

**Press Release**  
**Department of Labor and Employment**  
**Bureau of Working Conditions**  
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## **WORKPLACE MENTAL HEALTH POLICY, OUT**

The DOLE has recently issued Department Order No. 208, Series of 2020 entitled *Guidelines for the Implementation of Mental Health Workplace Policies and Programs for the Private Sector*. The Department Order was published in Manila Times on 17 February 2020 and shall take effect on 04 March 2020.

Republic Act No. 11036, otherwise known as the *Mental Health Act*, mandates the government to provide specific health sectors, units and health workforce that are primarily dedicated to attend on mental health sufferers. Mental Health is a catch-all term to describe any and all issues that may affect the mind. It includes a variety of mental disorders, addiction, neurologic disorders and behavioral problems.

The law is the first to acknowledge measures that directly shifts the focus of care, primarily to the community and emphasizing the importance of access to services and integration of mental health in both the national school curricula and countrywide workplace regulations.

Pursuant to the newly-issued Department Order, employers are directed to develop appropriate policies and programs on mental health in their respective workplace designed to raise awareness on mental health issues, correct the stigma and discrimination associated with mental health conditions, identify and provide support for individuals at risk, and facilitate the access of workers with mental health conditions to treatment and psychosocial support. Likewise, the policy must also include capacity building and mental health promotion.

More importantly, employers are required not to discriminate workers at risk of developing or who are found to have a mental health condition. This means that workers shall not be discriminated from hiring, promotion, and/or other benefits of employment because of their mental condition.

A mental health strategy enhances the experience of all employees by preventing psychological injury, promoting psychological wellbeing, and supporting employees who are experiencing a mental health problem or illness.

It is expected that the adoption of workplace mental health promotion programs by more employers can exert a strong influence on improving the holistic health and well-being of workers which could readily translate to productivity.

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