

Symposium | Work place : [Symposium 110] Workplace Mental Health: significance and progress

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[Symposium 110] Workplace Mental Health: significance and progress

Moderator: Tsuyoshi Akiyama (World Federation for Mental Health)

[SY-110-02] Preventing Isolation and Loneliness in the Workplace

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Prevalences of general and workplace loneliness were 9.0% and 8.3%, respectively, underscoring the importance of targeted prevention. To address this challenge, we have been developing multi-level programs—organizational, supervisory, and individual—aimed at reducing isolation and loneliness in workplaces. This presentation highlights an organizational approach using Appreciative Inquiry (AI), a method that emphasizes strengths and ideal visions to foster dialogue and rebuild trust and connection. Between 2023 and 2024, pilot workshops were conducted in two workplaces. While quantitative measures did not show significant reductions in loneliness, participants reported subjective improvements in workplace atmosphere and interpersonal relationships. Careful framing and wording lowered barriers to participation by avoiding direct references to loneliness, thereby facilitating engagement and cultural change. At the same time, challenges emerged, including the need for sustained organizational commitment and structures to ensure continuity. These findings suggest that AI can serve as a promising, inclusive approach to workplace isolation and loneliness, complementing individual and supervisory interventions. Broader application and refinement of this model are expected to contribute to healthier, more connected workplaces, particularly as concerns over loneliness intensify in developed societies.