened anxiety, grief, and uncertainty, which can manifest in distraction, fatigue, or reduced resilience at work. A proactive, compassionate response from employers can foster safety and collective resilience.

Key supports include clear and transparent communication to reduce fear and misinformation, as well as visible leadership that acknowledges the emotional toll of global events.

Offering mental health check-ins, signposting EAP services, and facilitating peer support groups provides employees with space to process their emotions. For international or migrant employees, additional supports such as time off to contact family abroad or access to trauma-informed counselling may be essential.



Conclusion

Throughout this guide, most life stage challenges are universally addressed first and foremost by compassionate and empathetic leadership, flexibility in workload and working hours, and a work culture that normalises vulnerability.

These three elements are the bedrock on which the other supports suggested throughout this guide can be built, combined these supports can help employees during intense periods and difficulties.

Remember the most successful interventions are those that are personalised and involve employee input each step of the way.

Some challenges require creativity and thinking outside the box – it can be an iterative process with ongoing review and readjustment to find what works best.

Addressing some of the most pressing challenges for the majority of employees should not dwarf the relevance of supporting individuals – and training line managers can facilitate greater personal care.

Solutions need to be multi-dimensional and holistic to be sustainable and impactful, however this does not mean they can't be simple!

The best start point is to ask what's needed and take it from there.



References

1. OECD. (2022). Promoting health and well-being at work: Policy and practices. OECD Health Policy Studies. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/e179b2a5-en>
2. Bennett, N., & Lemoine, G. J. (2014). What a difference a word makes: Understanding threats to performance in a VUCA world. *Business Horizons*, 57(3), 311–317. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.bushor.2014.01.001>
3. American Association of Colleges and Universities (AAC&U). The mental health and wellbeing of young professionals. <https://www.aacu.org/research/mental-health-wellbeing-young-professionals>
4. Krejčová, K., Krejčí, I., Chýlová, H., Rymešová, P., & Michálek, P. (2025). Work-related well-being in early career: A role of self-compassion. *Heliyon*, 11(1). <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.heliyon.2024.e23169>
5. Infurna, F. J., Gerstorf, D., & Lachman, M. E. (2020). Midlife in the 2020s: Opportunities and challenges. *American Psychologist*, 75(4), 470–485. <https://doi.org/10.1037/amp0000591>
6. Vonderlin, R., Biermann, M., Bohus, M., & Lyssenko, L. (2020). Mindfulness-based programs in the workplace: A meta-analysis of randomized controlled trials. *Mindfulness*, 11, 1579–1598. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-020-01328-3>
7. OECD. (2020). Promoting an age-inclusive workforce: Living, learning and earning longer. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/59752153-en>
8. Ponzo, S., Wickham, A., Bamford, R., Radovic, T., Zhaunova, L., Peven, K., Klepchkova, A., & Payne, J. L. (2022). Menstrual cycle-associated symptoms and workplace productivity in US employees: A cross-sectional survey of users of the Flo mobile phone app. *Digital Health*, 8. <https://doi.org/10.1177/20552076221145852>
9. Health Service Executive (HSE). Getting IVF, ICSI, IUI on the HSE. https://www2.hse.ie/pregnancy-birth/trying-for-a-baby/your-fertility/getting-ivf-icsi-iui-hse/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
10. World Health Organization. (2022). WHO recommendations on maternal and newborn care for a positive postnatal experience. <https://www.who.int/publications/i/item/9789240045989>
11. Health and Safety Authority (HSA). Pregnant employees at work: FAQ responses. https://www.hsa.ie/eng/workplace_health/sensitive_risk_groups/pregnant_at_work_faq_responses/
12. CIPD. (2023) Menopause at work: A guide for people professionals. Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development. <https://www.cipd.org/en/knowledge/guides/menopause-people-professionals-guidance/>
13. Department of Health. (2023). Health in Ireland: Key trends 2023. Government of Ireland. <https://www.gov.ie/en/publication/1d6f64-health-in-ireland-key-trends-2023/>
14. Central Statistics Office. (2023). Suicide statistics 2021. <https://www.cso.ie/en/releasesandpublications/ep/p-ss/suicidestatistics2021/>

15. Lefkowich, M., & Richardson, N. (2018). Men's health in alternative spaces: Exploring men's sheds in Ireland. *Health Promotion International*, 33(3), 525–535. <https://doi.org/10.1093/heapro/daw091>
16. Government of Ireland. (2018). *First 5: A whole-of-government strategy for babies, young children and their families*. <https://first5.gov.ie/>
17. National Parents Council. (2023). *Resources for parents*. <https://www.npc.ie/>
18. Department of Finance. (2024). *Ireland's first national financial literacy strategy – Stakeholder engagement*. Government of Ireland. <https://www.gov.ie/en/press-release/32a77-irelands-first-national-financial-literacy-strategy/>
19. OECD. (2016). *OECD/INFE international survey of adult financial literacy competencies*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/28b3a9c1-en>
20. Government of Ireland. (2024). *Migration – The facts*. <https://www.gov.ie/en/collection/aeaa0-migration-the-facts/>
21. Government of Ireland. (1998–2015). *Employment Equality Acts 1998–2015*. <https://www.irishstatutebook.ie/eli/1998/act/21/enacted/en/html>
22. Irish Hospice Foundation. *Grief training for managers: Grief in the workplace (GITW)*. <https://hospicefoundation.ie/our-supports-services/education-training/grief-training-for-managers/>



